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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Joao Rebelo, Chairman of the Sub-Committee for Future Security and Defence Cooperation (DSCFC) and Philippe Folliot, Chairman of the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM), led a delegation of 38 parliamentarians from 16 NATO member and associate member states to Portugal and Spain from 24-28 September 2018. The visit sought to gain greater insight into Portuguese and Spanish defence priorities and threat perceptions. Another key focus was the significant rise in cross-Mediterranean migrant arrivals to Spain in recent years, which is challenging the country's capacities at many levels.

2. Both nations underscored the significant and growing challenges emanating from the South and the subsequent alignment of their defence priorities and investments to meet them. As a result, both nations have worked to strengthen their air, land, and maritime forces, particularly via the investment necessary to improve their Special Forces capacity. Both Portuguese and Spanish officials also stressed the importance of strengthened Mediterranean defence cooperation to handle the suit of complex issues from large-scale migration to terrorism. In addition, officials also discussed the need for broader European attention to the challenges south of the Mediterranean via enhanced outreach in the areas of aid and development assistance, as well as other diplomatic and political initiatives to help address many of the underlying root causes of the increasing instability across North Africa, the Sahel, and beyond.

3. Delegation members also learned about each nation's contributions to NATO. Officials stressed their membership in the Alliance as a vital cornerstone to their nation's security. Discussions with government and Alliance officials in each country revealed that each nation continues to find the ways to contribute to the needs of the Alliance's new defence and deterrence policy, from the revamped NATO Response Force (NRF) to the Enhanced Forward Presence to the Readiness Initiative. A key element throughout the visit was the reinforcing element of parliamentary outreach. The role each nation's parliament plays in the funding and oversight of each nation's defence institutions, international security cooperation, and, when needed, security missions is vital. The parliamentary arm in the control of national armed forces is an essential element underpinning all Allied democracies.

II. PORTUGAL

4. The large delegation from the DSCFC and the GSM kicked off their visit in Lisbon. The dynamic programme in Portugal involved meetings with parliamentary committees, high-level government interlocutors, NATO commanders at Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO), and the Portuguese Navy.

5. A key message received in Lisbon is that Portugal believes its future security is inexorably tied to strong multilateral defence cooperation. For Portugal, this means NATO first and foremost when it comes to national security concerns. As a result, Portugal is working to prove their bona fides – from investing in NATO institutions in the country to participating in NATO missions. Portugal believes strongly in NATO's ability to adapt and rise above the complex challenges of today's international security environment, particularly those impacting the Euro-Atlantic community. A key focus is to ensure the complementarity of Portugal's armed forces to ensure they are fit for purpose – part of this level of competence comes directly as a result of its continued work within the NATO framework, which has strengthened its operational efficacy and character.

Challenges on NATO's Southern Flank

6. Portuguese interlocutors often underscored the complexity of the southern flank when compared to threats coming from the east: as the Portuguese Defence Minister, **José de Azerdo Lopes** told the Committee: “the hybrid, asymmetrical, and even vague threat from the south makes finding a posture fit for purpose all the more complex.” He continued to note that, when facing the challenges from the south, it is clear that the Alliance will need to work with regional partners.

7. Portuguese interlocutors stressed NATO's importance in an era of broader international systemic change, due to the declining influence and abilities of other international institutions, such as the United Nations. For many officials, the most difficult question for NATO's southern flank Allies today is to address how to restructure to face the challenges from the South. The Defence Minister told the delegation that “there will be increased operations and missions and common training, advising, and assisting actions south going forward.” As such, the Defence Minister noted, NATO needs to review and revise internal structures to better deal with new threats arising from the MENA region and beyond.

8. Portugal understands the need to also engage with other multilateral international security organisations from the United Nations to the African Union. Beyond this, Lisbon is also seeking to strengthen its cooperation with its Mediterranean partners and beyond to the South to help bolster long-term strategic regional stability. Several officials cited the example of Portugal's growing cooperation with the Gulf of Guinea nations, as a means of highlighting the expanding efforts required to address the deep-rooted challenges emanating from the South. As **Teresa Ribeiro**, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, told the delegation “Portugal is one of the Allies pushing most for more focus on the South – we are pleased with the Package for the South confirmed in Brussels. We hope this will create a basis for strategic awareness and action to handle the southern flank challenges, but we must also take into account regional dynamics better as well – this will greatly assist our ability to build capabilities in the region and enable more practical cooperation. We need to understand, at the same time, the limitation of resources. We also should note the EU shares the same views and concerns for the region.”

9. As high officials from the Defence ministry stressed, NATO must focus on Allied force complementarity and capability, not needless efforts which will only duplicate existing efforts. In June 2018, Portugal was one of nine EU states to sign off on establishing a joint military intervention force among EU states to act as a rapid deployment force for crisis management. Defence officials noted this is a new initiative that will reinforce the work already underway in the Alliance to strengthen and increase force readiness, not duplicate existing efforts.

Military Priorities and Engagement

10. **Admiral Antonio Silva Ribeiro, Chief of General Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces**, told the delegation that there were approximately 2,400 military personnel deployed on external missions across four continents, representing 10% of the total force structure. Admiral Ribeiro noted that the Portuguese armed forces participate in a wide range of missions, from those assumed by the nation's armed forces themselves to cooperation in various multilateral missions from NATO to the United Nations. Portugal's participation in NATO missions, he noted, covers a wide array to include; Operation Sea Guardian, Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, the air policing mission in the Baltic states, the enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania, the tailored Forward Presence efforts in Romania, KFOR, and the contribution of a frigate to NATO SNMG1.

11. Admiral Ribeiro told the delegation that missions dealing with challenges emanating from the South focused the bulk of Portugal's armed forces' attention. At the time of the visit, Portugal was engaged in 27 missions working to project stability toward the South dealing with a spectrum of issues from migrant smuggling interdiction to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) across the region for counterterrorism (CT) operations and situational awareness to domestic instability challenges. Specifically, he mentioned Portugal's involvement in a range of multilateral operations such as MINUSCA and EUTM in the Central African Republic to the various train, advise, and assist missions with NATO partners to the counter-Daesh operation in Iraq.

12. When discussing all of Portugal's involvement in operations, he underscored Portuguese forces' willingness to get into the line of fire, thereby exposing themselves to the necessary risk implied with contributions to today's challenging missions.

13. Admiral Ribeiro also highlighted Portugal's massive area of responsibility in the maritime domain and the need for the nation to reinforce its maritime capabilities even further. He told the delegation that he clearly saw a race for control of the high seas being just over the horizon – from security to environmental threats, NATO's maritime position will be a key area of focus for coordinated action going forward. As such, he said Portugal was working to re-instill a maritime mindset at home and among Allies to tackle this challenge. To get there, he said, the Portuguese armed forces are working to align ends, ways, and means for focus across the Alliance to deal with the clear maritime challenges ahead. He concluded his remarks by stating that the strengthening of NATO's maritime deterrence and defence capabilities is a clear first step to achieving this goal.

14. To better understand Portugal's maritime posture the delegation met with Portuguese fleet commander **Vice-Admiral Gouveia e Melo**. As Admiral Gouveia e Melo told the delegation, the Portuguese fleet today consists of 34 ships total, 24 of which are deployed due to the current high level of mission demand.

15. The naval motto – *prepare, deploy, and sustain* – guides the naval forces. The Portuguese navy has an enormous area of responsibility of approximately 6 million km², largely due to its Atlantic island possessions. The admiral told the delegation that the Portuguese navy sees 5 current and over-the-horizon maritime areas of concern: off the northern coast of Latin America; off the coast of Angola, the growing rivalry in the Indian Ocean, new challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean; as well as the Malacca straits through to the South China Sea.

16. The admiral noted that the protection of the Atlantic corridor is an essential part of maintenance of the broader security needs of the entire Alliance. Efforts today by Russia to break down through the GIUK gap (Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom) into the North Atlantic can impact vital shipping lanes, as well as cause disruption in the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas. He warned of Russian patrol vessels spotted lingering for days over the vital transatlantic communication cables across the Atlantic seabed – which would have a devastating impact if they were cut. In addition, he continued, China is seeking to come up into the North Atlantic through the Indian Ocean and around up the Gulf of Guinea.

17. He told the delegation about Portugal's efforts to stand up the Centre for the Defense of the Atlantic (CEDA), which will be located in the Azores. The centre's focus would be on maritime domain and governance. It will work promote common maritime values and vision, partnership and bounding, and synergise capacity building. The Admiral concluded his presentation by telling the delegation: "Land promotes disputes, but the seas promote partnerships – Battles are fought on land, but wars are won at sea." He noted that NATO's strength relies on its ability to control the seas: All flanks are important for the 360 approach to

security; Africa is a key factor for Alliance common stability and prosperity, and Portugal in key position to play a key role for future stability and prosperity.

NATO in Portugal – A Visit to STRIKFORNATO

18. The delegation also received a briefing about STRIKFORNATO during a visit to its headquarters in Oeiras, Portugal. STRIKFORNATO is part of the NATO Force Structure, founded under an MoU signed by 12 NATO member states^{*} and is commanded by a U.S. Navy 3-star admiral, who is also dual-hatted as the U.S. Sixth Fleet Commander. The commander noted that STRIKFORNATO was originally established in the Cold War to assist with NATO reinforcement in the Mediterranean. It was later transitioned to be able to operate anywhere within the remit of SACEUR's command. As briefers notes, STRIKFORNATO is on standby today to provide to SACEUR a rapidly deployable and scalable headquarters capable of planning and executing full spectrum joint maritime expeditionary operations. A key element to this is the provision of command and control for NATO's maritime Ballistic Missile Defence, primarily through the integration of U.S. naval and amphibious forces. This is a key element to overall Allied defence and deterrence.

III. SPAIN

19. The delegation travelled to Madrid to engage with high-level Spanish interlocutors to gain broader insight into Spain's defence and security priorities. Along with Italy and Greece, Spain has been one of the Allies most affected by the myriad of security challenges emanating from the southern flank. In 2004, Madrid was hit by an Al-Qaeda directed terrorist train bombing, which killed 193 people. Since then, Spain has been working diligently to improve its counterterrorism cooperation with Allies and to develop its national ISR capabilities for better situational awareness, a key element of this being the expansion of its Special Forces and increased international cooperation.

CAOC, CESEDEN, and C-IED COE

20. The delegation began in Madrid with a visit to the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC), where CAOC Commander **Lt. General Ruben Garcia Servert** briefed them on Allied efforts to create a joint air picture for Allied efforts to maintain defence of their airspace. The combined Allied efforts at the CAOC facilities lend critical ISR capabilities across all Allied territory for their mission of air policing during peacetime and crisis. CAOC is essential to NATO operational ambitions, as it will scale quickly to help plan, coordinate, and execute an operation in response to a crisis. The CAOC air picture is essential to the Alliance's ballistic missile defence efforts as well.

21. The delegation then proceeded to briefings at the Centre for Advanced National Defence Studies (CESEDEN), where they were welcomed by the CESEDEN Director, **Lt. General Rafael Sanchez**. The centre serves as a key intersection between the academic/think tank world and the articulation of Spanish defence policy at the Ministry of Defence. The briefings and discussions covered a range of topics from the increasingly complex challenges facing the Alliance from the South and the kind of response strategy the Alliance takes. A key to this, several briefers noted, was to move beyond simply inter-Allied cooperation to real engagement with states in the region to deal with the issues of ISR for CT missions, handling increasing flows of migrants and refugees across the Mediterranean, and planning for climate change disaster response. Regional Defence cooperation and exercising for potential direct action

^{*} France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

beyond the Mediterranean into North Africa and the Sahel and beyond, they noted, will take investment in partner capabilities in order to have them become operational enablers.

22. Briefers also discussed Spanish views on a new NATO Strategic Concept. There was wide recognition that the international security environment had changed significantly since the last concept in 2010, but briefers noted the core of the essential tasks outlined in the 2010 Strategic Concept remained valid. They stressed that new attempts to bolster NATO's deterrence posture must also be accompanied by dialogue, as "they are two sides of the same coin" noted General Sanchez. The general told the delegation that the Alliance is engaged today in the building of NATO 3.0 and focus on all elements of the new defence and deterrence posture is essential to all Allies.

23. Briefers also told the delegation that the Alliance should also remember that its first duty will always be to support and defend its territory and citizenry. As a result, they advocated a prudent approach to the declaration of any new level of ambition of the Alliance. Briefers also felt that crisis management and collective security should remain a key focus of all Allies and that efforts should be made to strengthen the *Projecting Stability* initiative and the *Framework for the South* that have been articulated in recent summits. These are essential to NATO's overall counterterrorism efforts, which all Allies agree remains a top priority.

24. The following day, the delegation visited the Counter Improvised Explosive Devices Center of Excellence (C-IED COE). C-IED COE briefers noted that IEDs are the future and the Alliance will always need to stay ahead of the curve on the development of IEDs by enemy forces. Today NATO Allies are faced with highly dynamic networked adversaries; briefers told the delegation, which focus on large-scale aggression, such as terrorism, coordinated insurgency, building violent criminal organisations. These adversaries are often non-state armed groups or criminal networks, but they can be aided by rogue/failed states, and they take advantage of regional conflicts. The complexity of the problem has led to a new problem of IED fatigue today in the Alliance.

25. Briefers told the delegation that NATO has said the future of warfare will be hybrid, they said the IED is in the middle of this type of challenge. As a result, NATO must concentrate the necessary resources to mitigate the threat by staying ahead of it. This involves finding the entire lifeline of an IED from the ideas to the building to the planting to the exploitation of the event. Briefers told delegates the IED cycle is like an iceberg, of which the IED explosion is only the most visible part. In its work to stay ahead of the IED challenge, the C-IED crosses military functional areas, because there is a wide range of IED types, from vehicle-borne IEDs to Maritime IEDs to tunnelling IEDs to RPA IEDs and beyond.

26. A key takeaway the briefer stressed to the delegation was the need to find the means to create better common intelligence sharing; a good example for C-IED, they noted, would be a shared biometrics database, which would help with the management of relevant intelligence. A key challenge to staying ahead of the IED curve, they noted, is the easy availability of new technologies, to help mitigate the effect of this, nations can create the laws to block the exchange of dual-use technologies.

Spanish SOF

27. In 2014, the Spanish Ministry of Defence created the Joint Special Operations Command to coordinate army, navy, and air force special operations. The move to create a distinct SOF command within the structure of their armed forces is still relatively unique in the Alliance. New emphasis on Special Forces is a clear step by Spain to adapt their forces to face the challenges of the modern complex international security environment. Spain has deployed its special forces to a range of missions over the past decade, recent known deployments have been to conduct training missions in Mali and Iraq. Mali is a major source of concern for the European

community, which is seeing destabilisation across the Sahel zone. Spain contributed 480 military personnel to efforts to develop the capacities of the Iraqi Security Forces. Much of this training focuses on anti-insurgency training as well as more specialised focuses such as demining and disarming IEDs. Spanish Special Forces efforts in Iraq have also worked on developing defences against drone attacks and surveillance from insurgence groups.

28. In January 2018, Spain announced the creation of a new Special Forces division with a focus of fighting terrorism. The fourth Special Operation Force will fall under the leadership of the Joint Special Operations Command. **Major General Andrade**, Commander of the Spanish Special Forces told the delegation that Spanish Special Operations Command will take on the lead on the NATO Response Force (NRF) in 2019. He noted that he was working with a range of Allied governments to find a way to promote interoperability between NATO nations' special operations forces (SOF). A key, he said, is to build an exercise schedule capable of creating Allied SOF readiness able to handle the increased demand on SOFs across the board. He also told the delegation the workload being asked of Allied Special Forces is increasing: he noted it took two years for the Spanish SOF to stand up the force structure necessary for NATO NRF capable deployment.

Migration Challenge

29. Whereas the overall number of illegal migrants to Europe has fallen in recent years, Spain continues to face a rising surge of people from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. In 2018, the International Organization for Migration reported a threefold year-on-year rise in unauthorised migration to Spain bringing the total number for this year at 22,700. In February 2018, then Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis expressed concern for the influx of migrants coming from the Sahel zone (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger). Specially, the Minister was alarmed by the possibility of terrorists, having been largely defeated in Syria and Iraq, finding refuge in the Sahel and infiltrating Europe through migrant flows to Spain.

30. Spain remains heavily reliant on Morocco to control the number of migrants attempting to gain asylum in the two Spanish enclaves in North Africa, Ceuta and Melilla. In July 2018, over 600 migrants forced their way into Ceuta using tools to cut through the heavily fortified fencing. As a result, Spain requested and received EUR 55 billion in funding from the European Commission to be spent on equipping Spanish and Moroccan border guards. Spain cooperates substantially with Morocco in the country's effort to dismantle human trafficking networks, illegal border crossings, and dismantling terror cells.

31. In June 2018, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez offered entry to the port Valencia to the MV Aquarius, a vessel carrying 629 migrants, which had been turned away by Maltese and Italian authorities. Sánchez's government supports Merkel's call for "a fair distribution" of migrants to Europe. The new government has struck a more liberal attitude toward migration than its predecessor, but the extent of policy changes remains unclear. To garner better insight into how Spain is handling the sudden change in the number of migrant arrivals to its shores, the delegation met with members of the Spanish Red Cross and Spanish Secretary of State for the European Union.

32. Members of the Spanish Red Cross told the delegation they viewed taking care of migrants and refugees along the line of working with the more vulnerable members of Spanish society itself; their mission is to work to ensure human rights. They noted there were approximately 190,000 volunteers working across Spain to assist 14,000 employees with a budget of EUR 700 million to assist the most needy. They told the delegation that 3,7 million had already been assisted in Spain in recent years; this was greatly increased by the financial crisis, which exposed more vulnerable groups. They noted an additional 1,7 million immigrants are currently being brought through the system as well. When speaking about immigrant camps; there are clear emergency needs to alleviate the needs straight away, requiring

immediate provision of comprehensive assistance. The goal of working with the migrant and refugee community is to move toward social and labour inclusion efforts and, eventually, integration. There are approximately 90,000 in early stages they said; 20,000 of which arrived in 2018.

33. In addition to migrant and refugee processing and settlement efforts, the Spanish Red Cross also works to counter human trafficking networks across the country, in addition to helping with the repatriation of those immigrants seeking to return home. Officials said that human trafficking, principally women being forced into sex work, is becoming a big problem. Efforts are made to help these women reestablish contact with families and to be able to receive basic social services

34. When describing the land and sea route arrival inter-agency efforts, Red Cross officials said the Coast Guard has 23 vessels funded by the state for rescue operations as well as for the provision of immediate medical treatment for those in the most vulnerable conditions. There are two key focus areas, the Gibraltar straits and the Almerian Sea. From the moment of landing, control of the migrant or refugee shifts to the ministry of the interior, when each individual is assessed for humanitarian aid requirements. They said the healthy ones get clothes, food and something to drink, while pregnant women are immediately taken away for examination and a full check-up.

35. Red Cross officials said that more than 2,000 volunteers are working with the seaborne migrant arrivals; 86 full-time employees manage the volunteers. They said that resources were seriously strained due to the precipitous rate of new arrivals, which has gone from 6,000 arrivals in 2016 up to almost 40,000 in 2018. As a result, the numbers of asylum seekers have grown immensely – humanitarian assistance is administered in detention centres, where people can be detained for up to 60 days while their cases are being adjudicated.

36. As the State Secretary for the EU, **Marco Aguiriano**, told the delegation, Spain is working diligently to ensure a safe arrival, that migrants are received humanely and that all asylum cases are treated fairly as well. He noted that Spain works closely with Morocco to help them handle the problem on the other side of the Almerian Sea, where the majority of the migrants attempt to cross the Mediterranean. He told the delegation Morocco only gets EUR 51 million for its efforts to help with migrant challenges, which is quite small when considering the EUR 6 billion given to Turkey. There has been close cooperation with Rabat for over a decade now to help manage the issue. He said the problem would likely not ebb for years to come and stressed the need for greater EU institutional attention to the problem of cross-Mediterranean migration flows.