



THE IMPACT OF NATO ON THE SPANISH AIR FORCE: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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Abstract:

The Spanish Air Force is one of the oldest independent Air Forces in the world and the youngest service of the Spanish Armed Forces. Since the early 50's of the last century it was very much involved in exercises and training with the United States Air Force following the Agreements that Spain signed with the United States in 1953. That is why when Spain joined NATO in 1982 the Spanish Air Force was already somewhat familiar with NATO doctrine and procedures. In the following years, cooperation with NATO was increased dramatically through exercises and, when necessary, in operations. The Spanish Air Force is now ready and well prepared to contribute to the common defence of NATO nations and to participate in NATO led operations whenever the Spanish government decides to do so. The Spanish Air Force maintains its readiness through training and exercises and contributes very actively to the development of NATO air operational doctrine and procedures.

Keywords: NATO, Spanish Air Force, United States Air Force.

Resumen:

La Fuerza Aérea española es una de las más antiguas del mundo pues inició su andadura en 1911 y se constituyó como un servicio independiente con el nombre de Ejército del Aire en 1939. Tras los acuerdos firmados por España con los Estados Unidos en 1953, se inició una estrecha relación con la Fuerza Aérea de ese país con énfasis en el entrenamiento, procedimientos y nuevo material aéreo. Por esa razón, cuando España se unió a la OTAN en 1982, el Ejército del Aire estaba en algún grado familiarizado con la doctrina y procedimientos usados por las Fuerzas Aéreas de la Alianza. Sin embargo, la entrada en la OTAN permitió una intensa colaboración con otras Fuerzas Aéreas aliadas con la participación del Ejército del Aire en maniobras y ejercicios y cuando fue preciso en operaciones. Las unidades del Ejército del Aire participan actualmente activamente en varias misiones lideradas por la Alianza y están listas y preparadas para contribuir a la defensa común con los demás aliados. El Ejército del Aire mantiene un alto grado de alistamiento y disponibilidad mantenido con un intenso entrenamiento que incluye la participación en ejercicios con otras Fuerzas Aéreas de la OTAN. Por otra parte, sus miembros contribuyen muy activamente al desarrollo de la doctrina aeroespacial y a la mejora de los procedimientos aéreos aliados.

Palabras clave: OTAN, Fuerza Aérea Española, Fuerza Aérea de los EEUU.

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1. Introduction

The Spanish Air Force, the “Ejército del Aire”, is the current name of this service in Spanish, is one of the oldest independent Air Forces in the world. Since 1939, the Spanish Air Force (SAF) has been an independent service and the youngest of the three services of the Spanish Armed Forces. When Spain joined NATO in 1982, the SAF was involved in a process of modernization and transformation. To analyse the impact of NATO on the SAF, at least some information about its glorious past and the pre-1982 development of this youngest service of the Spanish Armed Forces is needed. That is why the first part of this essay begins with a summary of the history of the SAF and then follows the successive stages in the relationship between NATO and the Air Force of Spain. That relationship existed even before 1982 and has been especially intense since the signing of the Coordination Agreements in the early 1990s. All experts consider that the impact of NATO on the SAF has not only been significant as an institution but also for its personnel. In fact in the past 27 years, Air Force generals, officers and NCOs have participated in NATO led exercises and operations and many have been assigned to the International Military Staff, to posts in the Command structure and in other structures and agencies. Their professional experience has contributed greatly to building the good understanding of NATO issues that today exists in the Air Force².

2. Building a New Service

In the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, the Ministry of the Air was created on 8 August 1939 and a few days later, on 7 October 1939, the Spanish Air Force was born as an independent Service from the Army and the Navy. Although the first military course for airplane pilots was announced in March 1911, the official onset of Military Aviation took place on 28 February 1913 with the creation of the Service of Military Aeronautics that was divided into Aerostation and Aviation branches. As early as 1913, airplanes from Military Aeronautics participated in operations in the Morocco campaign. A few years later there was another step in the right direction when a Royal Decree, dated 15 March 1922, provided the Aviation Service with a new framework that fostered a new Aeronautical section. Furthermore, the Air Echelon was created and different types of flying units were organized in groups, flights and squadrons. Once the Morocco campaign was finished, a period of great flights began around 1925. On 22 January 1926, the flying boat “Plus Ultra” departed for Buenos Aires. A few weeks later, between the 5 of April and the 11 of May, the Elcano flight conducted a raid into the Philippines. One of the last of those interesting flights was the Seville-Cuba raid in the “Cuatro Vientos” airplane. Barberán and Collar, the two pilots, disappeared on 20 June 1933 while on route from Cuba to Mexico. Spanish Aviation came into its own during the cruel years of the civil war. From 1936 to 1939, the military efficiency of Air Power gave Spanish Aviation units great prestige. The experiences in close air support, air bombing, air transport and air supply operations were incorporated into Air doctrine.

² There is not a bibliography about the impact of NATO in the SAF and any other type of open information on this topic is very limited. The Air Force magazine has been for many years the most consistent open source of information about all aspects of the life of the Spanish Air Force. For that reason, I have taken into consideration several articles published in that magazine to follow the progress of the relationship between NATO and the Spanish Air Force and to evaluate the consequences of that relationship.



However even more relevant were the proficiency and heroism of the Spanish pilots of both sides.

The “Ejército del Aire”, newly born in 1939 as an independent service, was negatively affected by World War II as training and acquisition of new planes had to be reduced because of lack of funds. The situation was even worse at the end of the conflict. In fact, Spain’s isolation from the Allied powers hampered the procurement of fuel and the renewal of material from 1945 till 1953. In December 1953, there were 915 aircraft on inventory but only 634 aircraft, most of them obsolete models, were ready for service of which 34 were classified as fighters. Notwithstanding some considerations about the fairness of the Agreements signed with the United States in 1953, the fact is that they put an end to a very difficult situation and there was a new beginning for the SAF. Once the Agreements were signed, the bases to be used jointly by the United States Air Force (USAF) and the SAF were defined as well as the bases that were to be used by the SAF units and were to be equipped with new material under the Mutual Defence and Assistance Program (MDAP). The arrival of jet fighters, the creation of the Air Defence Command and the renewal of material, systems management and doctrine boosted a transformation process that changed the SAF completely. A number of Air Force officers were sent to receive training in different schools and training centres in Europe and the United States. To mention one of them, in April 1954, six SAF officers were designated to attend a Course for Instructors of T-33 in Fürstfeldbruck (Germany) where they remained for two years as instructors for other Spanish pilots. In March 1954, the first Lockheed T-33 jet aircraft arrived to the new Fighter School, “Escuela de Reactores”, in Talavera la Real (Badajoz). A few months later, in September 1955, the first F-86 Sabres joined the SAF combat units. During the period 1971-1973, new aircraft were received by the SAF, including the C-130 Hercules for transport and refuelling, the P-3 for Maritime Patrol and the Phantom F-4c fighter-bombers that replaced the F-104 Starfighters received in the middle of the 60s as part of the United States military cooperation. Especially relevant in the transformation of the SAF was the operational training of its air defence and fighter units that were able to exercise regularly with units of the same type of the USAF. The use of common operational procedures made participation in exercises such as “Pathfinder Express”, “Atlantide”, “Creta”, “Sentry” and others possible. The cooperation went on for many years and made the SAF familiar with the doctrine and procedures of the USAF, doctrine and procedures that were also used by the Air Forces of many NATO allies. As has been mentioned, many pilots, navigators, mechanics and other SAF personnel attended courses in USAF training centres. Furthermore, most units of the SAF participated in exercises those years with USAF aircraft that were stationed in Spanish Air bases. For these reasons, it is generally accepted that when Spain joined NATO, the SAF was quite well prepared to operate with the Air Forces of our new allies.

3. Getting Familiar with NATO

The Air Force magazine paid attention to NATO issues as early as 1950, only a few months after the signing of the Washington Treaty, the 4th of April 1949. In fact, the first relevant article on NATO affairs was published in issue 113 of the magazine in April 1950. “El Poder Aéreo Atlántico” was a translation of the article “Atlantic Air Power”, published first in “Aviation Week”. The article explains the discussions that took place in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in Washington in November 1949. The article reported that, as a result of the discussions, it was accepted that for the success of any common defence strategy it was necessary to forge ahead with the Alliance Air Power. It was a very reassuring



conclusion for the SAF, which as a younger service in Spain had very often to justify why it was important for national defence to have an efficient Air Force. At that time, the early 50s, it was not easy in Spain to get first hand information about NATO issues and for that reason translations from foreign magazines were welcomed and somehow filled that vacuum. Mr. Madrey A. Salomon was the author of another article entitled “The North Atlantic Treaty Organization”, whose translation was published in the Air Force magazine in January 1952. Mr. Salomon presented an excellent overview of NATO structures at the time in his work. There were many other contributions from foreign authors commenting on NATO issues in the Air Force magazine during the fifties of the last century. It is a must to stress how important those articles were in making readers³ aware of the structures and policies of the Atlantic Alliance. Among those articles there were some that were especially significant for their content. One of them was “Europe’s stakes on missiles” whose author, Mr. Henry Kissinger, had had it published in April 1958 in the prestigious “Foreign Affairs” magazine. The magazine of the USAF reprinted the article and its translation appeared in our magazine in July 1958. Mr. Kissinger defended in a forceful manner the deployment of US missiles in Europe at a time when it was a hot issue in the old Continent. He argued that the deployment of missiles in Europe was necessary not for the defence of the United States but for the defence of Europe. Almost 20 years later, US Navy Captain Komorowsky was the author of two articles entitled “Spain and NATO defence” that appeared in the US Naval Institute Proceedings and were reproduced translated into Spanish in the March and April of 1977 issues of our magazine. Captain Komorowsky made a complete analysis of the military power and potential of Spain and its possible contribution to NATO common defence efforts in the first article. In the second, the author presented with some detail possible missions of the Spanish Armed Forces within the Alliance and explained his points of view about the advantages for Spain of becoming a member of NATO. This second article is illustrated with a map of Western Europe with the text: “Spain, dominating the Mediterranean accesses, is of extraordinary strategic importance for Western countries”. The contributions of the above-mentioned foreign authors and others⁴ were an important feature in the SAF magazine, one of the few publications in Spain dealing with strategic issues at the time. Some Air Force officers were soon interested in NATO matters and were beginning to write articles about NATO. Colonel Antonio Rueda Ureta was a pioneer on NATO affairs and the author of one of the first articles written by a Spaniard on this topic. “The European Defence Cooperation (ECD) and NATO”, published in November 1954, explains the structure of NATO Air commands and the improvements in capabilities, bases, training and organization of allied Air Forces in the years 1952 and 1953. In his article, Colonel Rueda also analysed how the French National Assembly’s rejection of the ECD initiative put NATO in the front line to become the foundation of a new European defence. In the 14 pages long article there are some interesting considerations on the aeronautical industries of Russia and the USA and on the need for good air to ground communications to assure the link between airborne units and ground control centres for the sound use of Tactical Air Support units. Colonel Rueda wrote other articles about NATO and many others experts followed that trend. As we have seen, for many years before Spain joined the Alliance, the Air Force magazine showed Spanish people, particularly Air Force officers, about its organization and activities. The number of articles on NATO

³ At that time, the Air Force magazine was distributed to all officers of the Spanish Air Force and was also sold in libraries and press kiosks.

⁴ See, among others, articles such as Richardson, Robert C.: “The US Air Force and NATO”, *Revista de Aeronáutica y Astronáutica*, no. 152 (July 1953); Perkins, George W.: “The United States and NATO”, *Revista de Aeronáutica y Astronáutica*, no. 202 (September 1957) and Vouthier, Charles: “NATO, the shield of the Free World”, *Revista de Aeronáutica y Astronáutica*, no. 255 (February 1962)



issues increased dramatically after 1982 and it can be said that today it is the Spanish professional publication that dedicates most attention to the activities of the Alliance.

At the beginning of the 1980s the political situation had changed and there was a feeling that the time was ripe for Spain to join NATO. In October 1981, the Air Force magazine published the dossier “La OTAN, síntesis informativa” full of information on the Alliance only a few months before Spain signed the Washington Treaty. The four contributions to the dossier explained the history and structure of the Alliance but more significantly contained some reflections on a hypothetical Spanish military contribution and about the cost of joining NATO.

4. Spain in NATO and the Coordination Agreements

The signing of a new Treaty between Spain and the United States of America in 1976 is generally considered the initial point of the process of Spain’s becoming a NATO member. The Treaty contemplated the creation of a US-Spain Joint Military Committee with a combined Staff and an ad-hoc Group to provide specific coordination with NATO. In May 1982 Spain joined NATO following a decision by the Spanish government, without specifying our military contribution. However a political change brought about by the general elections in October that year resulted in the freezing of the process of integration in the Alliance’s structures. Even during those years of uncertainty about the future of our position in the Alliance, our magazine published a dossier on “The Air Forces in NATO” in April of 1983. The authors presented in their contributions the roles, capacities and organization of the Air Forces of NATO nations.

On 12 March 1986 a referendum was held to determine the willingness of the Spanish people to remain in NATO under certain terms. The terms set up by the referendum were as follows:

- The participation of Spain in the Alliance will not include its incorporation into the integrated military structure.
- The ban on installing, stockpiling or introducing nuclear weapons into Spanish territory will be maintained⁵.
- There will be a progressive reduction of the US military presence in Spain.

The referendum confirmed the Spanish people’s will to continue in NATO and clearly strengthened the Spanish commitment to the Alliance. After the referendum a number of steps were taken to bring Spain into NATO. In June 1986, confidential intra-staff discussion of politico-military aspects of Spain’s participation in NATO bodies and activities and elaboration of the framework for Coordination Agreements took place, to allow for Spanish contribution to the common defence of the Alliance outside the Integrated Military Structure. Discussions on Spanish contributions to defence took place between high-level NATO staff and Spanish officials in October 1986, January 1987 and October 1987, respectively, in Brussels, Madrid and Brussels. On the 12 of August 1987, the Spanish accession to the

⁵ Other NATO nations like Canada, Denmark, Iceland and Norway also had a ban on nuclear weapons.



following NATO documents took place: Status of Forces Agreement; Ottawa Agreement; Agreement for Mutual Safeguarding of Secrecy of inventions related to Defence; and Agreement on the communication of technical information for Defence purposes.

On 25 January 1988, the Spanish Government presented its proposals on the contribution of Spain to the common defence to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Defence Planning Committee (DPC). The proposals included the participation of Spain in every activity of the Alliance except her integration in the military structure. According to the later so-called Spanish model, Spain accepted NATO's strategy, and from that moment was present at the Defence Planning Committee (DPQ), Military Committee (MC), Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), etc, and participated during the NATO planning process by answering the Defence Planning Questionnaire (DPQ) and presenting Spanish force proposals. The Spanish Chief of Defence (CHOD Spain) acted as a Major NATO Commander and made Force proposals, which were tabled with Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and Supreme Allied Command Atlantic (SACLANT), for their opinions. The Spanish model was politically accepted by the DPC on February 1988 and it was decided that to mark the Spanish contribution to NATO, Coordination Agreements between Spain and the Major NATO Commands (MNCs) should be written.

The Military Committee document 313 was produced with that purpose, defining the guidelines for the development of Coordination Agreements between CHOD Spain and the MNCs. Defence Ministers endorsed the guidelines and Foreign Ministers noted the document in the NAC on 8 December 1988. The document identified six areas where the Spanish Armed Forces would mainly contribute to NATO roles and missions. The basic difference between Spain and other nations was that its Armed Forces would be at all times under national operational command. Therefore, some arrangements for coordination between the MNCs and CHOD Spain were necessary to determine "What, Where, When and How" its Armed Forces would contribute to the common Defence. It took more than two years to discuss and produce the six Coordination Agreements that, after being signed by the MNCs and CHOD Spain, were endorsed by the DPC. The six Coordination Agreements and their endorsement dates were:

- Air Defence of Spain and adjacent areas (ADCA). 30/11/ 1990.
- Naval and Air operations in the Eastern Atlantic (ELCA). 30/11/1990.
- Preserving the integrity of Spanish territory (ISTCA). 17/5/1991.
- Naval and Air operations in the Western Mediterranean (WMCA). 17/5/1991.
- Defence and Control Straits of Gibraltar and its approaches (STROGCA). 24/8/1992.
- Provision of Spanish territory and facilities for reinforcement, reception and transit, and logistic, air and maritime support (SUPCA). 24/ 8/1992.

The six Coordination Agreements involved the greater part of the Spanish Armed Forces. In particular, the SAF had an important role in almost every agreement but the involvement was very significant in the agreements ELCA and WMCA and instrumental in ADCA. According to ADCA, Spain agreed to conduct independent, coordinated and combined Air Defence



operations mainly in the area that was common to both the MNC's⁶ area of responsibility and the normal area of Spanish Air Defence operations. Those Air Defence operations were in pursuance of NATO's Air Defence mission of contributing to deterrence, preserving the integrity of NATO airspace in peacetime and of defending NATO against air attacks in war. To that end the SAF had to adopt states of readiness compatible with those of NATO Command Air Defence forces and was supposed to increase them systematically and progressively in times of tension and war. The freedom of action of the Spanish Air Defence forces and NATO Command forces in the airspace over international waters should not be impaired. In ADCA there were provisions for the combined operations with a clear definition of the operational authority when NATO or Spanish air units were deployed in Spain or in the MNC's area of responsibility. The designation of the Coordinating Authority in coordinated operations was also well defined in the agreement. ADCA was the basis for detailed coordinated planning between Spanish and NATO commanders and, according to this, the Spanish Air operational commander and Allied Command Europe developed the Spanish Air Defence control plans. To facilitate liaison and coordination in all matters between CHOD Spain and MNCs, two permanent military missions accredited to Supreme Allied Commander Europe and to Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic were established and liaison officers were sent to the Channel Command and subordinated commands in Lisbon and Naples.

The SAF was very much involved in the process of drafting the Agreements, in particular ADCA. The Combat Command in charge of the Air Defence of Spanish territory received the ratification of this Agreement with enthusiasm. The SAF, responsible since its inception for the Air Defence of Spain, was well prepared to tackle the tasks contemplated in ADCA and many of its units were familiar with NATO procedures, at least since 1976. Nevertheless, in the new situation interoperability between the Spanish Defence system and the overall NATO Air Defence was a must and for that reason there was a significant increase in the number of exercises conducted within the NATO framework. Furthermore, the preparedness of the SAF was based on the implementation of instruction and training plans according to NATO standards. The acceptance of the Spanish model and the development of the Coordination Agreements supposed a clarification of our position in the Alliance after years of uncertainty about our future role in NATO. The new mood could be perceived in the dossier published in the Air Force magazine in April 1989, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Washington Treaty. The dossier was dedicated to the history of the Alliance and to the seven years of Spain's membership. Some Spanish diplomats and military officers assigned to our representations⁷ at NATO Headquarters had had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with NATO and that knowledge was reflected in their articles. In one of them, "The Spanish Air Force and NATO", the author pointed out that, notwithstanding the freezing of our contribution during the first seven years of NATO membership, valuable know-how had been incorporated into our Air Force by the personnel that had participated in meetings and working groups. It is also important to mention the knowledge about NATO acquired by officers and NCOs attending courses at NATO Defence College in Rome, NATO School in Oberammergau and other centres during those years of uncertainty. At this point it is proper to mention that the first Military Representative of CHOD Spain (JEMAD in Spain) in the Military Committee was lieutenant general of the SAF, Santos Peralba.

⁶ In 1990 there were three Major NATO Commands (MNCs), Allied Command Europe, Allied Command Atlantic and Allied Command Channel.

⁷ NATO nations have two high level representatives at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. The Permanent Representative that represents the national government in the North Atlantic Council and the Military Representative of the national CHOD in the Military Committee. The ambassador or Permanent Representative has the overall representation of the country.



5. The End of the Cold War and the New Developments

The Alliance's Strategic Concept, agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Rome Summit, 7th-8th November 1991, was NATO's response to the profound political changes that had taken place since 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe. Part IV, Guidelines for Defence, of the document included the Alliance's New Force Postures to respond to the new security environment in Europe. According to that new posture, NATO established a new Force Structure that was presented in December 1993 as a dossier in the Air Force magazine. The Allied Reaction Forces Planning Staff (ARFPS), located at SHAPE, was completely operational the 1st of April 1993 as an independent staff dedicated to planning issues of the Reaction Forces. A lieutenant colonel of the Spanish Air Force was assigned to the Reaction Forces (Air) Staff, subordinated to the ARFPS, established in Kalkar (Germany) and his work was instrumental for the participation of our Air Force in the exercise "Strong Resolve" of 1995.

The 5th of December 1995 the members of NATO decided to appoint Mr. Javier Solana as Secretary General of NATO and Chairman of the North Atlantic Council. In his speech accepting his appointment Dr. Solana said: "I believe my appointment as Secretary General is also an expression of recognition of my country, and of the contribution Spain makes to our collective security and defence and to the basic principles and objectives of our Alliance". A few months later, the 26th of April 1996, His Majesty the King of Spain paid an official visit to NATO Headquarters. A year later the Heads of State of the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance met in Madrid on the 7th and 8th of July 1997. The 27 points of the Declaration of Madrid issued at the end of the meeting was an important document at an important juncture of the life of the Alliance. Some of the decisions taken were: to issue invitations to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to begin accession talks; to reaffirm NATO's Open Door Policy; to recognize the achievements and commitments represented by the NATO-Russia Founding Act; to sign the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine; to convene the first meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council; to enhance Partnership for Peace; to update the 1991 Strategic Council and to adopt a new Defence posture; to welcome the progress on the development of a new Command structure; and to issue a special Declaration on Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Summit meeting in Madrid was a real success and together with the nomination of Mr. Solana and the visit of King Juan Carlos to NATO Headquarters was a clear sign of the strong position of Spain within NATO. Meanwhile Spain was getting ready for complete integration to the structures of the Alliance.

From 1989 till 1996, the Spanish Air Force was actively involved in common defence, cooperating with our allies in the framework of the six Coordination Agreements. The participation of Spain in the resolution of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia began in July 1991, when the European Union decided to deploy a European Community Monitoring Mission upon the signing of the Brioni Agreements. When the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina flared up in 1992, Spain, out of solidarity with other allies, decided to contribute with military units and a group of observers, under UNSC resolution 776, to the UN operation UNPROFOR. Further extension of the mandate led to the sending of Air Force units. During 1993, the SAF started its participation in Peace Support operations by sending some of its members to the former Yugoslavia as Forward Advance Controllers (FAC)⁸ and as Tactical Air Controllers (TAC), in support of Air Force units as requested from NATO by the United

⁸ Their international radio code "Bullfighter" became well known by all allied units deployed in Yugoslavia.



Nations. Our presence in international missions at that time included the active participation in operation “Deliberate Guard”, with fighter-bomber C-15⁹ (EF-18) aircraft stationed from 1993 in the Aviano Air Base. Furthermore, Transport aircraft T-12 (Aviocar C-212) were operating out of Vicenza Air Base (Italy) and Military Patrol aircraft P-3 Orion out of Sigonella Air Base from 1993. One of the expeditionary Aviocar aircraft was hit by enemy fire in March 1994 and the plane suffered serious damage.

In December 1994, Detachment “Icaro” was set up in Aviano Air Base, Italy, to take part in the operations conducted over the former Yugoslavia. For the first time the Spanish Air Force assumed an entirely expeditionary character by deploying combat and combat support aircraft outside national territory and participating in real operations including the first ever combat activity conducted by NATO. In recognition of the courage, valour and military and aeronautical virtues shown by the Detachment members, they were awarded the Air Medal collectively, which was presented by His Majesty the King Juan Carlos I.

6. The SAF Participation in Air Operations

As we have seen, after years of preparation the SAF was ready to contribute with its units to allied operations in the former Yugoslavia. Its participation was very active and was praised by NATO commanders and other participants in the operations. A detailed explanation about some of the main operations and our contribution to them is offered in the following paragraphs.

6.1. Operation Sharp Guard

Operation Sharp Guard, a joint venture of NATO and the Western European Union (WEU), began on 15 June 1993, was suspended on 19 June 1996 and terminated on 1 October 1996, following a UN resolution. For more than three years, NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) enforced both economic sanctions and an arms embargo. During Sharp Guard no ships were reported as having broken the embargo and in the period 22 November 1992 to June 1996 74.000 ships were challenged, almost 6.000 were inspected at sea and more than 1400 were diverted and inspected in port.¹⁰ Sharp Guard was initiated to conduct operations to monitor and enforce compliance with UN sanctions in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 713, 757, 787, 820 and 943. The main force involved in the operation was Combat Task Force (CTF) 440 formed with NATO forces, mainly the Standing Naval Force Mediterranean (STANAFORMED) and the Standing Naval Force Atlantic (STANAFORLANT) together with the WEU Contingency Maritime Force. As a consequence of UNSC resolutions 1021 and 1022 the Sharp Guard mission was eventually limited to a heavy weapons and ammunition embargo. UNSCR 1022 suspended, subject to certain provisions, the commercial embargo against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Sharp Guard units continued to enforce the embargo on heavy weapons and her ammunitions to include mines, military aircraft and helicopters, and remained ready to resume, at short notice, full implementation of sanctions if the conditions set by UNSC resolutions were not met. On 1 October 1996 the UNSC approved resolution 1074 and in a statement said that, satisfied with elections held in Bosnia-Herzegovina in line with the Peace Agreement, the UNSC decided to

⁹ In the SAF the letter C is for fighter/fighter-bomber, T is for transport aircraft, D is for multipurpose aircraft, E is for training and H is for helicopter. A means Advanced.

¹⁰ Operation SHARP GUARD replaced operations MARITIME GUARD (NATO) and SHARP FENCE (WEU) that had been active from November 1992.



immediately terminate all sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. On 2 October 1996 NATO and the WEU announced that, following the UN decision, Operation Sharp Guard was terminated.

Given the mainly maritime character of the operation, the detailed organization of CTF-440 and the ships participating on the Task Force are not presented here. Nevertheless, it is relevant to mention that the nations contributing forces were: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.

6.2. Statistics and Participating Forces (Air)

Fighter aircraft:

Aircraft from allied nations operating in the area contributed to the defence of NATO ships from attacks by surface ships. The exact number of sorties is not known but many were flown to defend allied ships.

Maritime Patrol aircraft:

Continuous MPA support to the naval forces of CTF 440 was provided by resources from eight nations: France (Atlantique), Germany (Atlantique), Italy (Atlantique), The Netherlands (P-3C), Portugal (P-3B), Spain (P-3B), UK (Nimrod), and the US (P-3C). The above aircraft operated from air bases at Sigonella (Sicily) and Elmas (Sardinia), in Italy.

7.151 Maritime Patrol Aircraft sorties.

Airborne Early Warning:

Eight E-3A and two E-3D from NATO's Airborne Early Warning Force (NAEWF) supported operation Sharp Guard. The E-3A aircraft operated from Geilenkirchen, Germany, Aviano and Trapani, Italy, and Action, Greece and were flown by multinational crews provided by 11 nations. The E-3D aircraft from the UK's Number 8 Squadron flew from RAF Waddington, UK, as well as Aviano and Trapani. The French E-3F aircraft participating under the auspices of the WEU operated from either Avord, France, or Trapani, Italy.

NATO and French Airborne Early Warning Aircraft sorties = 6.174

Operation Sharp Guard was mainly a maritime operation in which the air units had a supporting role to naval units enforcing the embargo. It was a joint NATO-WEU operation with the implications inherent in the cooperation of two very different organizations, one of them, the WEU, in the process of activation after many years without practical activity. Furthermore, the frequent change of the scope of the sanctions contemplated in the UNSCRs in some cases created confusion in the units in charge of enforcing the embargo. Nevertheless, during its three years of activity, operation Sharp Guard gave the opportunity to Maritime Patrol Aircraft units to improve procedures and cooperation with naval forces.

6.3. Operation Deliberate Force

Operation Deliberate Force was initiated in response to Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) shelling of the Sarajevo market place on 28 August 1995. However, this operation was the culmination of events and related planning over a long period of time. In fact, the warring factions disregard



for UN mandates regarding “safe areas” and heavy weapons exclusion zones (EZs), targeting of NATO and UN aircraft and ground forces, and increased factional fighting during the fall and winter of 1994, dictated prudent military contingency planning. As a result of these events two plans were formulated:

Dead Eye, an air protection plan, to disrupt the integrated air defence system in Bosnia-Herzegovina and thus reduce the risk to NATO aircraft.

Deliberate Force, an air attack plan, to reduce military capability to threaten or attack safe areas and UN forces. Targets included: field forces, heavy weapons, command and control facilities, direct and essential military support facilities, supporting infrastructures and lines of communication. The concrete targets were approved for planning through the Joint Targeting Board (JTB) process established by NATO and the UN.

As has been mentioned, Operation Deliberate Force was triggered by a mortar attack of the Bosnian Serb Army on Sarajevo market place on 28 August 1995, killing 38 civilians. A “Dual-Key” decision was made by the NATO Commander in Chief South (CINCSOUTH) and Force Commander UN Protection Force (FC UNPF) to initiate air strikes, 29 August 1995. Subsequently COMAIRSOUTH directed Commander Five Allied Tactical Air Force (COMFIVEATAF) to launch NATO forces with an execution time planned for not earlier than 02:00 on 30 August 1995. On 20 September 1995, UN/NATO agreed Deliberate Force objectives had been met, the mission had been accomplished and the end states achieved (“safe areas” no longer under attack). CINCSOUTH and FC UNPF therefore agreed, “The resumption of air strikes is currently not necessary”.

Statistics and participating forces (only Spain)

The total number of sorties flown in the operation: 3.515

<u>Nation</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Aircraft type</u>	<u>Location</u>
SPAIN	8	C-15 (EF-18A)	Aviano AB
	2	T-10 (KC-130)	Aviano AB
	1	T-12 (CASA 212)	Vicenza AB

Deliberate Force was a well-planned and well-executed operation that accomplished its ambitious objectives in a short period of time. The operation demonstrated the importance and ability of the Air Power to achieve specific goals and to force the enemy to renounce aggression. In fact, the end states, as contemplated in the UN-brokered Framework Agreement, were achieved at the end of the operation and the Safe Areas were no longer threatened or under attack. Another important aspect of the operation was the “Dual Key” way of taking decisions by the commanders of two different operational organizations. Furthermore, during some phases of the operation the use of CAP (Combat Air Patrol), AEW (Advanced Early Warning), AAR (Air to Air Refuelling), and ELINT (Electronic Intelligence) provide continuous coverage meanwhile CAS (Close Air Support) and SEAD (Suppression of Enemy Air Defences) able aircraft were airborne near continuously. As a matter of fact, Deliberate Force was a model of advance limited air operation and a test of the



capabilities of the aircraft and the ability and training of the pilots participating in the operation.

6.4. Operation Deny Flight

Operation Deny Flight was conducted from 12 April 1993 to 20 December 1995, when the International Implementation Force assumed responsibilities for the implementation of the military aspects of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina. During nearly 1.000 days this operation effectively prevented the warring parties from using belligerent air as a medium of warfare and, through the application of air power, made a key contribution to the peace process. The mission of the Operation Deny Flight was:

To conduct aerial monitoring and enforce compliance with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 816 which banned flights in the airspace of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the “No-Fly Zone” (NFZ).

To provide close air support (CAS) to UN troops on the ground at the request of, and controlled by, UN forces under the provisions of UNSCRs 836, 958 and 981.

To conduct, after request by and in coordination with the UN, approved air strikes against designated targets threatening the security of the UN-declared safe areas.

Statistics and participating forces (only Spain)

The total number of fighter sorties (NFZ) flown over Bosnia-Herzegovina: 23.021

Closed Air Support and Air Strikes sorties flown over Bosnia-Herzegovina: 27.077

Suppression Enemy Air Defence (SEAD), NATO Early Warning (NAEW), tanker, reconnaissance and support aircraft sorties: 29.158

Training missions flown: 21.164

Total of sorties: 100.420

<u>Nation</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Aircraft type</u>	<u>Location</u>
SPAIN	1	T-12 (CASA 212)	Rimini AB
	8	C-15 (EF-18)	Aviano AB
	2	T-10 (KC-130)	Aviano AB

Multinational crews provided by 11 nations flew the E-3A aircraft of NAEWF.

On 8 March 1994, a Spanish CASA 212 transport aircraft, on a routine flight from Zagreb to Split made a successful emergency landing at Rijeka Airport (Croatia) after being hit by ground fire while flying over Croatia. Four passengers on the aircraft were slightly injured and the aircraft suffered minor damage.



Operation Deny Flight not only prevented the use of airspace to the warring factions during 993 days but Air Power was also used to prevent other aggressions. In fact, when the NAC decided on 9 February 1994 that the heavy weapons not removed from a 20 kilometres exclusion zone around Sarajevo, or turned over to the United Nations ten days after 2400 GMT of the 10th of February of 1994, would be subject to NATO air strikes, the weapons were withdrawn or delivered or placed under the control of the United Nations. During the operation several aircraft violating the UN “No-fly” zone were shot down and NATO planes attacked some airfields and radar and SAM sites. One Spanish CASA-212 and other NATO planes suffered enemy fire and one NATO F-16 aircraft was shot down over western Bosnia on 2 June 1995. Search and rescue forces rescued the pilot on 8 June 1995.

6.5. The Kosovo Air Campaign and Operation Allied Force

The first phase of Operation Allied Force, called at the time “Operation Determined Force”, was initiated on October 13, 1998 when the North Atlantic Council (NAC) authorised an activation order allowing for “limited air strikes” and a “phased air campaign” in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, should Yugoslav authorities refuse to comply with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1199 (23rd September 1998). The execution of the “limited air strikes” was initially set to begin not earlier than 96 hours from the authorization of the activation order, to allow time for negotiations between Ambassador Holbrooke and President Milosevic to bear fruit. Some progress in the diplomatic negotiations was due to pressure maintained by NATO through the deployment of air and naval resources in Italy and in the Adriatic Sea. After nine days of negotiations, Mr. Holbrooke secured an agreement from Mr. Milosevic to comply with the provisions of UNSCR 1199 with both air and ground regimes to verify compliance. The agreement was signed on October 15, but after 96 hours there was clear evidence that there was some distance from full compliance of the terms of the accord. The following months there was some progress in the compliance but the crisis was not over.

Operation Allied Force proper was launched in March 1999 to halt the humanitarian catastrophe that was at that time unfolding in Kosovo. In fact, by the end of 1998 more than 300.000 Kosovars had fled their homes. Various cease-fire agreements were not respected and negotiations were stalled. At the beginning of 1999, two internationally brokered talks, in Rambouillet in February and in Paris in March, failed to break the deadlock and diplomatic efforts were considered unable to solve the conflict. On March 1999, all efforts to achieve a negotiated, political solution to the Kosovo crisis having failed, the only alternative open was to take military action. Mr. Solana, NATO’s Secretary General, ordered the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to initiate air operations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The operations started on 24 March 1999 under the name “Operation Allied Force”. On 9 June 1999, while the air campaign was in its 78th day, NATO and Yugoslav military authorities signed a Military Technical Agreement. Javier Solana ordered the suspension of air operations, having received reports indicating that the withdrawal of the Yugoslav security forces was in progress. On 20th June 1999, after all FRY military and police forces had departed Kosovo, NATO’s Secretary General decided to terminate the air campaign.



Statistics and participating forces (only Spain)

Thirteen NATO countries contributed to Operation Allied Force. The countries were: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. As of June 20, 1999, over 900 aircraft were committed to this operation. More than 37.000 sorties were flown, including as many as 14.000 strikes. Approximately 23.000 bombs and missiles were launched.

<u>Nation</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Aircraft type</u>	<u>Location</u>
SPAIN	8	C-15 (EF-18)	Aviano AB
	3	T-10 (KC-130)	Aviano AB
	2	T-12 (CASA-212)	Rimini AB

On 10 June 1999, after an air campaign lasting seventy seven days, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana announced that he had instructed General Clark, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, to suspend operation Allied Force temporarily. That announcement was the beginning of the end of a unique operation. In fact as is mentioned in a public document, the Alliance held together during 78 days of air strikes. During those days more than 38.000 sorties, of them 10.484 strike sorties, were flown without a single Allied fatality. After first targeting the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's air defences, NATO escalated the campaign using the most advance precision-guided systems and avoiding civilian casualties to the greatest extent possible. Furthermore, target selection was reviewed at multiple levels of command to ensure that it complied with international law, was militarily sound and minimized the risks to civilians and their properties.

6.6. NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force (NAEW&CF)

In all operations mentioned above and in many others the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force (NAEW&CF), formerly known as NATO Airborne Early Warning Force (NAEWF), has had a very significant role. The fleet is one of the few military assets that is actually owned and operated by NATO. It is also the Alliance's largest common-funded project and an example of what NATO member countries can achieve by pooling resources. The fleet of AWACS E-3A radar aircraft provides the Alliance with an immediately available airborne surveillance, warning and command capability. The AWACS – or Airborne Warning and Control System – are modified Boeing 707 (called E-3A) equipped with special radar capable of detecting air traffic over large distances and at low altitudes. The data can be transmitted directly from the aircraft to command and control centres on the ground, sea or in the air. Multinationality is a key characteristic of the AWACS programme. The programme involves 15 NATO countries, among them Spain. The fleet of AWACS aircraft are integrated in the NAEW&CF based on Geilenkirchen (Germany) and operates 17 NATO-owned E-3A aircraft. The squadrons are manned by integrated international crews from 13 nations, among them Spain. In fact, 22 officers and 24 NCOs are assigned from the Spanish Air Force in NAEW&CF, which is permanently under NATO Command.

Since 1982, when it began flying operations, the AWACS fleet has proven to be a critical asset for crisis management and peace support operations. During the 1990s, aircraft from the NATO AWACS fleet operated extensively in the Balkans, supporting UN resolutions in the former Yugoslavia and Alliance missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as



Kosovo. Governments of NATO countries have also requested AWACS support and their surveillance capability for major public events. This was the case for the 2004 Olympic games in Athens, the Euro 2004 football championship in Portugal, the 2006 World Cup football matches as well as many important meetings held by international organizations. NATO AWACS also support security for the summits and for high-level national events such as the wedding of Principe Felipe of Spain.

7. Integration in the Military Command Structure

The contribution of the SAF to NATO common defence was implemented till the end of 1996 under the Coordination Agreements. For more than four years the model had successfully met the standards for which it had been designed. However, the need for a change had emerged in the light of new challenges that appeared in the European Security environment and in the light of the clear imbalance in our military contribution to the Alliance. It has already been said that Spain participated in all NATO planning disciplines including Force Planning. We were present in all fora including those at the highest level (NAC, NACC, DPC, DRC, NPG, MC, etc.). We were also participating in NATO security investment and common funding programmes, including Spain's participation in the Infrastructure Programme agreed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in July 1994. Furthermore we were contributing to the Force Structure by offering the majority of our Armed Forces and support facilities for both operations and exercises. We did, however, have to stand to one side in the decision-making process and were unable to assume any command responsibilities.

In November 1996, the Spanish Parliament decided to take the necessary steps towards our full integration into the Command structure, provided the following general requirements were met:

- There was to be a single structure, able to carry out all Alliance mission, opened to further procedural adjustments for specific operations such as non-article 5 operations.
- There was to be a new Command structure based on the following:
 - Broad decentralization of military activities and greater flexibility in terms of geographical limits, as well as missions and tasks;
 - A substantial reduction in the number of headquarters;
 - Development of the European Security and Defence Identity within the Alliance, pursuant to the decisions reached at the January 1994 Brussels Summit¹¹ and the June 1996 Berlin Ministerial meeting¹².
- Operational and command responsibilities should be assigned to Spain, particularly in commands established within our immediate strategic area of interest.

¹¹ Point 4: "We give full support to the development of a European Security and Defence Identity which, as called for in the Maastricht Treaty, in the longer term perspective of a common defence policy within the European Union, might in time lead to a common defence compatible with that of the Atlantic Alliance."

¹² Point 7: "The third objective is the development of the European Security and Defence Identity within the Alliance."



Spanish officers participated very actively in the discussions that took place at NATO HQS about different options for a new Command structure. The discussions were carried out in the working group for the Long Term Study (LTS WG) created by the International Military Staff (IMS). The Defence Ministers, at their meeting on 13 June 1996, had directed that LTS must proceed on the basis that it should be cost-effective. Furthermore, “although adaptations should not be driven only by savings ...every attempt should be made to reduce running costs”. The long process to determine resource implications was followed very closely by Spanish Defence authorities and very soon it was clear that all the general requirements imposed by Parliament were going to be met. In fact, the Spanish Armed Forces were going to have an adequate presence in the new Command structure through an agreed policy of rotating key posts and a Joint Sub-Regional Command could be established in Spain. Furthermore, the Ministerial meeting of the NAC on 16 December 1997 acknowledges, “an agreement had been reached on a new Command structure as a whole, and in particular on the type, number and location of headquarters.” As a consequence, the Spanish government authorized, on 27 December 1997, the participation in the new NATO Command structure and the establishment of a Joint HQ Sub-Regional Command Southwest (JHQSW) in Spain. At the beginning of 1998, Retamares, Pozuelo de Alarcón (Madrid) was selected as temporary site for the new JHQSW.

The dossier “The Air Force and the new NATO” published in the Air Force magazine in March 1998 covered different aspects of the changes that were taking place in the Alliance at that time¹³, the new Command Structure and the concepts of Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Joint Forces Air Component Command (JFACC), the air component of the combined task force. Furthermore, the progress in the development of Air Command and Control System was analysed in depth in one the articles of the dossier.

The NAC approved activation requests for the headquarters of the new Command Structure the 1st of March 1999. The Washington Summit Communiqué, issued in Washington D.C. on 24 April 1999, welcomed the activation decision of the implementation phase of the new Command Structure. In accordance with these declarations Joint Command Southwest Headquarters (JHQSW) was activated on 1 September 1999 and the official ceremony of inauguration was held on 30 September that year with the Spanish Prime Minister, NATO Secretary General and SACEUR present. The 6th June 2002 the new JCSW achieved Full Operational Capability. The Headquarters of NATO in Madrid was born as a Joint Headquarters and for that reason Air Force officers were assigned to key positions in its structure. The JHQSW was always deeply involved in multiple, demanding tasks and oriented towards training as well as to operations.

Consistent with a new framework and mission of NATO Command structure agreed by Alliance Defence ministers at their meeting on 12 June 2003, JHQSW lost its joint and territorial features in favour of a land-focused body: CC-Land Madrid. On July 1st 2004 as a result of the decision to streamline the Command structure adopted in the Prague Summit, Joint Headquarters Command Southwest was transformed into Component Command Land HQ (CC-Land) Madrid as part of the Joint Force Command, Naples. Some Air Force officers that were integrated in the JHQSW left when it was transformed into a Land Command. This new Component Command achieved Final Operational Capability the 1st July 2006. The new headquarters accomplished significant tasks in training, military cooperation, integration of new NATO members as well as operations and it provided the core staff for ISAF XI in 2008.

¹³ Signature of NATO-Russia Founding Act the 8 May 1997 in Paris and the decisions taken at the Madrid Summit in July 1997 of inviting Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to join NATO.



CC-Land Madrid was being reconfigured as a NATO Force Command HQ in 2009. On 30th June 2009, the 1st Deployable Joint Staff Element (DJSE-MA 1) of the new Force Command achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC).

8. The Spanish Air Force in the Command Structure

The former Combined Air Operation Centre 8 (CAOC-8), now a FOB of CAOC Poggio Renatico, is one of the 5 components of the Component Command Air (CC-Air), Izmir, Turkey. NATO HQ CAOC-8 was created on the 1st of September 1999 with the re-organization of the NATO Command Structure and was located in a provisional facility in Torrejón Air Base, Madrid, Spain. It had a multinational staff, with personnel assigned from 7 NATO nations: Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the United States of America. Spain as host nation and the other participating nations began to fill the assigned positions of the Peace Establishment in March 2000. The manning consisted of 66 NATO positions of which 56 were filled at the end of 2001. On the 28th June 2001, Spain handed over a new building to NATO to host one of the Alliance's Combined Operations Centres (CAOC). CAOCs supervise air defence and carry out air policing functions. The new facility, based also in Torrejón Air Base, was inaugurated during a ceremony presided over by the Chief of Staff of the Spanish Air Force. Specialists in offensive, defensive and support air operations, as well as intelligence and communications personnel, ran the new CAOC-8, which was under the command of COMAIRSOUTH. The responsibility of former CAOC-8 (air defence and air policy) encompassed Iberian Peninsula and Canary Islands and is charged additionally with Air Campaign Planning and Spanish National and/or NATO Exercises and Training.

When CAOC-8 moved to the new building, personnel started to perform 24 hour duties, assuring air defence and air policy for the Iberian Peninsula and Canary Islands, reaching the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) at the end of NATO Exercise Destined Glory 01 (November 2001). CAOC 8 continued to host and/or participate in numerous NATO exercises all over Southern Region, training its personnel and reaching the Final Operational Capability (FOC) on 7 June 2002 after a successful performance in the NATO Exercise Dynamic Mix 02.

The new Command structure agreed by Defence ministers on the 12th of June 2003 changed the role of the facilities at Torrejón. In fact, as the four deployable CAOCs that were established needed to exercise their capability to exercise and deploy, the facilities at Torrejón Air Base were designated the primary site for training and exercising in the region. Small NATO air facility staffs are stationed at Torrejón to support that capability. The Spanish Air Force also participates in the NATO Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS) and, through a rotational scheme, has been in charge (2006/2007) of the Air Defence of the Baltic countries.

9. Lessons Learned and a New Phase of Cooperation

“Spain's increased level of participation in UN and NATO operations, and particularly recent efforts in Kosovo and neighbouring Albania, have clarified the reaction capability of the country's Armed Forces in humanitarian missions” according to the Chief of Defence Staff of



Spain, General Valderas.¹⁴ This statement of General Valderas in May 2000 expressed in few words the very significant involvement of the Spanish Armed Forces in NATO operations in the Balkans from 1991 till 1996. The three services were involved in those operations but the Air Force participation was especially relevant. General Valderas, a fighter pilot, also made other significant considerations in that interview: “Nonetheless, the Kosovo conflict, like any other, has provided us with a series of situations that we need to take special note of in future crisis. It is interesting to note that this was the first armed conflict to be resolved mainly through the use of air power, although, unfortunately and to certain extent foreseeable, it was not enough to settle the crisis firmly rooted in the heart of a people tormented by inter-ethnic conflicts for many generations.”

Participation in NATO operations implies a high degree of interoperability with the forces of other member countries. The interoperability is particularly important in air operations that need precise coordination, air to air and air to ground, adequate communications and common procedures. In the already mentioned interview, General Valderas added some reflections about lessons learned in the Balkans about air operations. The general stressed that: the participation of eight F-18 Hornet fighters of the SAF in operations in the Balkans and mainly in Operation Allied Force revealed many lessons to be learned. From the operational point of view, the use of precision-guided weapons has to be emphasized: it was more costly but much more effective than conventional bombing. This together with an adequate selection of objectives permitted the boosting of air power and at the same time minimised collateral damage. That is why analysts stress the importance of providing adequate resources for the acquisition and processing of intelligence. The use of multinational formations of aircraft divided into groups with specific assignments which work together to create synergy requires greater effort but the results are clear in reducing the rate of attrition to virtually zero. General Valderas also pointed out that the political limitations on the selection of targets and the need to avoid at all cost your own losses and collateral damages, placed constraints on the planners of the NATO air campaign and the lessons for Spain were the same as those for other members of the Alliance. The Chief of Defence of Spain also mentioned the transition to a professional force was going well and that a social change had motivated the drive for professional Armed Forces. Furthermore, increasing technological advances in weaponry and military procedures demand greater continuity in units.

The full professionalisation of the Armed Forces that was finalized at the beginning of the 2000s didn't have a significant impact in the SAF, where most of the operational personnel had been almost always professionals. Nevertheless, the efforts to modernize the Spanish Armed Forces have been very significant in the 2000s. Since the transition to professional forces began in the late 90's of the last century, the Air Force has been especially keen to get better facilities and services in the bases for personnel, mainly for lower ranks. Social change motivated the drive for full professional armed forces. At the same time, increasing technological advances and sophistication of weaponry and procedures demanded greater continuity in units. The experience required to maintain and operate Air Force weapons systems cannot be obtained in the limited period of time of conscript service.

¹⁴ “Interview”, *Jane's Defense Weekly*, vol. 33, no.22 (31 May 2000), p. 40.



10. New Systems for the Future

The SAF is nowadays a modestly sized organization with increasing significance in terms of quality. In fact, the SAF works very hard to maintain its capacity to perform its permanent mission of guaranteeing the air defence and control of the airspace of national sovereignty. The Spanish Air Force also helps to preserve international peace and security and contributes to common defence with our NATO allies. The SAF, to accomplish its mission, needs to renew as required its inventory of aircraft and other weapons systems. That renewal of inventory will be done in collaboration with NATO allies facilitating interoperability and, when needed, common maintenance. Over the next two decades there will be a significant change in the aircraft the SAF operates from its bases in the Iberian Peninsula and Balearic and Canary islands. In fact, aircraft such as the C/CE-15 (Boeing EF-18A+/B+ Hornet) fighter-bomber aircraft, T-10 (Lockheed Martin C-130H/H30 Hercules) tactical transport aircraft and AE-9+ (CASA-Northrop F-5) lead-in trainer aircraft will be replaced by the Eurofighter Typhoon multirole service aircraft, some already in service, by the Airbus Military A400M strategic transport aircraft and by a new trainer aircraft as part of the European Jet Pilot Training Integrated Training System (AEJPT ITS). Alongside the Typhoons and the Hornets, C-14 (Dassault F1 Mirage variants) fighter aircraft will remain in service for many years. More than 80 C-16 (Eurofighter Typhoons EF-2000) fighters are going to be distributed among five squadrons, two of them already operational. The delivery of the Eurofighter aircraft began in 2003 and the delivery of the first 19 was completed in 2007. The delivery of the second batch will be completed in 2012. The remaining 34 aircraft are supposed to be delivered after 2012. In the medium term, the Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft will be the backbone of the combat units of the SAF. Nevertheless, the Mirage F-1 force will serve till the end of the next decade and the upgrade of the F/A-18 will take the aircraft through to 2025. The F/A-18s of the squadrons deployed at Zaragoza Air Base and Torrejón Air Base have completed their mid-life upgrade programme that, as already mentioned, will maintain the aircraft in service till 2025. The F/A-18 stationed at Gando Air Base will be maintained in service at least till 2015. These aircraft may also undergo a mid-life extension upgrade. Spain is not a member of the Joint Strike Fighter partnership but it is possible that the Spanish Navy will get involved in the program as an option to retain its short take-off/vertical landing capability. As is well known, there is a variant of the JSF with that capability.

The move to a new generation of fighter aircraft is a big improvement for the SAF. Nevertheless, the very much-needed boost of the airlift fleet will be perhaps an even more important change. That substantial improvement will happen when the A400M aircraft will enter into service to replace the more than 30 years old fleet of six T-10 (C-130H) and one C-130H-30 procured in 1987. Spain had planned to buy 26 A400M aircraft but the number could change due to delays, the increase of acquisition costs and the decisions of some governments to withdraw from the A400M program. The lift capacity of the Spanish Armed Forces will also increase by the procurement of 45 NH90, made by NH Industries. Although the majority of these helicopters will be committed to the Army and the Navy some of them will have to replace the Aerospatiale HD-19 (SA-330H Puma) utility helicopters. The five P-3 (P3B) aircraft have been upgraded with the Fully Integrated Tactical Systems (FITS), including an acoustic signal processor and an ALR-66 electronic support measures system and other new equipment. With these improvements the ageing P-3 fleet will be in service for at least eight more years.



Recent conflicts, from the Balkans to Iraq, have highlighted the need for pinpoint targeting of surface objectives to do more damage to the enemy's capability while avoiding civilian casualties. That need is even more significant in Afghanistan today. The SAF has units ready to acquire and to perform pinpoint targeting. Any increased attack capability is associated with heightened situational awareness, which is enabled through planned improvements to Eurofighter Typhoon's sensors that will enhance the battle space information available to the pilot. Although interoperability has always been very important up to now, it will be even more important in the future and vital between aircraft participating in coalition missions. Eurofighter Typhoon's new and upgraded communications' systems will allow pilots to operate effectively in Composite Air Operations (COMAO).

11. Conclusion

Spain's commitment to the achievement of a more stable and safer world, based on peaceful coexistence and on the defence of democratic values and human rights, revolves around a broad concept of security and defence. That broad concept includes not only the territory of our national sovereignty and that of our allies but also the defence of Spanish interests all over the world. Since 1982, the SAF has participated in operations in the framework of NATO once the decision to do so was taken by the Spanish government. The Spanish Air Force maintains today its readiness to participate in all kind of assigned operations in the framework of NATO but also of the European Security and Defence Policy and other international organizations. As a matter of fact, the SAF is nowadays participating in several NATO led operations such as "Allied Protector" in Somalia and off the Horn of Africa, "Active Endeavour" in the Mediterranean Sea and in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Furthermore, members of the SAF are in charge of the control and technical supervision of Kabul Airport. Units with other type of aircraft are also ready to be integrated in ISAF if so decided by the government.

To keep up the ability to participate in these operations and in others in the future, the SAF follows a very comprehensive military training and exercise programme. In fact, the training programme makes the successful participation of the SAF in exercises, and when necessary in operations, possible. The first phase of the programme is the Individual Common Core Skills (ICCS) that assures basic military and aeronautical training. The second phase is the "Plan de Instrucción y de Adiestramiento Básico" (Training and Basic Instruction Plan) that is regulated by General Directive 50-1. The third step is the Advance Instruction Plan, prepared by the Combat Command. This Plan covers a wide range of practical and complex exercises that facilitate the final training of crews for further participation in advanced exercises and operations. Furthermore, there is an Evaluation Plan of NATO air units known by the name of FORCEVAL to certificate combat and combat support air units that are committed to common defence by each NATO country.

The Tactical Leadership Programme (TLP) was established in Germany in 1978 and moved to Belgium in 1989. TLP is dedicated to delivering advance-training courses for combat crews and support personnel. The different courses of the Programme were delivered in Florennes, Belgium till June 2009. Since October 2009, Albacete Air Base, Spain, has been the new seat of the Programme. Furthermore, the Spanish Air Force participates in exercises such as Red Flag to improve the interoperability and integration of its own capabilities with those of our NATO allies. This exercise, in the context of the Concept of Expeditionary Air Force, entails having the human and material resources required to deploy combat aircraft and



other weapons systems rapidly to scenarios far away from the homeland and to sustain their operations for an indefinite period of time.

Air Force regulations define that any unit of the SAF, before being deployed, receives specific training to become familiar with its established area of deployment and operations. This process is in force for the detachments deployed with NATO: “Mizar” with T-10 (C-130 Hercules) aircraft in Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan; “Alcor” with T-21 (EADS-CASA 295) aircraft at Herat, Afghanistan; “Helisaf” with HD-21 (Puma SA-330 and Super Puma SA-332) helicopters; and Kabul International Airport now under control of the SAF. The same process was followed with the detachments with the European Union: “Icaro” with P-3 aircraft in Djibouti and the already finished “Sirio” with T-21 (EADS-CASA) aircraft in Chad.

The Spanish Air Force has participated in all types of operations in the framework of NATO, the training of its units follows NATO patterns, its doctrine is the NATO doctrine and NATO STANAGs¹⁵ and procedures are used by its crews and technical personnel. Having this in mind, it’s clear that the integration of the SAF’s own capabilities with our allies will continue in the future. For many years the Spanish Air Force has been both a pioneer and a crucial factor in peace support operations as well as an important actor in humanitarian aid missions. In fact, it has been a prime actor in humanitarian aid, taking the message of solidarity from Spain to the countries in greatest need. During the next few years the Spanish Air Force will continue to be a modestly-sized organization but provided with cutting-edge weapons systems and looking forward to the full integration of air and space resources. In any case, the programmes under way will enable the Spanish Air Force to be fully interoperable with our allies in the framework of NATO.

¹⁵ STANAG or STANDARDIZATION AGREEMENTS are documents that contain NATO multinational techniques and procedures agreed by allied nations.