

"We want to have a flexible navy."



Photos: Guy Foremans

Admiral Gonzalo Nicolás Ríos Polastri was appointed Commander General of the Peruvian Navy on 30 December 2016.

Back in 2013 the Marina de Guerra del Peru (MGP) began renewing its fleet with new and more advanced platforms to be able to comply with its increasing commitments. As of late December 2017 the Peruvian Navy already inducted fourteen new units into the fleet: the logistic support ship BAP TACNA, the coast guard patrol boat BAP FERRÉ, the oceanographic polar research vessel BOP CARRASCO and the indigenously built sail training ship BAP UNION, the salvage tug BAP MORALES, four RIO PATIVILCA Class patrol boats and five Plataforma Itinerante de Acción Social con Sostenibilidad (PIASS) platforms.

ESD: Admiral Ríos, on 29 July 2016 the new Peruvian Government was inaugurated. Did it bring much changes to your navy's procurement programmes approved by the former Humala Government?

Admiral Ríos: When the new government took office it was a great relief to hear the new leaders remain in favour of the naval projects which had been approved by the previous government. It is very important for Peru to modernise its fleet because our navy has to carry out a wide range of tasks, covering the whole spectrum of maritime operations. So we are confident that our main procurement programmes can go ahead as planned. Our naval aviation's capabilities have been boosted with the acquisition of five SEA SPRITE SH2-G helicopters from the Royal New Zealand

Interview with Admiral Gonzalo Nicolás Ríos Polastri, Comandante General de la Marina de Guerra del Peru

Air Force. And we are to acquire AB-412EB helicopters and TWIN OTTER hydroplanes.

ESD: What are your experiences with these new platforms?

Admiral Ríos: All these assets make truly great additions and provide excellent services. In particular BAP TACNA (ex-HMNLS AMSTERDAM), acquired from The Netherlands in December 2017, bolstered our HA/DR assets and allows us to sustain our ships during long-range missions; BAP FERRÉ and the four RIO PATIVILCA Class units considerably enhanced our Coast Guard's patrol capabilities. Negotiations for the transfer of a second PO HANG Class are underway and we plan to build another six RIO PATIVILCAs; and BAP MORALES proves to be an excellent example of a small polyvalent unit. Another success story is our PIASS programme with five units already in service and seven more planned. The BOP CARRASCO sailed Callao on 14 December on her very first deployment to Antarctica, e.g. ANтар XXV - the 25th scientific campaign of Peru to Antarctica.

And, obviously, we are very proud of our sail training ship BAP UNION; she is a real ambassador for Peru. She arrived back home from her 6-month VIEX-2017 Training Cruise to Europe on 5 November 2017.

ESD: One of your major programmes is the Landing Platform Dock (LPD) project. What is the status of this programme?

Admiral Ríos: The lead ship BAP PISCO is in the final stage of being fitted out and due to join the fleet end-February/early-March 2018. Upon her commissioning she will carry out mainly national tasks. You may remember that in April 2017 Peru was struck by heavy flooding. Therefore we will keep her in our home waters in order to provide assistance in case "El Niño" throws another calamity at us. Only when the second unit joins the fleet we will deploy BAP PISCO on the international scene. The keel of the second unit, BAP PAITA, was laid on 14 December 2017.

ESD: What will these new LPDs offer your navy in terms of meeting Peru's defence and security requirements?



The Peruvian Navy's sail training ship BAP UNION, sailing off Callao in November 2016 for her maiden training cruise VIEX-2016



The Peruvian submarine BAP ANGAMOS off sailing on the surface off Callao



Some of the Peruvian Navy's major surface combatants alongside in the Callao Naval Base. From left: BAP VILLAVISENCIO (inboard), BAP PALACIOS, BAP MARIATEGUI (inboard), BAP QUINONES, BAP GUARDIAMARINE SAN MARTIN (ex-BAP CARVAJAL), BAP BOLOGNESI (inboard), BAP MONTERO, BAP FERRE (ex South Korean PO HANG Class ROKS KYONG JU) and two VEARDE Class corvettes.

Admiral Ríos: Capable to act as an afloat support base, deliver goods and vehicles in damaged or non-existent ports, produce potable water and embark extensive medical facilities, the LPDs will provide us with the means to support HA/DR missions in a timely and effective way. Once both LPDs are operational one could be positioned offshore to provide logistical and medical support, acting as an afloat command and control (C²) and hospital platform, while the second unit can transport materiel and personnel to and from the disaster-stricken area.

ESD: Will you have to re-think the navy's concept of operations to make the most out of these units?

Admiral Ríos: For every "first-of-class" joining the fleet there is a learning curve.

However, having operated amphibious ships like our PAITA Class LSTs for more than half a century we do have experience with amphibious platforms and operations. New capabilities can retain the same concept of operations, yet the approach on how to implement the new capabilities can differ. Obviously, the ship's well-dock is a new asset and will see our Marine Amphibious Brigade transferring from a "territorial defence force" into a "mobile international deployable force".

ESD: The SIMA shipyards have proved to be the cornerstone of the Marina de Guerra del Peru's new projects. Are there other navies showing interest in the platforms SIMA designed and constructed?

Admiral Ríos: Yes, several foreign navies are showing interest in some of SIMA's concepts and asked to look into possible partnerships or to share expertise. For instance Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Indonesia and the Philippines are interested in the PIASS and BAP MORALES designs.

ESD: In addition to the new programmes, the MGP is also modernising some of its current platforms. What is the status of the modernisation programmes?

Admiral Ríos: The mid-life upgrade of the Aquirre class frigates is on track, with BAP BOLOGNESI fully operational again and BAP AGUIRRE to follow in early-2018. The modernisation of our four Angamos-class submarines kicked-off as well. Work on the first boat - BAP CHIPANA - is underway. BAP TACNA is to receive some upgrades as well, e.g. the installation of the VARAYOC combat system, a Mage QHAWAX electronic support measures system (ESM) and SACAF III weapon systems.

ESD: Can you also give us a rundown of the MGP's future procurements? Which projects are planned or in the pipe-line?

Admiral Ríos: The agreement has been signed with our neighbours, Brazil and Colombia, for the joint construction of the helicopter-capable riverine patrol vessels (Patrullera Fluvial Posa-Helicoptero). We will acquire two of these units, with the first anticipated to join the fleet by 2021. And I anticipate that this tripartite project will open new opportunities of collaboration. On the longer term, we will replace our AGUIRRE Class frigates and ANGAMOS Class submarines. And, as we plan to build a flexible navy, offshore patrol vessels are certainly on our wishlist, as well as the procurement of drones.

ESD: What are the baseline requirements for the new frigates and submarines? Which designs are being studied?

Admiral Ríos: Our baseline requirements for the new frigates call for a platform in the 3500/4500 tons range with state-of-the-art, yet proven sensor and weapons systems compatible with our Varayoc CMS capable to embark mission-specific modules as well as a helicopter. Possible designs include the Italian "Pattugliatori Polivalenti d'Altaura" (PPA) multipurpose units, the German MEKO 200A design, the Singapore Navy's Formidable-class, the South Korean KDX II destroyers, the French FREMMs type, Navantia's F 538 design based on the AVANTE 3000/2400 concept), and the DAMEN Shipyard's



The CARVAJAL class frigate BAP MARIATEGUI and the ANGAMOS Class submarine BAP PISAGUA exercising off Callao

ARMED FORCES ■

concept. As for the new submarines we are looking at designs in approximately the same tonnage as our ANGAMOS class boats. Some of the designs we are looking at are the South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering (DSME) and Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems Type 214, DCNS' SCORPENE design, and Navantia's S-80 design. And we are also assessing the procurement of a series of offshore patrol vessels.

ESD: How do you see your navy's roles and responsibilities evolve with regard to the increasing maritime security issues?

Admiral Ríos: The security environment in Latin America is characterised by complex, diverse, and non-traditional challenges. Consequently, maritime security and situational awareness are a top priority. International co-operation is no longer a matter of choice but a necessity. We must take every opportunity to strengthen the cooperation with other navies and, at the same time, build trust and confidence in order to ensure effective collaboration and share the gathered intelligence. Hence our participation in several initiatives such as the South American Defence Council,

the Inter-American Naval Conferences, the Western Pacific Naval Symposium and, since 2015, the bi-annual Regional Seapower Symposium in Venice; and we also conduct dynamic exchanges of information on a regular basis with partner services mainly in the Pacific basin but also in Europe. Since 2015 we also have an officer assigned as staff of the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) in Singapore. We plan to establish a similar IFC in Callao.

ESD: What is likely to have the biggest impact on the MGP in the coming years?

Admiral Ríos: Notwithstanding the fact that we already made significant investments in modernising the fleet, the challenges are still considerable. Complexity and uncertainty continue to increase. You can imagine that things are not going to get any easier. Our multifaceted missions can only be achieved with modern platforms and highly qualified and motivated personnel. Therefore we must also ensure that a naval career continues to be an attractive option for young Peruvians.

The interview was conducted by Guy Toremans.

UDT
Undersea Defence Technology
26-28 June 2018
SEC, Glasgow

THE GLOBAL EVENT FOR UNDERSEA DEFENCE AND SECURITY



1,100+
attendees expected
at UDT 2018



80+
exhibiting companies



4
exclusive conference
streams



40+
countries represented



30+
VIPs attending

www.udt-global.com [@UDT2018](https://twitter.com/UDT2018) www.udt-global.com/linkedin

Image source: Crown Copyright (2017)

Lead Sponsor



Innovation Partner



Certified by



Organisers of



Organised by

