



The relationship between the Armed Forces and the Humanities is long-standing, and was particularly intense until the Industrial Revolution brought about the technification of armies. This factor then became increasingly decisive and gradually sidelined the humanities, despite the fact that war is a social phenomenon and man is its key. This neglect has consequences.

The situation reached the point where, as Hew Strachan pointed out, "the professional soldier is not concerned with strategy". As a result, they even lost interest in thinking about military issues in broad terms beyond historical or operational considerations, and especially at the philosophical or political-strategic level.

But the situation is even worse because the basis of progress lies in free time, insofar as it serves and enables reflection. And reflection today seems like an unjustifiable waste of time bordering on unethical behaviour. In today's world, which is so practical and utilitarian, it is not well understood. There is an imbalance between the useful and the useless that threatens our progress and our happiness at the same time. And it is contrary to the model of convergence that is advocated.

Reflection enables convergence and the mixing of ideas, while commitment ensures their consolidation. What better way to remember this than to turn to history? We could cite, in reverse, the extraordinary interest of D. Benito Pérez Galdos in military affairs. His *Episodios Nacionales* intertwine the history of contemporary Spain with military history.

But we have examples within the Armed Forces. A well-known case is that of Garcilaso de la Vega (1501-1536), wounded in combat several times, who was a master of the Spanish tercios and died as a result of wounds received at the siege of Le Muy.

But this is also the case of Jorge Manrique (1440-1479, whose father, the central theme of his poems, died from wounds received near the castle of Garcimuñoz), Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556, in whom chivalry and mysticism also merge; and emerged convalescing from his wounds), Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503-1575, humanist, historian and poet, seriously wounded in combat and losing a leg), Alonso de Ercilla (1533-1594, whose *Araucaria* was inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid*, seriously wounded in combat), Hernando de Acuña (1520-1580, captain, poet and translator of Latin, French and Italian), Francisco de Aldana (1537-1578, poet whose work has recently been recognised, who died in the Alcazarquivir campaign), Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616, the one-armed man of Lepanto, author of the discourse on arms and letters), Lope de Vega (1562-1635, who participated in the expedition to the Terceiras Islands and in the Spanish Armada), Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681, who served as a captain and was wounded in one hand), Álvaro José de Navia-Osorio y Vigil de la Rúa (1684-1732, III Marquis of Santa Cruz de Marcenado, author of *Reflexiones Militares*, a treatise that would inspire Frederick of Prussia and precede Clausewitz. The work explores war from a philosophical point of view, addressing moral, offensive and defensive issues, logistics, etc. He died defending Oran), José Cadalso (1741-1782, colonel and author of *Cartas Marruecas*, who died as a result of wounds sustained during the siege of Gibraltar)...

They are military men and humanists, as well as people who, through their lives and work, bear witness to their commitment. Thus, strategy is closely linked to words, reasoning and writing; this not only perfects them, but also makes them possible. The Greek world understood these essences by placing its patronage in Athena: goddess of intelligence, words and intelligent warfare.

As the academic Alfonso García Valdecasas wrote in his response to the inaugural speech of Lieutenant General Manuel Díez-Alegría Gutiérrez at the Royal Academy: "In Cervantes' time, there was a debate about which was more important, letters or arms. Today we understand the relationship differently. Arms and Letters need each other. Without law there is no society; without defence, neither. Laws are essential to the army, and it is the law that distinguishes war from acts of extermination and pure violence."

The military is also part of language, sometimes even as one of its modes. If military history is a contribution of the military to history, insofar as military events are relevant events, military vocabulary equally enriches our language in the same terms. Many relevant words in the dictionary are of military origin: strategy, tactics, logistics... And we cannot, we must not, incorporate others, or their meanings, from third languages when we have our own.

Furthermore, concern for literature and thought in general serves to strengthen ties with the society to which the Armed Forces belong and which they serve. And this is no minor issue, as they form part of a culture, the Spanish culture, to whose splendour the Armed Forces must also contribute and strive. In this way, Spanish culture can make a contribution to universal culture in all its dimensions, that is, without delegating it to the language of other nations.

It is therefore not surprising that the relationship between the Royal Spanish Academy – an institution founded in 1713 and of the highest prestige – and the Armed Forces is long-standing and that there has almost always been a link between the two. There have been 39 members of the Royal Academy who have combined their military status with that of academics. Eight of them have also been its directors.

Notable recent figures include the aforementioned Lieutenant General Manuel Díez Alegría, a historical figure of the Transition who was also director of CESEDEN; Rear Admiral Julio Guillen Tato, a prolific, multifaceted man gifted with an artistic instinct whom

Gregorio Marañón referred to as "the prototype of the modern military man, a man of technique and action, and, in his spare time, a man of profound knowledge and, by nature, impeccable artistic sensibility"; and Admiral Eliseo Álvarez-Arenas Pacheco. And, of course, the current member, General Auditor Miguel Sáenz Sagaseta, who has been a member since 2013 and whose inaugural speech recalled his predecessor, Admiral Álvarez-Arenas.

There has been a consolidated change in the social reality of our country in terms of civil-military relations. The time had come to strengthen the links between long-established institutions such as the Royal Academy and the Ministry of Defence. But to approach the RAE is to approach the intellectual elite of Spain

This is not only because the international situation demands that the distance between the civilian and military spheres be overcome in order to understand it properly, or because of the turbulent geopolitical times we are living in, which give the military a greater presence. As Admiral Alvarez-Arenas said: "The true seafarer hears and understands what the sea sings because it sings for him and he lives in it." We are facing a democratic necessity.

This is the reason for the two General Protocols signed on 4 March 2025 by the director of the Royal Academy, Mr Santiago Muñoz Machado, and the Admiral General Chief of the Defence Staff.

The first was aimed at producing the book *Geopolítica del Español* (Geopolitics of Spanish), under the direction of Mr. Juan Luis Cebrián Echarri – a central figure in many other parts of the project, with a distinguished career and who is also a member of the RAE, where he occupies the letter "v" – brought together military members of CESEDEN with numerous members of the Royal Spanish Academy and, with , other leading specialists in the subject matter of the publication. It aims to be an example of the convergence between the aims of both institutions. And their collaboration enriches both. So much so that it has a foreword by His Majesty the King.

The second protocol addresses CESEDEN's collaboration in reviewing the military terminology of the Dictionary of the Spanish Language and, with it, its updating. The development of military thinking, technology and logic in recent years has made it necessary to review military, naval and air terminology.

In addition, a third agreement was signed between the RAE, CESEDEN and Grupo Planeta for the publication and distribution of materials that are of interest to security and defence, deal with language and culture, and have a pan-Hispanic reach.

The Armed Forces must support actions that, within their sphere of influence, contribute to Spain's prestige. Supporting the Spanish language undoubtedly does so.

CESEDEN's membership of the Pan-Hispanic Network for Clear and Accessible Language is the natural commitment that institutions must have to the right of all citizens to understand in their relations with the public administrations. Clear and understandable language is a democratic necessity when addressing an issue as important as security and defence. But it is also an operational necessity in order to achieve the synergistic effect of integrating the efforts of a nation within a single domain.

This effort continued with the development of a summer course entitled "Geopolitical Trends (VI); Geopolitics of Spanish," which took place in the emblematic setting of the Monastery of El Escorial. With this, and with the help of the Complutense University, the present and the past, the military and the academic, were united in physical and symbolic terms, while placing the attendees in a vantage point from which to contemplate the current reconfiguration of the world order and its inevitable consequences for our language. And all this with the help of many of those who would be the protagonists of the book in question.

The design of the book cover provided an insight into the work, personality and figure of Antonio López, considered by many to be the most important of today's Spanish painters. The perspective of an open field points to the horizons of our language and adds literature to the plastic arts, giving them a common space to become an exponent of Hispanic culture.

In this sense, the participation of singer Carlos Vives in the work is also significant, as the existence of a community requires shared emotions, and sharing the same music ensures this. We had Carlos Vives with us both in El Escorial and in the book, and we also attended one of his performances in Lima.

In this context, I had the privilege of accompanying the director of the IEEE, Brigadier General Víctor Mario Bados Nieto, to Lima for the II Pan-Hispanic Convention on Clear

and Accessible Language. It was the first time that speakers in uniform had appeared at a convention of this kind. This generated great excitement, and General Bados' speech was particularly welcomed by the academic community.

Later, I was able to accompany Lieutenant General Miguel Ballenilla y García de Gamarra to the 10th Spanish Language Convention, which took place in Arequipa and was attended by His Majesty King Felipe VI, who had also written the prologue to the book and whom we had the opportunity to greet as military personnel.

It was an intellectual and geopolitical experience of the highest order. To approach the RAE is, by definition, to approach the intellectual elite of Spain, and that is a major challenge.

Furthermore, from Arequipa, Spain and its history were seen in a different light. Latin America first demands attention and sensitivity to address its rich diversity; and then, exquisite treatment in form and substance, similar to that accorded by the RAE. As Lao Tzu wrote long ago in his timeless classic: "To remain weak is called strength."

The presence of uniformed military personnel at an event of this nature and importance was greatly celebrated, as was General Ballenilla's speech to the plenary. We may have opened a path that others will follow, thus contributing to the normalisation of civil-military relations. These are still a pending issue in some countries on the continent.

Finally, to conclude, we recall D. Pedro Laín Entralgo and extend his words to the land and air spheres. "To this House, so far inland, Admiral Álvarez-Arenas brings his great love of the sea, but also, and this is what matters most to our tasks, his great knowledge of the sea. Since the creation of the Diccionario de Autoridades, there has never been a shortage of sailors in the Spanish Academy..., and this has meant that attention to nautical terms has been very noticeable in successive editions of our official dictionary. I dare say that, until the middle of our century, the care taken with this aspect of our lexicon leaves little or nothing to be desired."

*Federico Aznar Fernández-Montesinos**
IEEE Analyst.