

9,000 American troops are expected to participate in the DEFENDER 23 exercise

The equipments arrive in Rota in Spain

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USPA NEWS - Nearly 9,000 American troops are expected to participate in the DEFENDER 23 exercise which kicks off April 22. According to the deputy Pentagon press secretary, Sabrina Singh, "this annual, nearly two-month long exercise is focused on the strategic deployment of US-based forces, employment of Army pre-positioned stocks and interoperability with European allies and partners."

In the Defender Europe 23 exercise, Spain carries out the 'Swift Response' phase, in which the Castillejos Division will assume command and control of units of different nationalities, integrating into multinational operating structures, and leading joint-combined operations in different European settings, such as Scotland and Greece, among others. The chief of the Castillejos Division, general José Manuel Vivas, attended the RoC Drill accompanied by the three chiefs of the Joint Forcible Entry (JFE) subordinate to the Division, in addition to staff from the Training and Doctrine Command, the Army Airmobile Forces and the Headquarters of the Castillejos Division.

The purpose of the RoC Drill was to allow the chief of the United States Army Europe-Africa (USAREUR-AF), general Darryl Williams, to visualize the concept of the operation, as well as to synchronize and coordinate the maneuver, fires and effects (lethal and non-lethal). For this purpose, the Castillejos Division and its subordinate units presented the concept of the operation, whose planning had been carried out in previous weeks, and which culminated with the issue of the order of division-level operations.

The DEFENDER 23 exercise is led by US Army Europe and Africa and has been planned since 2021. The exercise is designed to demonstrate the US military's ability to rapidly deploy combat-credible troops and equipment to assure allies, deter those who would threaten the peace of Europe and defend the continent from aggression. The exercise also demonstrates the commitment of European nations to increase the scale, capability and interoperability of their own militaries.

"Approximately 9,000 US troops and about 17,000 troops from 26 allied and partner nations will participate and portions of the exercise will stretch across 10 different European countries," Sabrina Singh said. In addition to the United States, troops from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom will all take part in DEFENDER 23.

The deputy Pentagon press secretary said equipment to support the exercise began arriving this week in Spain. About 7,000 pieces of equipment were shipped to the European theatre from the US, she said. Additionally, about 13,000 pieces of equipment, drawn from pre-positioned stock, will be used during DEFENDER 23. The equipment included CH-47 helicopters, Black Hawk helicopters and supporting equipment including fuel and ground maintenance needed to maintain the aircraft for this portion of DEFENDER 23. The port was filled with trucks and forklifts unloading more than 50 pieces of equipment off the vessel and transporting them to a warehouse to be stored.

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