



The Commanders Respond

To explain the need for a navy in a country like Spain, with such an evident maritime nature, marked by its own geography and so dependant on the sea for its prosperity and development, should not be a difficult task. It takes but a quick glance at the map to understand that a country with more than 8,000 km of Atlantic and Mediterranean coastline, with extra-peninsular archipelagos and territories, that acts as a bridge and natural border between Europe and Africa, has important maritime interests.

More than 80 percent of our foreign trade and 90 percent of our energy reach Spain through maritime commerce. The cost to transport one ton is seven times cheaper than by land and 70 times cheaper than by plane. This historical dependence of Spain on the sea is marked by the fact that our country's greatest moments correspond with those periods when we were at the peak of our naval power.

Today the naval scenario is different, and the nature of military operations has evolved toward joint and combined efforts. The Spanish Navy has evolved to adapt itself so that its contribution to joint and combined action internationally proves to be ever more valuable.

The political power is fully aware of this and, in fact, thanks to the support of successive governments, Spain now has the best navy it has enjoyed for many years. We have plans to continue improving to become a Spanish Navy that provides unique and necessary capabilities.

We explain to our people that the navy is unique because only it can contribute to the joint operations demanded by the current strategic scenario with both naval units and sea-based command and control maritime platforms. The navy's vocation is expeditionary; it operates in the vast maneuvering area of the sea, and may reach any littoral without the need for diplomatic clearance; it is ready for action, self-sufficient as



regards logistic support, capable of appearing by surprise and disappearing showing no sign of retreat. A good navy is also a permanent element of deterrence, an excellent tool for crisis management, an ideal instrument for foreign policy, and a factor of international prestige.

We also explain and cherish the navy's daily contribution to the security and well-being of our citizens that is executed by the permanent peacetime missions and cooperation in maritime security tasks with other national and international organizations. It is a routine job hardly appreciated away from the coast, but would be much missed should it not be present.

We have convincing reasons to explain the need of our navy, so the message to sway Spanish public opinion is that it is worth investing in the Spanish Navy because we know how to make that investment profitable for the public's security.