

Beat: Politics

## Spain will not increase its defense budget until 2029

### Five years later than what NATO asks

Madrid, 30.06.2022, 22:00 Time

**USPA NEWS** - Spain will not fulfill its commitment to increase military spending to 2 percent, as requested by NATO, until 2029. This was confirmed this Thursday, at its final press conference after the NATO Summit held in Madrid, the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez. Despite the good qualifications he received from the president of the United States, Joe Biden, and the Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, Sánchez was adamant: Spain will not dedicate 2 percent of GDP to military spending for another seven years.

At the bottom of this delay, which contradicts the agreement reached by the NATO partners in Madrid - the year 2024 -, are the disagreements that have arisen in the Government presided by Pedro Sánchez. This same Thursday, while the NATO Summit was saying goodbye, in Parliament Sánchez's partner in the Government of Spain, the far-left coalition Podemos, voted against the results of the Summit and increasing military spending.

However, Pedro Sánchez wants to reach "a country agreement" with the rest of the political forces so that the increase in military spending to 2 percent of GDP has the greatest possible political support. The Spanish Prime Minister promised NATO to increase the defense budget, but he fears that his image will be damaged if his government partners and opposition parties turn their backs on him.

Sánchez appeared before the journalists elated by the results of the Summit. Among them and particularly, for the Alliance's confirmation that it will defend "every centimeter" of the territory of its member countries. And because, in the new Strategic Concept of NATO, approved on Wednesday, it is announced that North Africa and the territory of the Sahel will be under the focus of NATO, which will be able to act, after invoking Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, against mass immigration for political purposes and against threats to the energy supply. Two direct references to the continuous assaults on the Spanish border in the North African cities of Ceuta and Melilla, and to Algeria's threats to cut off gas supplies to Spain.

According to various media, Spanish military commanders regretted this Thursday that the Atlantic Alliance refuses to increase the deployment of military forces on the Southern flank, despite the instability in the Sahel, which directly threatens that border. Regarding the possible cut of the Algerian gas supply, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez admitted, in a television interview, that "we must be prepared" for a harsh winter. The difficulties experienced by other European countries that stopped receiving Russian gas put the Spanish Government on alert, in case the cut in the supply of Algerian gas materialized.

#### Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21169/spain-will-not-increase-its-defense-budget-until-2029.html>

#### Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSiV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin - Photos: Rosana Rivera

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619