

NATO Submarine Rescue Exercise improves international cooperation for saving human lives

3 June 2011 - Cartagena, Spain - A demonstration of submarine rescue operations, in the framework of Exercise Bold Monarch 2011, took place today at the presence of Admiral Giampaolo di Paola, Chairman of NATO's Military Committee (CMC), Gen Nikolay Makárov, Chief of Joint Staff of Russian Federation Armed Forces and Admiral General Manuel Rebollo Garcia, Chief of the Spanish Navy, along with other NATO Officials. The exercise Bold Monarch is the world's largest event of this kind, bringing together every three years submarines, ships and aircraft from both NATO and non-NATO countries. The 2011 edition includes the participation of Russia, marking it as the first time a Russian submarine participates in any NATO exercise.

Bold Monarch 2011 is designed to maximize international cooperation in submarine rescue operations – a critical capability for NATO and for all the submarine-operating nations. During the 12-day exercise, submarines from Portugal, Russia, Spain and Turkey were 'bottomed' in a sea area just off the southern coast of Spain. Rescue forces equipped with a range of sophisticated debris clearance, diver-assisted gear and submarine rescue vehicles from Italy, USA, Russia and Sweden, together with a jointly-owned rescue system from France, Norway and United Kingdom engaged in a series of rescue operations for the "sunken" submarines. The exercise will conclude in the next days with a 48-hour coordinated rescue and evacuation operation for some 150 survivors, including many simulated casualties, from a 'disabled' submarine.

During the visit to the ships, submarine and rescue systems, the Chairman of the Military Committee was briefed on how this exercises can greatly contribute to enhance partner interoperability, providing specific military training, coordinating military assistance, and cooperating with the chain of command of key nations. Compatibility between rescue assets, standardization of procedures, coordination and cooperation between all national elements, both military and civilian, were among the exercise's objectives shown. The exercise is proving invaluable also for testing the command and control of this kind of incidents under internationally-agreed NATO procedures.

During the demonstration CMC and General Makárov were 'rescued' from the Russian submarine through a NATO rescue systems, providing a concrete example on how platforms and procedures can successfully mate.

Thanking the Spanish Navy for hosting the exercise, Admiral Di Paola said that “Exercises like the Bold Monarch 2011, beside the great value of all the objectives in term of improving safety and interoperability at sea, show how much interest and enthusiasm there is, within NATO and beyond, in strengthening networks in the field of cooperation and security.” Gen. Makárov echoed CMC, highlighting the importance of these successful exercises, in light of joint efforts to save human lives.

Detailed information about Exercise Bold Monarch 11 can be found at:

<http://www.manw.nato.int/boldmonarch2011/default.aspx>