Report on the 23rd edition of the Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol between Argentina and Chile - 2020/2021

English version provided by the author

Report on the 23rd edition of the Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol between Argentina and Chile (PANC) – 2020/2021

*Information Paper submitted by Argentina and Chile*

***Summary***

This Information Paper, drafted jointly by Chile and Argentina, provides information on the activities carried out during the 23rd edition of the Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol.

***Background***

The Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol (PANC) began in 1998, when Argentina and Chile established the need to coordinate their efforts in the Antarctic SAR areas of responsibility of both Parties, established in the “International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue” of 1979 (SAR Convention), which also requires cooperation and coordination among neighboring States.

Since its creation, the Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol has performed its activities within the framework of the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS). For this reason, Argentina and Chile have included the participating vessels in their respective pre-season information, notifying other Parties of its configuration.

Likewise, both Parties have permanently informed the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings about the PANC’s activities through Information Papers (IP), providing details on support and rescues carried out each season. These reports can be found in IP 26 ATCM XXVI; IP 121 ATCM XXXIV; IP 109 ATCM XXXVI; IP 99 ATCM XXXVII, IP 109 ATCM XXXIX, IP 125 ATCM XL, IP 14 ATCM XLII and IP 26 ATIP 2019/21, among others.

***Mission, organization and assignments***

The Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol is performed between November 15th and March 31st of each year, to conduct activities and exercises of search, rescues, salvaging, pollution monitoring and remediation, with the objective to safeguard navigation, human life at sea and to contribute in keeping waters free from pollution, in the Antarctic Treaty area, south of 60°S, between the meridians of 010°O and 131°O”.

For the performance of the SAR missions in the area of the PANC deployment, the SAR Coordination Centers (MRCC) in Ushuaia and Punta Arenas have service and Antarctic support vessels and other means at their disposal, for the purpose of handling the emergencies that might arise. Likewise, the secondary SAR Coordination Center (MRSC) in Puerto Williams also provides support for ongoing operations.

Aside from the fundamental purpose of the PANC, the Antarctic Service Vessel fulfills the following complementary activities, which are carried out insofar as they do not interfere with the purpose of the patrol.

* Aid to the navigation: a) Meteorological support to the vessels and ships navigating in the patrol area, b) as a mobile weather station, incrementing and contributing to the available information for the elaboration of the area´s forecast through the meteorological services of both countries and c) maintenance of maritime signalling for both countries within the PANC area.
* Sanitary assistance: the units that integrate PANC have the capacity to provide sanitary support of low level complexity, and have a physician on board to take care of medical emergencies.
* Support to the Antarctic scientific community: through the transport of personnel and/or scientific equipment between facilities or stations.
* Logistics: through the resupplying of facilities and stations, from both countries or from third states.

The “Austral Naval Area Command” (Comando del Área Naval Austral), based in the city of Ushuaia, and the “Third Naval Zone Chief Command" (Comandancia en Jefe de la Tercera Zona Naval), located in the city of Punta Arenas, have the responsibility of managing the Antarctic Patrol in alternative stages of approximately 34 and 35 days.

The efforts of the PANC during the 2020-2021 period were oriented towards the following aspects:

1. **Maritime safety:**
2. Safety of navigation.
3. Observations on Antarctic cartography.
4. Maintenance, installation and updates for navigation aids.
5. Updates on radio communications and capabilities of the GMDSS.
6. Signals and false alarms COSPAS – SARSAT.
7. SAR cases and maritime assistance.
8. Presentation of maritime safety information (MSI), including weather forecasts and meteorological and glaciological conditions in real time.
9. **Pollution**
10. Observations on special prescriptions for the use or transportation of fuels in the Antarctic area (MARPOL rule 43).
11. Pollution resulting from normal operations or from a collision, stranding or sinking of vessels and platforms:
    1. Pollution from hazardous bulk liquid substances.
    2. Pollution from waste waters.
    3. Pollution from solid wastes from vessels.
12. Atmospheric pollution generated by vessels.
13. Monitoring of pollution in shipwreck areas.
14. Exercises in pollution countermeasures.
15. Use of dispersants, absorbant materials, skimmers and containment barriers.

***Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol 2020/2021***

Argentina and Chile, through their MRCCs: the “Austral Naval Area Command” (Comando Area Naval Austral), in Ushuaia, and the “Third Naval Zone Chief Command" (Comandancia en Jefe de la Tercera Zona Naval) in Punta Arenas, deployed the 23rd edition of PANC, between November 15th 2020 and March 31st 2021.

During the aforementioned period, the MRCC of both navies permanently maintained an “Antarctic Service Vessel” with Search and Rescue capabilities and the necessary elements to control and combat pollution, in addition to another vessel with similar characteristics as back-up. These ships where the “Aviso ARA ‘Puerto Argentino’” and the “Aviso ARA ‘Bahía Agradable’” of the Argentine Navy and the vessels “ATF ‘Lautaro’” and “OPV ‘Fuentealba’” of the Chilean Navy.

The stages of the 23rd PANC where as follows:

**A. ALPHA** (between November 15th and December 18th 2020)

Antarctic service vessel: ATF “Lautaro” – Nov. 15th to Dec. 9th, 2020.

OPV “Fuentealba” – Dec. 9th to 18th, 2020

Antarctic support vessel: AVISO A.R.A. “Puerto Argentino” – Nov. 15th to Dec. 18th, 2020.

Highlighted activities:

1. Patrol and monitoring within the area of responsibility.
2. Support to Antarctic stations and operators, including transport of personnel and general logistics.
3. Maintenance work conducted on the existing maritime signalling in the area of responsibility.
4. Opening of Chilean Antarctic stations.

**B. BRAVO** (between December 19th 2020 and January 22nd 2021)

Antarctic service vessel: AVISO A.R.A. “Puerto Argentino” – Dec. 19th, 2020 to Jan. 22nd, 2021.

Antarctic support vessel: ATF “Lautaro” – Dec. 19th, 2020 to Jan. 22nd, 2021.

Highlighted activities:

1. Patrol and monitoring within the area of responsibility.
2. Hydrographic work and maintenance work conducted on the existing maritime signalling in the area of responsibility.
3. Inspection of B/P KAI XIN and B/P EXPLORER.

**C. CHARLIE** (between January 23rd and February 26th 2021)

Antarctic service vessel: AVISO A.R.A. “Puerto Argentino” – Jan. 23rd to 24th, 2021.

ATF “Lautaro” – Jan. 25th to Feb. 26th, 2021.

Antarctic support vessel: ATF “Lautaro” – Jan. 23rd to 24th, 2021.

AVISO A.R.A. “Puerto Argentino” – Jan. 25th to Feb. 26th, 2021.

Highlighted activities:

1. Patrol and monitoring within the area of responsibility.
2. Support given to Antarctic stations and operators, including transport of personnel and general logistics.
3. Maintenance work conducted on the existing maritime signalling in the area of responsibility.

**D. DELTA** (between February 27th and March 31st 2021)

Antarctic service vessel: ATF “Lautaro” – Feb. 27th to Mar. 2nd, 2021.

AVISO A.R.A. “Bahía Agradable” – Mar. 2nd to 28th, 2021.

ATF “Lautaro” – Mar. 28th to 31st, 2021.

Antarctic support vessel: AVISO A.R.A. “Puerto Argentino” – Feb. 27th to Mar. 2nd, 2021.

ATF “Lautaro” – Mar. 2nd to 28th, 2021.

AVISO A.R.A. “Bahía Agradable” – Mar. 28th to 31st, 2021.

Highlighted activities:

1. Patrol and monitoring within the area of responsibility.
2. Hydrographic work and maintenance work conducted on the existing maritime signalling in the area of responsibility.
3. Support given to Antarctic stations and operators, including transport of personnel and general logistics.

The results of the joint efforts of the 23rd edition of PANC were:

* Total nautical miles navigated: 12.585,94 NM
* Time at sea: 144 days.
* Total assistances: 16 stations.
* Maritime traffic: Radio contact was established with 11 vessels in SAR area, providing support to navigation and meteorological information.

**Final comments**

The tasks carried out during the 23rd PANC have once again evidenced the importance of the joint efforts, both from Argentina and Chile, in support of the international Antarctic community that operates in the aforementioned area of responsibility.

This joint effort by Argentina and Chile allows for the execution of PANC and at the same time, contributes to a rational use of both countries’ resources.

The intention of Argentina and Chile is to continue conducting PANC annually, contributing to the safeguarding of life at sea, the safety of navigation and the preservation of the Antarctic environment.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts were optimized to fulfill the commitments of the Joint Antarctic Naval Patrol.