The evolution of Spain's internal response to strategic and political ties with the United States from Franco to Zapatero

Volkova-Ostroumoff, Anastasia

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THE EVOLUTION OF SPAIN’S INTERNAL RESPONSE TO STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES FROM FRANCO TO ZAPATERO
(1953-2009)

By

ANASTASIA VOLKOVA-OSTROUMOFF

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
MIDDLE EAST & MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES PROGRAMME
KING’S COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
2013
Abstract

The modern era of Spanish relations with the United States began with the signing of the 1953 Madrid Pact that gave the US access to military bases in Spain. This thesis examines how the military bases provided the context for shaping the political and strategic ties between the United States and Spain. Through analysing the motivations and actions of successive Spanish governments from 1953 to 2009, this thesis will articulate the functional benefits that each partner has gained over the period under review.

The study will show the changing nature of the relationship through four key phases: the need to end international isolation under Franco (1953-1975); the post-Franco desire for closer integration into the European economic and political architecture (1975-1996); the rise of an Atlanticist ideological commitment to the US (1996-2004) under Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar; and finally Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero’s multi-polar view of world politics (2004-2009). The last two chapters give an assessment of Aznar’s leadership by contrasting it with his immediate successor, Zapatero, who took over the leadership role of Spain during the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

The argument of this thesis is that the nature of the relationship between Spain and the US has evolved over time from being transactional in nature to being, by mid-2009, based on a more balanced partnership. Base politics plays two key roles in this progression; firstly the nature of bases was a transactional pact based on military expediency to a Treaty of Friendship that has led to closer integration between the two countries strategically, politically, diplomatically and socially. The second key change was the economic growth of Spain and this thesis will argue that the US need for Spanish bases led to Spain’s rapid membership of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), followed by accession to the European Economic Community (EEC), in turn leading to Spain’s growth in economic and geopolitical power.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Rory Miller for supervising my research and for all his efforts, support and given opportunities during my studies for which I am grateful. I would also like to thank Carlos Echeverria Jesus, Florentino Portero, Manuel Coma, Ignacio Cosido, Rafael Bardaji, Antonio Marquina Barrio, Angel Viñas, Lt. Cdz. Santiago G. Gayz, Ian Lesser, Ramon Hill Casores, Javier Ruperez, Militon Cardona, Ignacio Ruperez, Sanges d’Abadie, Susan Cleary, Joacquin Marti, F. Scornik Gerstein, Manuel Muniz and Joacquin Crespo for guiding me in my research and helping me to obtain data. Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and friends for their help and support during my journey in education. Without their encouragement this thesis could not have been completed.
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AoC</td>
<td>Alliance of Civilizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVT</td>
<td>Association of Victims of Terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNG</td>
<td>Bloque Nacionalista Galego (Galician National Block)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNP</td>
<td>Basque Nationalist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRIE</td>
<td>Barometer of the Elcano Royal Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFSP</td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHATHAM HOUSE</td>
<td>Royal Institute of International Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>US Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CINCSOUTH</td>
<td>Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Southern Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNI</td>
<td>Centro Nacional de Inteligencia (Spain’s National Intelligence Center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIS</td>
<td>Centre for Strategic and International Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>Counter Terrorism Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>US Department of Homeland Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD</td>
<td>US Department of Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EADS</td>
<td>European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Free Trade Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGF</td>
<td>European Gendarmerie Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>National Liberation Army, Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMU</td>
<td>European Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESDP</td>
<td>European Security and Defence Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETA</td>
<td>Euskadi TA Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom, Basque Nationalist and Separatist Organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAES</td>
<td>Fundacion para el Analisis y los Estudios Sociales (Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences, Spain)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FARC</td>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATF</td>
<td>Financial Action Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRIDE</td>
<td>Fundacion para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Dialogo Exterior (Foundation for Internation Relations and Foreign Dialogue, Spain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSB</td>
<td>Forward Support Base</td>
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GB  Great Britain
GEES  Grupo de Estudios Estrategicos, (Strategic Studies Group, Spain)
GICM  Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group
GRAPO  First of October Antifascist resistance Group
GWOT  Global War on Terror
IAEA  International Atomic Energy Agency
IBERLANT  The Iberian Atlantic Command
IDF  Israeli Defence Force
IDU  International Democratic Union
IISS  International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMF  International Monetary Fund
INF  Intermediate –Range Nuclear Forces
ISAF  International Security Assistance Force
IU  Izquerda Unida
KFOR  International Security Force for Kosovo
MAE SP  Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spain
MINURSO  The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
Mod SP  Ministry of Defence, Spain
NGO  Non-governmental Organization
NATO  North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT  Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OECD  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE  Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PP  Popular Party (The Conservative People’s Party, Spain)
PSOE  Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol (Spanish Socialist Worker’s Party)
PLO  The Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PNA  Palestinian National Authority
PTR  Provincial Reconstruction Team
RAND  Corporation Research and Development non-profit Organisation
RUSI  Royal United Institute for Defence and Security Studies
SACLANT  Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic
UCD  Democratic Centre Union
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNED</td>
<td>Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia, Madrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFIL</td>
<td>UN Interim Force in Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United National Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN CTED</td>
<td>UN Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>US NSC</td>
<td>US National Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEU</td>
<td>Western European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
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<td>WWII</td>
<td>World War II</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the strategic and political relationship between the United States and Spain. The aim is to articulate each of the countries’ roles in this partnership. By leveraging the importance of the US’s military bases, the central thesis put forward is that Spain has used the relationship with the US primarily as a means of expanding its status within Europe and internationally. The study will show the changing nature of this relationship from Franco to the rise of Zapatero, putting the US-Spanish relationship in the context of Spain’s domestic political evolution, and within a European and global perspective. The military bases will be shown to be the cornerstone of a relationship, which with time has become increasingly multi-dimensional.

The United States and Spain under Franco

Following World War II (WWII), Franco’s Spain was by no means a natural ally of the US. The defeat of Adolf Hitler in Germany and Benito Mussolini in Italy led to the exclusion of fascist dictatorships from Western Europe. Spain found itself isolated from the international system. The desire to engage and integrate with the rest of the world, to promote Spanish interests, became a driving force in Spanish foreign policy. International antipathy to fascism, however, was soon muted by the rise of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This development, combined with Franco’s reorganization of the Spanish governmental structure in 1949 - which greatly increased the power of the Roman Catholic Church - gave Spain a chance to engage with the US and the Vatican. The results of these developments were the signing of two international agreements – the Concordat with the Vatican and an economic and military pact with the US - between 1950 and 1953. With the Cold War beginning in earnest, by 1955 Spain was able to join the United Nations (UN).

The key to this remarkable progression from international pariah status was the signing of the 1953 Madrid pact with the US, which gave Washington the right to build military bases in Spain. In the years since 1945, Spain became a key part of a US defence strategy that rested on three key ideas: defence against the USSR’s military threat; maintenance of peace and stability globally; and the desire to work with any nation state that could promote the first two aims. Spain triangulated these needs,
providing a vital link in the defence plans (as the peninsula offered control of the Mediterranean, and airbases in Spain were out of range of Soviet first strike capabilities); an ideologically anti-Communist government; and a real motivation to work with the US government. The economic aid that Spain received was not, in itself, significant, neither were the bases popular with Spanish public opinion, but the diplomatic advantages for Spain were manifold.

Return from total exile was marked, in the period 1957-1969, by Spain joining 40 international organizations, a tremendous result for a dictatorship whose leader had been a political ally of Adolf Hitler. The transformation was complete when in 1959 US President Dwight Eisenhower visited Spain, demonstrating that the US now saw Spain as a key ally. However, there was a domestic price to pay for accommodating the US. The bases were perceived as increasing the USSR’s military threat to Spain, without providing any guarantees of mutual defence from the US. This feeling was exacerbated by the development of Soviet long-range missiles - which brought Spain within reach of the Soviet nuclear threat - and by the US accidentally dropping four nuclear bombs in Spain in the 1966 Palomares incident. Placing the relationship with the US above public opinion, in the service of foreign policy aims, is a recurring theme in the evolution of the relationship between Spain and the US.

The period 1970-1975 saw further changes to the relationship between Spain and the US, as Franco’s ill health and the increase in social protest within Spain, meant the US came to view the Iberian Peninsula as a less stable partner. The pacts with Franco had been beneficial to Spain. They had brought Spain into the international family, but unfortunately created anti-American feeling at the perceived imbalance of the relationship. Furthermore, the fact that the US had been a friend to Franco created lasting ill will with anti-Franco sections of the Spanish nation.

Spain in transition: from Dictatorship to the EEC

The end of Franco’s rule created different foreign policy objectives for the government of Carlos Arias Navarro, with closer integration, as equals, with Spain’s European neighbours a key priority, and membership of NATO and the EEC, central to that aim. Despite these new policy objectives, and the unpopularity of US bases, the government of Adolfo Suarez still saw strategic ties with the US as the means to achieving these goals. The renewal of the bases agreement could lead to accession to NATO, in turn, logically leading to membership of the EC, with all its attendant benefits.
This thesis will show that despite the socialist government of Felipe Gonzalez being publicly anti-American, in private it reassured key players that it remained committed to the US. The thesis will also explore the intricacies of US and Spanish base politics as it is of fundamental importance to a proper understanding to the relationship. Indeed, the eventual ratification of partial NATO membership, via a referendum in 1986, was not a move towards US friendship, but was seen as a way to join a European defence organization. This pattern of using the alliance with the US to increase European participation was both a tactic to increase external influence, but also to help impart European values on post-Franco Spain.

_Shifting sands: from 1996 to 9/11; from M-11 to the GWOT_

The election of Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar in 1996 signalled a dramatic sea change in Spain’s foreign policy approach towards the US. Whereas previous post-Franco administrations had seen US ties as a path to greater European integration, Aznar was suspicious of the German-French axis at the heart of the EU. Full NATO membership, with integration into the military structure in 1997, initiated Spanish military involvement in a series of US led campaigns. Meeting with US President George W. Bush, in June 2001, Aznar reaffirmed his Atlanticist beliefs. Just three months later the attacks of September 11 would provide an opportunity for Aznar to create a bond with the US unlike any previous Spanish government. Prime Minister Aznar saw the opportunity to create a lasting, fundamental shift in the European balance of power. The path from the “bases for dollars” led to the symbolic photo opportunity for George W. Bush, Tony Blair, Jose Maria Aznar and Jose Manuel Barroso in the Azores on the eve of the 2003 Iraq War.

The Madrid bombings of 11 March 2004 saw the end of Aznar, and the election of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. It thus marked a new development in US-Spanish relations characterized by the new Spanish Prime Minister’s belief in the politics of dialogue and engagement. This thesis will show how Zapatero moved away from the US, because of profound disagreement with the unilateralist worldview of the Bush Administration, and fuelled by the belief that Spain’s interests lay in forging new links with Europe, Latin America and Arab world. Zapatero’s first term was in fact characterized by a series of foreign policy decisions that were not in accordance with the US approach towards the governments of Cuba, Venezuela, Iran and organisations such as Hamas, Hezbollah and ETA. Zapatero’s forging of ties with China, in an attempt to secure a
seat at international economic forums, proved difficult. Indeed without the personal affinity between Bush and Zapatero, Spain was perceived once again as a follower in world politics. The arrival of the Barack Obama Administration to power presented an opportunity for Spain to revive its long lost position in the world affairs, leading to a more balanced partnership between the US and Spain in the new world order. Importantly, Zapatero did not attempt to end the US use of Spanish bases, or withdraw totally from the War on Terror (as Spanish troops were transferred from the war in Iraq to Afghanistan), while Spanish bases proved to be of great importance for on-going NATO military operations.

**Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to explore Spain’s relationship with the US from Franco and the end of World War II through the Cold War period and until the Global War on Terror. The thesis aims to examine Spain’s international relations only in so far as they are relevant to the relationship with the US, in order to limit the scope of the study. The thesis does not claim to cover all aspects of Spanish foreign policy in this period.

To show how, Spain has used its military and, recently, geopolitical importance to the US, to increase it status within Europe and on the global stage. Spain’s path from pariah, to major global player, is fundamentally linked to the US.

**Literature and Sources**

Few scholars had attempted to conclusively analyse the political and strategic aspects of the bilateral partnership from a Spanish perspective. Nevertheless, many highly valuable studies do exist that analyse US-Spanish military base politics in the context of Spain’s foreign policy under Franco, the transition from dictatorship to democracy, and the Spain’s membership of NATO and the EU.¹

Key primary sources for this study were interviews with members of Royal Institute Elcano, GEES, FAES, Fundacion Jose Ortega & Gasset, Spain’s Ministry of Defence (Mod SP) & Spain’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE), Madrid, US Spanish Embassy representatives and Spanish government officials and diplomats. Many of these interviews took place off the record. Their information is invaluable and my thanks are due to them. Other sources include closed-door transatlantic conferences that included brief discussions with J. M. Aznar, Javier Solana, Josep Pique, Anna Palacio, J. M. Barroso, Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice and Alberto R. Gonzalez.

Official documents of the Spanish and American governments were also used. On the American side these included sources from the Library of Congress, the National Archives, Maryland, Brookings Institution, Centre for International Peace, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Centre for Strategic & International Studies, Georgetown University Library, Washington D.C., USA, and the Information Resource Centre Archives of the USA in Madrid. On the Spanish side these included sources from Biblioteca Nacional, Biblioteca de Documentacion, Biblioteca de UNED, GEES and Elcano Royal Institute, Madrid, Spain.

Other key sources included the British Library, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Chatham House, Royal United Institute for Defence and Security Studies, Spanish Embassy, Cervantes Institute in London and University of London Libraries for their wide range of American, Spanish and other European media material.

*Structure of the Study*

The study consists of eight chapters that deal with key phases in US-Spanish relations. Each chapter will analyse how the partnership evolved within the shifting contexts of domestic, European and global politics. The first chapter provides a background introducing Spain under Franco and the concession of the US base installations in Iberian Peninsula. Chapters two and three show how the relationship with the US was subsequently used to facilitate the accession of Spain to NATO and, consequently, to the EEC, indicating a recovery of Spain’s diplomatic and strategic identity. Chapter four deals with the policies of Aznar that took Spain to its prominent role in the new political world order, whilst chapter five deals with the impact of 9/11 on US-Spanish relations in the context of the GWOT. Chapter six looks at the political repercussions of M-11, coupled with the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Finally chapters seven and eight
show how the legacy of Aznar was altered under Zapatero, with Spain moving away from supporting US unilateralism at all costs, and moving towards multilateralism.
The Evolution of US-Spanish Relations during the Franco Era

1.1 Introduction

In order to understand the evolution of the United States-Spanish relationship from 1953 to the end of the Franco regime in 1975, it is essential to analyze their interaction from the Franco era and the special political implications that they had on the future course of their relationship. At the end of the Second World War (WWII), the US position towards the Franco dictatorship was hostile. This study will show a gradual end to this hostility, the eventual adoption of a more sceptical approach by the Republican administration under Dwight Eisenhower and the subsequent implementation of US policy towards Franco throughout the administrations of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford. The historic analysis will commence with the early period of isolation up to the signing of the military and economic agreements in 1953, through to the 1960's and early 1970's, a period during which the US-Spanish relationship saw no fundamental changes.

In the period 1945-1949, Franco's earlier pro-fascist stance condemned the regime to a difficult international isolation. Franco responded with changes in the political structure of the country: the configuration of the State as a Kingdom, the mandatory maintenance of the autarchy as a synonym of independence and significant weight given to the Catholics ahead of the Falangists. International events, in the context of the Cold War

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that accelerated in the late 1940’s, allowed for a change of attitude of the US and, as a consequence, of the United Nations (UN) in connection with Franco’s Spain.

The next phase of Spain's foreign policy began in 1950-1953 when the attainment of a Madrid-Rome-Washington axis became a high-priority objective of the Spanish leaders. The efforts made by the US and the growing Cold War, helped to produce a slow but sure integration process of Spain into international society. The progressive liberalization of the regime in the economic sphere and the government’s reconfiguration helped to transform the image of Spain for external demands. These circumstances allowed the signing of two international documents that mark a “before” and an “after” in the foreign policy of the regime: the Concordat with the Vatican in August 1953 and the economic-military pacts with the US in September 1953.

The period of 1953-1957 was a stage that allowed Spain, with the support of the Vatican and of the US, to begin a strong international offensive to increase its presence in international organisations, culminating with entry into the UN in 1955. The subsequent period of 1957-1973 was characterised by the formation of Franco’s tenth government on 25 February 1957, which included Fernando Maria Castiella’s appointment to the office of foreign minister. This period became the key stage of external relations of the Francoismo up to 1969. It was the phase in which the biggest political opening took place. During this period the economic transformation of the country upon the approval of the Stabilization Plan took place leading to the better planning of foreign policy. The nationalistic politics of Castiella became the reason for serious tensions with Washington and inside the Regime as evidenced by the renegotiations of the agreements that took place in 1963, 1968 and 1970.
The period 1973-1975 saw little change in Spain's foreign policy. Taken with the achievements obtained up to 1973, the murder of the Prime Minister Carrero Blanco in December of that year indicates the beginning of a period that can be characterized as crisis-ridden. Uncertainty, an increase in repression, Franco’s illness, all combined with the impact of the world economic crisis that hit Spain in 1974, paralysed economic progress and caused growing social uneasiness. The US Administration was continuously keen to keep its military bases in Spain, but was also anxious to know how stability could be preserved after General Franco's death, which occurred in November of 1975. This was the beginning of the end of isolation, international condemnation and a tentative dawn of the next stage of the US-Spanish bilateral agreements.

1.2 The Early US Approach to US-Spanish Relations

To understand the 1953 agreements between Spain and the US, one has to go back many years in order to evaluate the circumstances that made these agreements necessary. General Franco secured his rule over Spain only months before the outbreak of the Second World War (WWII). The Spanish Civil War drained the country of much of her national resources, leaving the economy in ruins. As a result, Franco was forced to follow a path of neutrality throughout the WWII. The allies knew of Franco's cooperation with Nazi Germany, though many were grateful to Franco for having remained neutral during a vital period of the allied offensive: the landing in Northern Africa (Operation Torch). As early as the end of 1944 the US began the negotiation of commercial aviation access, with various countries, including Spain, in order to create a strategic counterweight against Communism. On 2 December 1944, Jose Lequerica,

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Minister of Foreign Affairs and Carlton Hayes, American Ambassador to Spain, signed an agreement between the US and Spain related to the functioning of the International Aviation Transport Services. The routes which were established included: a route from New York to Miami, to South America, West Africa, Villa Cisneros and French Morocco to Seville, Madrid and Barcelona, from there on to Paris and other destinations close to the French capital. On 19 February 1945, there was a secret agreement signed by Spain and the US that permitted US aviation to use Spanish territory in West Africa. In the second part of 1945, one saw the beginning of this agreement come to fruition when US planes started to land on Spanish soil, marking the beginning of military cooperation between the US and Spanish military forces.4

However, the US still adhered to the international position that Franco’s Spain had to be isolated. On 4 March 1946, the US, Great Britain and France published a Trilateral Declaration stating that the “Spanish Nation would not be accepted into any alliance while Franco is in power.” Harry Truman’s government, however, influenced the US to work out a compromise solution, which still called on member states to withdraw their ambassadors from Spain by December 1946. Interestingly, on various occasions US military planes were allowed to lay up in West Sahara, and make emergency landings.5 Consequently in 1947 Martin Artajo, at the time director of the Cultural Hispanic Institute, and a fellow associate, Joaquin Ruiz Gimenez, had an interview with new American envoy, Paul Culbertson. During the discussion it was agreed that the regime was “anti-Communist” and in the case of potential US-Soviet conflict, Spain would be on the side of the US. Culbertson came to the conclusion that “Franco is a sincere and


honourable man; therefore what he does is for the benefit of Spain and Spanish nation.” In another military mission visit to Spain, Senator Gurney declared: “All those who resist Communism have to understand the importance of making Spain join the United Nations.” Moreover, the brother of General Franco, Nicolas, acknowledged to Culbertson that the main aim of Spanish foreign policy was to “ameliorate the relationship with the United States.”

1.3 The Dividends of a Pragmatic Approach to Foreign Policy

A sophisticated and progressive foreign policy based on pragmatism, not ideology, prevailed under Franco’s authoritarian regime. In 1948 Jose Felix de Lequerica, in Washington, presumed that "if the collaboration of Spain with the US at this hour of danger for the West can be precious, she also has for the US an invaluable value for the future." This paid off in 1948 when the US House of Representatives proposed the inclusion of Spain in the Marshall Plan, but this proposal was then vetoed by President Harry Truman, who only authorised the benefit of credits from private banks. The enmity of Truman toward Franco was distinctly personal, though, on the other hand, this was the first sign of acceptance received by the regime, and indicated an important element in the process of gradual legitimisation and integration of Spain.

It was thus in the context of the Cold War history that the US changed its policy toward Franco's dictatorship. In April 1948 Le Monde wrote that “In Washington the interest of the US for the Spanish problem has not decreased. The US Department of Defence

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7 Ibid. p. 42.
gives a lot of importance to find a way to end the Franco question, and the new discussion will take place in the near future.”¹⁰ From that moment onwards, the politics and attitude of the US to Spain changed. On the other hand, the French Minister of Defence Jules Moch, showed his opposition categorically to all Spanish participation in the defence of Western Europe. In January 1950, US Secretary of State Dean Acheson declared that he was prepared to defend the return of the US Ambassador to Spain despite the opposition of the UN. In one letter to Tom Connally, a senior Senator, the secretary of state declared: “The US has been for a long time now questioning the efficacy of recommendations of the 1946 resolution. Retrospectively, it is clear that not only such action harms the objective, but also serves to strengthen the position of the present Regime […] in no way our vote would mean our support for the Regime in Spain.”¹¹ Thus, Acheson’s 1950 declaration opened the way for Spain to gain financial credit. Later that year the National Bank of New York gave US$25 million in credit to Spain for provisions. In the same year, US negotiators visited Spain: Admiral Sherman, Sidney Suffrin, Chief of the Commercial Mission, and General Spry, Chief of the Military Mission. Even though the negotiations could have been delayed by Truman’s personal dislike of Franco’s regime and by a lack of sympathy in the Senate and the House of Representatives, these considerations were all overshadowed by the Korean War, following the invasion by Communist North Korea of its anti-Communist neighbour in the South. It resulted in the US further reassessing the importance of formerly isolated countries such as Germany and Spain in the global war against Communism.¹²

¹⁰ Le Monde, April 1948.
American defence plans to expand military bases abroad were urgent, fuelled by the threat of Soviet invasion of Europe. One study of 1947 titled “Drumbeat” and another in 1951 titled “Selection and Use of Strategic Air Bases” concluded that from a military point of view, the US should furnish economic aid to Spain “as soon as feasible.”\(^{13}\) Shortly afterwards, and on the basis of military recommendations, the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department decided that it was in the national interest to modify US policy towards Spain.\(^{14}\) This included recognising the need to invest in Spain's infrastructure. There was no doubt that Spain’s military capability left much much to be desired. For example, at the time it was even joked that "Spain's best defence was her appalling infrastructure, which was bound to slow down any advancing army."\(^{15}\) As a result of the evolving outlook of the US towards Spain, it used its dominance of the UN to push through a resolution easing sanctions and isolation of Spain, marking a major diplomatic event in Spain's political negotiations with the international system. While in June 1951, a statement by President Truman at a press conference that: "disapproval of Spain's human rights record should not override the conviction of US military planners", indicated a shift from the previously idealistic approach toward foreign affairs to classic Realist approach.\(^{16}\)

As one of Franco’s top former Generals, Carlos Iniesta Cano, put it in reference to Franco: "Our Commander’s noble and calculated calm, his extraordinary success when driving our foreign policy, and his clear statesman-like vision, brought about the


\(^{14}\) National Archives, Civil branch, NSC-3, US Policy towards Spain, 5 December 1947.


\(^{16}\) Ibid. p. 232.
positive result that we all know - ambassadors returned to Madrid in 1951."\(^{17}\) Indeed, the two governments needed each other: Spain for political reasons and the US for primarily military reasons. US airplanes had to be prepared against a feared Soviet attack and they could not be based too far from their territory, neither could they be too close to the Iron Curtain as this could have made them vulnerable. The importance of Spain rose when the Pentagon reached the conclusion that the Iberian Peninsula was the best place to locate its strategic bases. Even though the American government was divided on the issue internally, the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that it was time to change American foreign policy towards Spain and to initiate cordial military relations with Franco.\(^{18}\) Undeniably, the geographic situation of Spain was privileged strategically. On the margins of Europe, with access to two seas, the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, separated by Africa, protected by a mountainous fringe bordering France, with adjacent islands of tactical support, Spain was coveted militarily in logistical terms.

Washington’s conviction of the new dangers brought upon by the encroachment of Communism, gave an opportunity for Franco to show his desire to work with the West. These circumstances enabled the regime to benefit economically and politically. As Spain's former Chief of Staff, Jose Ramon de Pardo, pointed out: "The Armies are always the main instrument of foreign policy."\(^{19}\) Franco wanted to increase his military power even before US-Spanish bilateral agreements, but the circumstances leading to the Cold War created an opportunity to do so with the help of the US. The general attitude of most Socialist governments that favoured Spain’s exclusion from NATO

\(^{17}\) Teniente General Carlos Iniesta Cano, Memorias y recuerdos, Los anos que he vivido en el proceso historico de España, (Barcelona, Planeta, 1984), p. 153.


\(^{19}\) Jose Ramon Pardo de Santillana y Coloma, former Chief of Staff of the defence establishment, in Seguridad Nacional y Diplomacia, Documentacion Administrativa, po. Cit., pp. 205-207.
was rarely shared by the military leaders of those nations, because these figures realised the true dimensions of the problem of defending Europe in the case of Soviet attack. The military leaders knew that a hostile Spanish government would restrict their access to the Strait of Gibraltar, which in turn would make it more difficult to access the US Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, and consequently make it impossible to support Italy, Greece, Turkey and Israel.\(^{20}\) Truman did not favour Spain’s entry into NATO, and Franco therefore was looking to making a direct agreement with the US.\(^{21}\)

### 1.4 The 1953 US-Spanish Agreements

With the election in 1953 of General Dwight Eisenhower as US President, the situation for Spain became more favourable. Franco could feel Eisenhower's positive outlook towards Spain's anti-Communist stance. In an interview with the American journalist, Margaret Higgis, on 9 August 1951, General Franco declared that he was assured that in order to protect the Pyrenees from Communism "America will meet us on the half way of the road."\(^{22}\) During another interview given that year by Franco to journalists in the presence of foreign ambassadors, the general announced that one day he would be interested in concluding an exclusive defence agreement with the US. Such a decision on behalf of Franco was considered by US diplomat and the deputy director of CIA, Vernon A. Walters, as "a threat to their security and most of all Spaniards with a historical xenophobia would see it as a foreign injection in their internal matters."\(^{23}\)


\(^{21}\) Nevertheless President Truman worked especially hard to build Spain’s international legitimacy because he was anxious to create an alliance against the Soviet Union. Even though he opposed Spain’s entry into NATO while Franco was in power, it was exactly because of the strategic need to build Spain’s international legitimacy that US policy-makers and intelligence officers later worked to facilitate Spain’s integration into the NATO structure, in Benny Pollack, *The Paradox of Spanish foreign policy: Spain’s International Relations from Franco to Democracy*, (New York: St Martin’s Press: 1987), p.25.


the other hand, all understood the importance of cooperation with the US, which could eventually lead to normalizing relations with Europe. As the advance of Communism did not give the US planners time to persuade European countries to integrate Spain into the Western alliance, the problem of overcoming European misgivings prompted Ambassador Thomas B. Griffiths to propose the establishment of military bases in Spanish territory instead. Franco's response was clear: “Our position in Europe makes us accept the propositions of the US, in view of signing a mutual security agreement in the future.”24 In the course of 1953, the Pentagon informed the Council of Air Forces to form a committee that would study in detail Spanish territories as potential zones for the establishment of air and naval bases.

On 27 August 1953 a Concordat was signed in the Vatican, which secured the relationship between the Spanish state and the Church until 28 July 1976. This undoubtedly increased the prestige of the regime in the Catholic world. One month later, on 26 September 1953, Madrid and Washington signed their first bilateral agreements. In one month, the regime became valuable to the two powers most interested in it: religious and military ones. Spanish foreign policy was viewed as divided in two periods: one before and another after 1953. With this Concordat agreement in one hand and with the agreements with the US in the other, Spanish diplomacy prepared itself for a so called “external reconquest.”25

The Agreements were signed in Madrid by the Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister, Alberto Martin Artajo, and the US Ambassador to Spain, James Clement Dunn. On 26 September 1953 Artajo published an official statement explaining the terms of the agreements.

24 Franco Bahamonde Francisco, Jefe del Estado Espanol, en la inauguración de la IV Legislature de las Cortes Espanoles, 16 May 1952.
agreement: “the Governments of Spain and the United States of America have
concluded today three agreements in order to strengthen the preparation of the West to
maintain peace and international security.” The first of them referred to the
construction and use by Spain and the US of some military installations (aerodromes
and military bases); the second, referred to economic aid; and the third to the technical
and military aid from the US, in accordance with the Programme of Mutual Defence
related to the organisation of Spanish defence. "Spain gives something of value for the
United States, and this country contributes with something that Spain wanted", was
Eisenhower’s comment in regards to the agreements signed. Far less optimistic was
the opinion expressed in the New York Times, suggesting “we are faced right now with
the need to swallow a bitter pill: the contract with Franco’s Spain. Let’s hope that this
medicine will produce more benefits than problems.” Nonetheless, the relevance of
the Pact was the geo-strategic position of Spain and its potential mobilization of
2,000,000 men; its relative domestic stability, as well as strategic importance for its raw
materials such as potassium, iron, zinc, lead and mercury. Added to this was the
importance of military bases in Spain for US control of western access to the
Mediterranean. The insular Atlantic side of Spain offered key strategic points, which
enabled the control and protection of the Atlantic navigation routes; peninsular Spain
offered sufficient places to establish corridors for light, medium and heavy
bombardments. From the West European point of view, Spain theoretically provided
the main defence line along the Pyrenees, as well as a platform for land, sea and air
offensive operations.

26ABC, 26 September 1953.
27“España de lago de valor para los Estados Unidos, y este país contribuye con algo que España deseaba, dice Eisenhower”, ABC, 1 October 1953, p. 23.
Franco’s famous phrase on the day of the agreements signing showed his total contentment, “finally we have won the war.” To Franco, it indicated the affirmation of his regime, “one day other countries will resemble ours.”

“Not many governments have been able to present to their countries in so brief a term, success as impressive as those harvested in our country during the month of September”, observed the pro-monarch newspaper *ABC* in an article dedicated to the seventeenth anniversary of Franco’s rule. In October 1953, Franco sent a message to the Cortes with three Agreements signed between Spain and the US: “The defence of the West against Communist aggression is as important to us as it is to the US. It is solely the enunciation of the concept of the Spanish-US agreement that represents an important victory that establishes the peace in front of the Communist threat.”

The alliance with the US was thus based on the three key forces behind the Cold War: defence, in case of West came under threat of attack, the maintenance of peace and international security, and finally cooperation with other countries that followed those same objectives to reinforce western defence.

### 1.5 The Agreements Receive a Mixed Reception

It has been argued that the Madrid Pacts were "quasi-colonial in tone" and were negotiated "through the back door." To show the secrecy that evolved around the signed agreements, it is useful just to cite one example. On 1 October 1953, during the visit of Secretary of Defence, Charles E. Wilson, to Madrid, the Spanish newspaper *Arriba* published a small column saying that the visit “does not have any relevance to

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31 “La fiesta del Caudillo”, *ABC*, Madrid, 1 October 1953.
34 Marquina Barrio, Antonio, Interview held in Madrid, 27 August 2002.
the agreements recently signed”, thus trying to hide the military importance of the pact.\textsuperscript{35} Importantly, in one of the official notes made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alberto Martin-Artajo Alvarez, it was underlined that “the agreements didn’t contain secret clauses of military nature.” However, Angel Viñas, who has carried out detailed research of the bilateral agreements, has argued that during most of the Franco era a large part of the agreements were kept secret from the public.\textsuperscript{36} This, he argued, was reflected in three additional notes to the second paragraph of article III of the defence agreement.\textsuperscript{37} It determined the modalities of activation of the US bases in the event of war or emergency. Interestingly, two decades later, the opinion of Jose Maria de Areilza, who was appointed as foreign minister in 1975 deferred on the topic: "the thesis that Franco has carried out some mysterious secret pacts with the US, without informing his own government on the content of the same ones, it is a simplistic position, unaware of reality, if a series of complimentary aspects of the agreements that you discussed existed and they were analysed, for both parts, in our logical desire of taking our party position in the situation. I believe that it is convenient to mention to the context to focus with truthfulness in the long process."\textsuperscript{38} He continued his argument by saying that, "In the context of the executive agreements of 1953, there was not a certain quota for economic compensation. The financial deed came from what was called the appropriation, a figure fixed by the Congress whose absolute powers with regards to expenditure was very well known. In Madrid they haven’t understood the system completely and insisted that it was a quota for several years, but this Defence Support was a decision about the progress and the only thing that could be achieved was an\textsuperscript{35} "El Caudillo recibo a una Comision de delegades Congreso de Estudios Europeos. Tambien recibio al Embajador de los Estados Unidos", Arriba, 1 October 1953, p. 6. 
\textsuperscript{36}Angel Viñas, Pactos Secretos de Franco y Estados Unidos, (Barcelona: Grijalbo Press, 1979).  
\textsuperscript{37}Angel Viñas, En las ganas del aguila, Los pactos con EU, de Franco a Felipe Gonzalez (1945-1995), (Barcelona: Critica, 2003).  
annual improvement that our parliamentary friends of the Congress, members of the Commission always obtained.”

There were nevertheless indications that there were three major reasons that explain the secrecy and the outcomes of the agreements:

1. The breakdown of Anglo-French opposition to the US initiative, which consequently drove the US decision to conduct these negotiations with great discretion from the beginning;
2. The US demand that the technical details should be secret;
3. The lack of Spanish experience in negotiations of this type and the bad conscience of “our racial ineptitude to keep secrets” (in the words of General Ignacio Perez Galdoz) led Spanish authorities to accept or to apply inadequate classifications that on some occasions resulted in unnecessary complications.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the secrecy of the agreements was not the main issue, but the general principle behind the agreements was being criticized: the Eisenhower Administration was criticized for compromising its democratic values by entering into an agreement with a fascist dictator. Arguably, global changes in technology, warfare and the geopolitical balance meant that Washington not only had to meet its global responsibilities but had to abandon its previous idealistic approach to world affairs. The military alliance formed out of these agreements with Spain by President Eisenhower with the informal consent of only eight Senators and four Congressmen was not submitted as a treaty nor was any joint resolution of approval asked of

Congress. The US bases that were later constructed in Spain belonged to the regime, but they were unarguably essential for the US military planners during the Cold War years. Anti-Communism was to play an important part in the survival of Franco’s regime. It was thus the Cold War between the US and Soviet Union that helped Spain to find a way to overcome isolation.

From a methodological point of view, it was very difficult to distinguish the political and strategic issues from other economic and technological aspects of the US military presence in Spain. While probably true for many other countries as well, this was particularly the case with Spain given the nature, and the special political implications, of the first bilateral agreements. Specifically, while the treaty and subsequent agreements made reference to several direct financial commitments by the US in payment for the use of the bases, they also had other, indirect implications for the Spanish economy that, while often difficult to quantify, in the long run were of much greater importance. This chapter will only focus on economic aid to Spain, as it directly influenced the bilateral relationship with the US.\footnote{In accordance with the Office of Diplomatic Information of the US State Department, the military aid in period 1953-61 represented US$ 436.8 million. In the period 1962-68, it amounted to US$ 163.4 million in surrenders and US$ 2.3 million in credit for the purchase of military equipment. The surrenders represented half of the annual amount of US$ 23.6 million, and a decrease regarding the previous period of US $52 to 100 million. Closer to the end of Franco's regime, the circumstances of the Cold War altered the value of military bases in Spain, the nature of economic aid varied accordingly; in Fernando Prieto, S.J., 

\subsection*{1.6 New Military Installations in Spain}

Between 1953-59 American strategic military bases were to be constructed: three airbases, one near Zaragoza, another close to Madrid, Torrejon de Ardoz, and one, Moron de la Frontera, near Seville; the naval base was to be located at Rota, near Cadiz, and together serving as a shipping and aeronautic complex, it was to have a 485
mile fuel pipe connection to the other bases around Spain. The fuel pipe involved the territory around El Arahal, Ecija, Ciudad Real, Alcala de Henares y Zaragoza, with a bombing station in Rota, El Arahal, Adamuz, Ciudad Real and Alcala de Henaras. The characteristics and cost of these bases – exempt for all kinds of taxes, according to the Agreement of 1953 were the following:

- **Rota (Cadiz)** - occupied 2,400 hectare of space; employed 2,700 men; was considered the second strongest American sea and air base; by 1963 it stationed 11 Polaris submarines (adding to 14 situated at Holy Loch, Scotland); its assembling cost was 5,530 million pesetas.

- **Torrejon de Ardoz (Madrid)** – occupied 1,320 hectares of space; employed 3,600 men, a quarter of the US XVI Air Force were based here; its runway was the largest in Europe; its cost: 4,340 million pesetas.

- **Moron de la Frontera (Seville)** – occupied 1,00 hectares; employed 600 men; it served as a starting point of the air place-cistern that supplied the USAF in action in the Mediterranean.

- **Zaragoza** - occupied 1,800 hectares; employed 900 men; cost 2,500 million pesetas; the route of the fuel pipe that began at Rota and connected with the rest of the bases ended here. The storage tanks for fuel were also located here. The bombardment points were also stationed at Rota. From the beginning, this served as a reserve, but with the closure of US bases in Libya, it became an important strategic point. The most important feature of the Zaragoza base was that it was only 58 kilometres from the Bardenas-Reales Weapons Range, which, because of low damage claims from residents in the area and almost continuous clear weather, was considered by the US Air Force to be one of the most desirable practice bombing ranges in Europe.\(^{43}\)

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In addition to those four bases there were another seven radar sites and seventeen strategic penetration points created between 1953 and 1976 and located in El Ferrol, Cartagena, Rota, El Arahal (near Moron), Ecija, Ciudad Real, Alcal de Henares, and Adamuz, to the north of Cordoba: secondary bases; specialist service stations; stations for observation and a radar for alert; services for communications. They were managed by a contingent of about 7,000 and 8,000 men, technical and military, and their dependents.

1.7 Political and Economic Debates around the Agreements

The aim of the 1953 “Madrid Pact” was to strengthen Western security. However, from the time of its signing, three issues dominated the political discussion:

1. The status and terms of the agreement: in spite of Spain's interest in a formal treaty, an executive agreement was signed that did not require formal ratification. The Spanish government also felt that the agreement was asymmetrical in that it required that Spain assumed certain risks without necessarily any guarantees of US assistance in the event of an attack.

2. US economic compensation for the use of the bases was considered insufficient in light of what the Spanish government was offering in terms of military assets.

3. On the other hand an important issue was the role the agreements played in bolstering, and giving legitimacy to, the Franco regime and in breaking Spain's political and economic isolation.

Thus the extent to which the issues discussed above overlapped in the political debate illustrates the degree to which economic repercussions of the agreements were inseparable from the political and strategic aspects. This interrelationship also remained
an element in the future renewal of the agreements.\textsuperscript{44} Of course, the presence of foreign armed forces in the territory of another sovereign State raised issues of territorial sovereignty.\textsuperscript{45} From a Spanish point of view, especially for the nationalists, the concession of the bases, as well as the presence of foreign troops on Spanish territory constituted an offence. For the traditionalists, the agreements with the US signified the end of political alienation and neutrality. For the Catholics, it meant a union with Protestants and selling out to “the dollars of heretics.”\textsuperscript{46}

While US military strategists explored the Spanish base facilities, from Franco's perspective, the ties eased pressure on his regime. It was thought that these military ties and complicated pressures prompted by Cold War necessities opened the way for Spain to eventually be admitted to the UN in 1955 and generally to become acceptable to other international agencies (including membership in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) followed in 1959.\textsuperscript{47} Between 1957 and 1969 Spain entered forty international organisations and became a signatory to multilateral specialized

\textsuperscript{45} Jose Duret, “La jurisdicción sobre las fuerzas norteamericanas en España”, \textit{Política Exterior}, 35, VII, Autumn 1993, p. 168. The agreements were kept secret until 1979 in order to save face and claim no loss of sovereignty of Spain to the US. The most difficult part to be negotiated for the US were not the conditions under which the US would be allowed to activate or put in a state of alert the bases and military facilities in the event of the armed conflict, but the accompanying economic assistance. Franco was very accommodating over the activation clause (Spain merely had to be informed of the unidentified “evident Communist aggression which threatens the security of the West”). The bases were put on a state of alert because of the 1958 Lebanon crisis, the evacuation of the Congo in 1964 and Libya in 1969, hardly acts of “Communist aggression” and “threats to the security of the West”, in William Chislett, “Spain and the United States: the Quest for Mutual Rediscovery”, \textit{Elcano Working Papers}, 44417-2005, www.royalistuteelcano.org
agreements. Neighbouring states were in the process of establishing the European Community and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). In the process of liberalizing trade among their members, these organisations found it difficult to establish economic relations with countries wedded to trade quota and bilateral agreements, such as Spain. However, Spain not being politically able to join these organisations, found the newly acquired membership in international organisations, as a remedy for its exacerbated economic situation. These bodies became immediately involved in helping Spain to abandon the autocratic trade practices that had brought its reserves to such low levels and that were isolating its economy from the rest of Europe. In a document categorized as “top secret” of 30 November 1956, one year after Spain had been admitted to the UN, the US National Security Council declared its intention to use the bases in Spain to attack the Soviet Union, if necessary. This showed the price Spain would potentially have to pay for an agreement that facilitated the economic recovery and international recognition of Franco’s Spain.

Despite US-Spanish rapprochement, Washington had to pressure Madrid into backing the American position in the 1956 Suez Canal crisis. As the tensions around the Suez Canal were growing, and the attack on Egypt followed, the Spanish press and radio “were clearly biased and even aggressive towards Israel, France and Britain”, as Louis Blitz, the president of the Jewish community in Madrid, wrote. Just before the fight broke out, General Franco told a reporter from the Associated Press news agency that

48 It was argued that “friendlier contacts with the US did not solely motivate Spain's activities in Europe; in fact, Spanish officials viewed revived relations with Washington as a prerequisite to closer association with the rest of Europe” in James W. Cordoba, Two Nations Over Time, Spain and the US 1976-1977, (London: Greenwood Press, 1978), p 226.
50 Ibid.
the event in Egypt, like those in Algeria and Morocco, reflected changes in the international sphere and represented a protest against imperialist and colonial oppression.\textsuperscript{53} Before long, however, the Spanish media moderated their support for Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. The regime was concerned about its image in the West, and military circles were worried about the Soviet Union’s growing influence in Egypt and the possibility that Egypt’s brand of Arab nationalism might encourage calls for the eradication of the Spanish presence in Northern Africa. The newspaper \textit{ABC} published a number of articles which, although expressing disapproval of the manner and timing of the Anglo-French intervention, nevertheless claimed that the operation would further the interests of the Western bloc, since it had caused the destruction of a great deal of military equipment that the Soviets had sent to Egypt. The decision against Spain’s military intervention was finally made “thanks to the talented politicians”, as was described in the Falangist newspaper \textit{Arriba}. In December 1956, Franco met with both the US ambassador in Madrid and the army minister, Agustin Munoz Grandes, in quick succession; within two days, the attacks on “western imperialism” earlier claimed by Franco, disappeared from the papers.\textsuperscript{54} Thus even though Franco was developing close ties with the Arab world, his actions in 1956 underlined the value he placed on continued American friendship. In the 1960’s Spain had an opportunity to show its loyalty to the US. As such during the Vietnam War in 1960’s Spain officially maintained a low profile but unofficially supported Washington since the conflict involved the fight against Communism in Asia.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{The Times}, 21 November 1956.  
To show Washington’s continued appreciation for Spain’s support in the war against Communism, President Eisenhower's visit to Madrid in December 1959 became a historical moment in the relationship between both countries.\(^56\) During the welcome speech, Franco said to Eisenhower: “this Torrejon base, constructed with the powerful help of the United States, that guards the Spanish and American planes, where the same commandment is the symbol of our friendship and has been my slogan as much as I am sure it is yours: peace is my profession.” Eisenhower responded by calling for “peace, friendship and liberty for our two nations.” It was argued that Eisenhower’s visit to Spain in 1959 was largely opposed by the US Department of State, and by other Eisenhower advisers.\(^57\) The fact that Eisenhower visited Franco and ended his visit affectionately with an embrace was of great international symbolic value.\(^58\) The significance of this visit could hardly escape the Europeans. It reaffirmed Washington's commitment to support Spain and maintain its wish to eventually include Spain in NATO. Following a meeting in London between Eisenhower and Spain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alerto Martin-Artajo Alvarez, \textit{ABC} commented that “from the military point of view, the United States consider Spain as the most important of its European allies, after Great Britain.”\(^59\) Interestingly enough, four decades later after the September 11 attacks, President George W. Bush made the same declaration to the Spanish press stating “Spain is our most important European ally, after Great Britain in the war against terrorism.”\(^60\)


1.8 Asymmetry of Agreements Called into Question

Amendments to the agreements brought politico-military tensions within the US in the course of the Cold War. According to American political phraseology, an Executive Agreement was not a treaty, as in their view, the successive renovations of such agreements, did not require the intervention and approval by the Senate. In fact there are two procedures under domestic law through which the United States becomes a party to an international agreement. First, international agreements (regardless of their title, designation, or form) whose entry into force with respect to the United States takes place only after two thirds of the U.S. Senate has given its advice and consent under Article II, section 2, Clause 2 of the US Constitution are treaties. Second procedure refers to international agreements brought into force with respect to the United States on a constitutional basis other than with the advice and consent of the Senate. These international agreements other than treaties are often referred to as executive agreements. Unlike treaties, executive agreements are less formal, compel but do not bind the president to take actions and do not bind succeeding presidents to follow the agreement. Successive presidents must renegotiate such agreements. Thus, from the Spanish point of view it implied that the US was not automatically to guarantee Spain defence support from the US President in case of an outside attack, neither would the financial subsides agreed during military base agreements be necessarily approved by the next US government in power when the renovation of agreements was due again for renewal. The arrival of the Democrat US Administration of John F. Kennedy in 1961 was less favourable to the Spanish regime than General Eisenhower's Republican Administration. By 1963, Spain was becoming increasingly conscious of the asymmetry of the original agreement, in which it was given practically no guarantee of any kind of

a US defence commitment. This was accentuated when the US refused to support Spain in the latter’s colonial conflict with Morocco, at a time when Spain relied heavily on US military equipment. As a result of these difficulties, Spain demanded that the existing agreement be exchanged for a mutual defence treaty. Ardajo Alvarez, Spanish Foreign Minister was determined to change the asymmetry of US-Spanish relations. From 1957 Alvarez maintained his hope that Spain would recover international standing, due to its history, geography, strategic potential for the US, by seizing the moment to recover that footing and achieving a larger degree of international involvement.

As the US developed long-range missiles (Atlas, Titan and Minuteman) dependence on bases in Spain decreased. In 1962 General Agustin Munoz Grandes, with the support of Franco, permitted US nuclear Polaris submarines to enter Rota without the knowledge and permission of Spain’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Marine, Admiral Pedro Nieto Antunez. Consequently, in November 1962 Soviet discontent in the UN against the military bases in Spain followed: Valeriy Zorin, Moscow’s UN representative, accused Spain of having transformed itself into a vehicle for the US “to unchain the war in Europe”, and to have reaffirmed the existence on Spanish soil of secret rocket bases. The Spanish position was becoming more volatile. Moreover, the expulsion of the US military base from Libya was the reason for reactivation of the Zaragoza base, which was converted into the most important base in Europe for US military training and tactical bombing. The creation of long distance nuclear missiles that year by the Russians, brought added risk to Spain and the withdrawal of the US

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64 Each of these great underwater vessels carried sixteen nuclear missiles, each missile capable of destroying an enemy city 2,500 miles away; in Benjamin Welles, *Spain and The Gentle Anarchy*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger publishers: 1965), p. 283.
military forces from Torrejón de Ardoz came to be discussed, until the agreement’s withdrawal of B-47’s in 1963-1964, meant that such critical measures were avoided. Nevertheless, in January 1963 a Spanish proposal for the amendment of bilateral agreements was put forward: a declaration was made by Lincoln White, spokesman at the Department of State regarding new Polaris bases: “As our fleet of Polaris submarines grow continually, we are considering the possibility of additional bases.” In February 1964, a Russian warning against the installation in Spain of Polaris submarines in Rota was acknowledged in the journal *Red Star*, where the Russian Ministry of Defence warned that the installation of such bases would transform Spain into the “object of potential reprisal.”  

1.9 US Nuclear Strategy Reveals Inconsistencies

Spain’s reluctance to guarantee a non-nuclear future was a sharp contrast to her declared goals regarding the non-nuclear character of Spanish territory. This dichotomy reflected the dual civilian-military nature of security policy and the unavoidable contradictions that evolved. US Ambassador to Spain, Angier Biddle Duke, declared on arrival in Madrid in March 1965: “I think that Spain is and has to be a part of Europe.” This declaration was the beginning of US gestures to integrate its military bases in Spain into NATO, but at that point without desired success. It is possible that the Spanish nation would have shared the US wish for membership in NATO, if it were not for the scandalous affair of Palomares that took place in 1966 that highlighted the deep risks that were brought about by bilateral relations. Until then, it was not publicly known that American planes with nuclear arms on board flew over Spanish territory in the times of peace. On 17 January 1966, off the southern coast of

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Spain in the proximity of Palomares, a US air force B-52 plane carrying four unarmed B28 hydrogen bombs collided with the refuelling boom of a KC -135 tanker 9,144 while attempting to refuel. One bomb landed on Spanish soil without exploding and another was recovered from the Mediterranean Sea floor after several months of searching; two others disintegrated when falling to the ground, producing a radioactive cloud that extended for 226 hectares. Critics of the air and naval bases pointed to the incident as an example of the negative influence of the US on Spain. US Captain and army lawyer, Joe Ramirez, was one of the first US servicemen on the scene as he took part in the search for the missing bombs. In an interview given to the BBC in January 2011, he said that he was not aware of the radiation level that was caused by the incident. According to the BBC, 45 years after the accident, the US and Spanish authorities are still quarrelling over the financial compensation that Spain should be given. A water desalination plant was given by the US to Spain in 1968 as a gesture of goodwill. The fact that Spain’s Minister of Information and Tourism, Manuel Franga Iribane, US Ambassador to Spain Angier Biddle Duke and their sons went for a swim in the waters of the Mediterranean in order to show that they were not affected by

68 For three months, 1,700 US personnel and Spanish Civil Guards worked to decontaminate the area. Through all this, the US personnel wore protective clothing and underwent regular radiation checks; such measures were not taken for the Spanish workers. The Air Force commander in charge later stated, “The US Air Force was unprepared to provide adequate detection and monitoring for its personnel when an aircraft accident occurred involving plutonium weapons in a remote area of a foreign country.” The monitoring programme apparently continued at least through 1986. In 1985, at the instigation of Palomares’s mayor Antonia Flore, the villagers who had been monitored were finally allowed access to their medical records, which, according to Francisco Mingot, the director of JEN’s Institute of Radiobiological and Environmental Protection, were kept secret under pressure from the US and, later, from the Franco dictatorship, which sought to avoid excessive concern. See for example: “Broken Arrows: The Palomares and Thule Accidents” in Stephen I. Schwartz, “The Costs and Consequences of US Nuclear Weapons since 1940”, www.brookings.edu/projects/archive/nucweapons/box_73.aspx By 2011a number of the USAF military police personnel that were deployed in support of this recovery have developed medical conditions and felt were directly related to the recovery operation were allowed to file VA medical claims. The Torrejon air base had the following message posted on its official website: “If you or anyone that you know participated in this recovery and is ill please send an email to the address below for further instructions on filing a claim or call 321-276-0409” 18 March 2011, www.torrejonairbase.com
radiation, gave rise to much debate. Apart from other factors, what upset Spanish public opinion was the fact that Yugoslavia was receiving more American economic aid than Spain, which continued to put itself in nuclear danger. For this reason in July 1968 the Spanish group “Movimientos del Pueblo” protested against the American bases in Spain.  

1.10 Renewal and Renegotiation: Diverging Opinions

The agreements of 1963 only lasted five years. In 1968 the issue of the amendment of the agreements became problematic. It was necessary to make use of the automatic renewal of the agreements in June 1969 so as to make a commitment that the agreements were continued until September 1970, so that on the given dates the bases could become exclusively Spanish. For the amendment of the agreements by the end of the 1960’s, Spain’s Foreign Minister Castiella pointed out that the agreement had to become a treaty and had to be concluded in total equality, though elements of the Regime were opposed to these discussions. The anger was augmented by the presence of the US Navy in Gibraltar, all of which pushed the Spanish government to initiate a diplomatic campaign, and propaganda, that supported the revision of the pact. In an interview with Le Monde, Castiella declared: "The Spanish government doesn’t believe in the automatism of the agreements signed fifteen years ago, as the international context has changed since, although it was done with the presence of the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean and tensions in North Africa". The intentions of the Spanish government were therefore not to proceed to further negotiations without a promise of a treaty from the American side. This view was not shared by the US, which felt that

70 “1968 Chronology in Europe: Spain”, www.1968ineurope.com
Spain had already benefited prodigiously. The US had helped Spain gain international recognition and to receive financial and economic aid.

Once elected as President of the US in November 1968, Richard Nixon decided to make reductions of US military forces, which in Spain’s case included Polaris nuclear submarines with ballistic missiles based in Rota. Following a *New York Times* report that the new Bases Agreement with Spain would include US commitments to defend Spain, President Nixon at a news conference on 4 March 1969, denied that any military commitment had been made. He added "my view is that none should be made. We will, of course, analyse it at the time to see whether our vital national interests might require me to reassess it." The main difference in the negotiations between the agreements of 1963 and 1969 was the fact that the medium and long distance missiles had lost their usefulness, as the US created a strike system that enabled them to reach the USSR directly. The US change in domestic policy gave little chance for Spain to ask for more substantial military aid. From a Spanish political point of view the regaining of Gibraltar seemed much more complicated without an agreement with the US; on the other hand looking for a new partner while Spain was under Franco's regime seemed impossible. In case of the war, not only Torrejon, but also Madrid could be potentially under danger. In 1969 Carrero Blanco, under Secretary to the Presidency at the time acknowledged: "Today we have an enemy, England, in the matter with Gibraltar, without it we are being returned to square one, our relationships are deteriorating with the Vatican, and if we will also break with the United States, the only true factor that

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unites us with the West, is it possible that we live in isolation? If we don’t change the orientation of our policy, I believe we will find ourselves in a very serious situation.”

The secrecy of the bilateral agreement continued: in June 1969, the Spanish government rejected information given in the Washington Post as incorrect and false. The Franco’s government denied the report that US forces participated in some joint manoeuvres in Spain, whose aim was to coach the Francoist army to squash a potential internal revolution against the Spanish regime. Certainly, Franco displayed little interest in a Spanish contribution to West European security, regarding the Spanish military primarily as an instrument to protect the internal stability of the country.74 The independent Spanish press argued relentlessly that foreign policy should be the consequence of domestic politics, but that it was not acceptable for a foreign policy to be formulated by a dictatorial regime, as was the case at that time in Spain. The Institute of Public Opinion in Spain carried out research in 1969 that showed that more than half of the population was generally unhappy with Spanish foreign policy.75

In the 1970’s increased Soviet political and military influence in the Mediterranean made the Spanish bases more important to Washington than in the 1960s. In his memoir, Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State from September 1973, would later claim that America’s contribution to Spain’s evolution during 1970’s was “one of the major achievements of our (US) foreign policy.”76 Nevertheless the difficulties of the renewal of the 1970 agreements were exacerbated by differences within the Council of Ministers: Carrera Blanco was in favour, but Fraga was against, and Franco had to wait

for six months until they reached an agreement. According to the research carried out by the Institute of Public Opinion in 1970, 40 percent of those consulted declared that they were against the amendments to the agreements with the US. The newspaper *La Vanguardia* asked: "why continue with it [...] if it creates problems for us in international areas where we won’t have neither a voice nor a vote in the level of the important decisions?"\(^77\) The Spanish press was insisting that the treaty was imminent or the military based had to go: “At the end, for Washington, the only thing that can change is the intervention modalities, according to the course of the events in Spain."\(^78\) The negative point of these discussions was that it was not that the Spanish government was asking for larger material benefits for the surrender of the bases, but for more stable political and moral support. Finally, after three years of negotiations, a new agreement was signed on 6 August 1970 for a duration of five years. President Nixon declared: “Viva la amistad Hispano-Nortamericana.”\(^79\) This announcement was followed by an official Nixon visit to Spain in October 1970. During the visit, Nixon’s main concern was that the crowds lining the streets of Madrid should be larger than those that had turned out in 1959 to greet Eisenhower, a president whom he both respected and envied. According to Kissinger, Franco was “able to assuage Nixon’s unease over unfavourable comparisons with Eisenhower’s reception by commenting sagely that once crowds exceeded several hundred thousand the only problem was to announce some plausible figure.”\(^80\) It was argued that Kissinger was unwilling to make any concessions to Franco, who himself had no leverage over the American President. However, this “unwillingness” was mainly due to the fact that Nixon was under


growing pressure from the Senate over Vietnam and was not in the position to be generous with Franco. As a result Nixon offered US$50 million in military aid and US$25 million in credit instead of the US$ 1 billion that Spain had asked for.\footnote{The reason behind was the US creation of the anti missile system SENTINEL that led to the general revision of the structure of the defence budget. Fraga Iribane spoke of disagreements with the US on amendments of the agreements: “Spain is one of the few countries that was not offered the “hand” of Mr Marshall that has created her modest reserves with her work and her effort at a price of which America doesn’t seem to have a clear idea.” in Manuel Fraga Iribane, Memoria breve de una vida publica, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1972), p. 169-171. Later in May 1972, the bilateral agreement followed by an exchange of notes constituting an agreement between the US and Spain relating to the loan of vessels, thus indicating the change in the relationship, that resembled contracts the US had with other countries, more balanced in nature, in The American Charge d’affaires Joseph J. Montloor and interim to the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Lopez Bravo, Note No. 370, UN Treaty Series, Madrid, 30 May 1972, published in 1973 UN, Treaty Series, Vol. 756, p.141.}

1.11 A Post-Renewal Souring of Relationship

By 1970’s the military bases were increasingly becoming the reason for anti-American feeling in Spain. In 1973, the bilateral relationship had become largely based on a quid pro quo deal as the foreign policy makers in Washington, influenced largely by National Security Adviser and then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, threatened a complete halt to the relations. The view of politicians and military commentators in the US was divided regarding Spain’s demand for a mutual treaty, as some considered the presence of the US army in Spain already proof of mutual defence. As one of the top American officials of the era, Earle G. Wheeler, put it: "With the presence of American troops in Spain, US has proportioned to Spain a guarantee of security more visible and with best credibility than any written secret document."\footnote{US Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad: 1971 (1969-1971), “Hearings” of the Foreign Relations Committee at the Senate.} This was the beginning of a crisis in Spanish-US relations, which lasted a short number of years. Criticism of Madrid's policy towards the US played an important part in the removal of Lopez Bravo from the Foreign Ministry in June 1973.\footnote{James W. Cordoba, Two Nations Over Time: Spain and the US 1976-1977, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 242.} Apart from this Madrid was generally critical of US actions. In October 1973 during Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur war, Spanish
authorities found US Forces taking unauthorised actions by refuelling their aircraft on Spanish territory on their way to Israel, which breached the strict neutrality declared by the Spanish government.⁸⁴ These restrictions, it should be understood, were not directed against the US or its policies in the Middle East, but rather reflected the interests of Spain in maintaining friendly relations with the Arab states of North Africa and the Middle East, in particular the economic interests of critical importance to the Spanish economy. Among its most important economic interests in North Africa were the phosphate deposits in what is now Spanish Sahara. Moreover, Spain was a major importer of oil from the Middle East. Ninety-five percent of its oil came from that region and it could not afford to be subject to an embargo that would virtually cripple its industrial capability.⁸⁵

Shortly afterwards, the collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship following the military coup of 25 April 1974 seriously threatened to undermine NATO’s southern flank. Several months later, at the opposite end of the Mediterranean, the Cypriot crisis resulted in the collapse of the Greek military dictatorship, which was succeeded by a government which saw in NATO a symbol of US military support for the defunct Junta. Additionally, the conflict over Cyprus led Washington to impose an arms embargo on Turkey, which retaliated by threatening to buy weapons from the Soviet Union. Finally, during these years the French and Italian Communist parties steadily improved their electoral performance to the extent that the West came to see their participation in future coalition governments as inevitable. As Kissinger himself would acknowledge, “the Administration did not believe that with the Middle East in turmoil and our other bases in Mediterranean in jeopardy we could afford to abandon the

⁸⁴ Roldan Concha, Los americanos en Zaragoza. La presencia de las fuerzas aereas de los Estados Unidos en la base: (Zaragoza: Caja de Ahores y monte de piedad de Zaragoza, 1998), p. 118.
⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 120.
Spanish bases and compound the impression of a global American retreat.”

Consequently, by 1974, the Republican Administration, and Kissinger in particular, had begun to build a case for Spain's NATO membership with renewed vigour. As the State Department memorandum argued in August 1974, “it is our objective to favour and work for Spain’s closer integration with the West, both because of the strategic importance of the country, and in order to provide an anchor to its domestic stability in the post–Franco period. It is in our long-term interest to use what influence we have, in Spain and in the other European countries, to move along the rapprochement between Spain and the rest of the Western Europe, particularly in NATO.”

1.12 Franco’s Ambition Achieved through Life and in Death

During Nixon’s visit to Spain in 1978, he was able to meet Prince Juan Carlos, whom Franco had appointed his successor in July 1969. George Landau, the US director for Spain at the State Department believed that the visit was arranged to “express American confidence in the prince not only in the context of US-Spanish relations, but also as the best bet in securing the internal stability of Spain after Franco.” Following this visit and partly at the Prince’s instigation, in February 1971 Nixon sent the Spanish-speaking General Vernon Walters, on a secret fact-finding mission to Madrid, which included an interview with Franco. According to Kissinger, during the final years of the Franco regime, the US Administration had been faced with the choice of having to “ostracise and oppose the existing regime, or, while working with it, to extend our (US) contacts and therefore our influence for the post-Franco period.” It had

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87 Memorandum (Briefing Papers on Spain and Portugal) from the State Department to Brent Scowcroft, 20 August 1974, Spain (1), Box 12, National Security Adviser, PCF-EC,GFL.
opted for the latter course of action. The ailing health of the Spanish dictator brought US President Gerald Ford to Spain in June 1975. Importantly, he chose to see Prince Juan Carlos I, as the progress between the two states had been on hold for over seven years whilst the Ford Administration awaited the death of Franco and the start of a more democratic system. When Ford expressed concern to West Germany’s Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, about the possibility of losing the bases, Schmidt told him that “in order to be sure of your bases and your strategic links with Spain the day after tomorrow, you should also speak about it with those who will be in power in the future.” Nonetheless, more than anything, Washington was more concerned with preserving Spain's political stability. This stability was crucial for the US to make the best use of Spain's strategic, as well as economic, resources after the end of the Franco era. The relationship with the US acquired greater relevance for the Franco regime once it lost the external support of Portugal and the Sante Sede Concordat. When the bilateral agreements came up for renewal in 1975, the US used "the carrot of eventual Spanish membership in NATO during negotiations." The bilateral treaties of 1953 and their amendments were significant for the US in the sense that they drew Spain directly into the American-led system of European defence, but did not integrate Spain into the multilateral command structure of NATO. On the other hand, the US and its European allies remained firm in barring Spain from entry into NATO prior to the end of Franco's regime.

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Taking into consideration the fact that the earlier agreements with Spain covering US access to bases were executive agreements only, the treaty-based agreement negotiations that commenced in 1975 brought an improvement in US-Spanish relations. It was in early October 1975, that the first stages of the negotiations were completed, when a preliminary agreement was reached between Spanish Foreign Minister Pedro Cortina, and Kissinger. Importantly, the pre-agreement was reached at the height of a major international campaign against the regime triggered by the execution of five anti-Franco activists convicted for terrorist killings only weeks before the dictator’s death. The US pressed for the renewal of the leases on the military bases at the time when major European democracies withdrew their embassies from Madrid in protest. Just before his death, Franco gave instructions that the preliminary agreements should be completed. The US gave its fundamental support for more than two decades to Franco in spite of domestic and foreign opinion, but this fact could not alter the internal situation in the country or speed up the process of agreement amendments. Later, just a month before Franco's death in November 1975, a US official was told to pass the following information from Franco to Ford: “Tell the President that the order and the stability in Spain were guaranteed by the opportune and ordinate measures that I am adopting.” Franco was making sure that the efforts made by him to make Spain an active player in international relations, with the help of the US, should be guaranteed beyond the end of his rule. The 1953 Madrid Pact that served as a basis for the relationship between the two countries changed little until the death of Franco in November 1975, and the negotiations at the end of Franco's era for the mutual treaty that was signed later in 1976 highlighted the continued importance both countries placed on their relationship with the other. Following Franco's death, expectations rose.

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that the US might now support Spain’s NATO membership. Moreover, some expressed the view in Spain that "the US will help us build democracy."  

1.13 Concessionary Politics at Work for Both Countries

Looking back at Franco's regime and his bilateral agreements with the US it is unsurprising that the open criticism of the concessions made by him concerning military bases became public after the end of his rule. For instance, it was argued that “for Spaniards in general, the perception of the Soviet threat did not exist, it was just a central topic of Franco’s propaganda". It was also argued that “those who support the US are the Francoists, and those who should normally long for liberty and democracy that exist in the US, oppose the US–Spanish bilateral ties." Indeed, the history of US bases in Spain, has led one author to conclude that “engaging authoritarian leaders by striking basing deals with them has done little for democratization in those states because these leaders know that, at bottom, US military planners care more about the bases’ utility than about local political trends." As a senior US diplomat serving in Madrid in 1974-78 observed, “the security relationship itself (would) be more soundly based for the long term if founded on a democratic consensus than if delivered from the will of one man." This advice, however, was only rarely followed by decision-makers in Washington during the twilight years of the Franco regime and beyond, thereby underestimating the future standing of the United States in the eyes of many Spaniards.

Despite the fact that the US provided Spain with almost US$4 billion in aid over twenty-five years, there were frequent complaints voiced by Spain’s government, that

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the financial assistance was either inadequate or unproductive. However, one has to acknowledge that by 1975 Spanish military forces were well equipped with an extensive range of modern, sophisticated weapons, thanks in large part to US military aid. For instance, during the Spanish reserve crises of 1958-1959, US economic aid played an indispensable role, if not preventing the complete financial collapse of the Spanish state.\footnote{William Braasch Watson, Samuel Chavkin, Jack Sangster, and William Susman, \textit{The US bases in Spain: implications for the US Foreign policy}, (New York: New York Publishers, 1976), p. 40. The US connection opened door to the IMF for Spain, and represented an abrupt and decisive change from previous economic policies and enabled the Spanish economy to take off during the 1960’s. A year after the adoption of the Stabilization plan, Franco admitted that “without the plan, we were heading towards bankruptcy”; The US bases agreement acted as a stamp of approval for the American business community, while the Stabilisation Plan engineered a long period of the highest growth in Europe, in William Chislett, “Spain and the United States: the Quest for Mutual Rediscovery”, \textit{Elcano Working Papers}, 44417-2005, www.royalistutoelcano.org} Although the arrival of military material from the US improved the level of equipment of the Spanish armed forces, it had a negative effect on the development of the national defence industry, as the number of orders to domestic arms producers fell sharply once the US armaments began to arrive.\footnote{Buesa, M. And Brana J, “Tecnologia y dependencia: el caso de la industria militare”, \textit{Informacion Comercial Española}, No 552, August 1979.} Regarding this view, one has to conclude that the reinforcement and modernisation of Spain’s armaments was not possible without technical collaboration with the US. Cadiz was the centre for transport and military supply to US troops in Europe; Torrejon, was the primary logistics centre in Europe.\footnote{Jose Manuel Orti Bordas, “Las Bases”, \textit{Arriba}, Madrid, 13 September 1968.} Undeniably, Rota, Torrejon de Ardoz, Zaragoza and Moron were all important bases in the dramatic events of the Cold War. In sum, the agreements of 1953 obeyed the Cold War law of short term needs.\footnote{Fernando Prieto, S.J., \textit{España Política 1969}, (Bilbao: Mensajero, 1973), p. 133. Angel Vinas, “Los Pactos con Estados Unidos, 1953-1976: Una Vision Estructural”, in Fernando Puell Del Villa et Sonia Alda Mejias (eds), “\textit{Fuerzas Armadas y Politicas De Defensa Duramente El Franquismo}”, Madrid, 3-5 November 2009, IV Congreso De Historia de la Defensa, Instituto Universitario General Gutierrez Mellado, www.iugm.es}

Moreover, as Vernon A. Walters has pointed out, "I dare to think that without the agreements of 1953 between Spain and the US, the history could have been very
different." Indeed, by 1975 Spain formed an integral part of not only US military planning but also of Western cultural and economic life. Concerns voiced by European nations and the US in the 1940’s and 1950’s about the lack of democracy in Spain, gave way to the reality of Realpolitik and economic opportunities. This transition was made possible by the acceptance of Spain into the Western defence structure that followed the signing of the Madrid Agreements in 1953. In addition, the agreements served to bring Spain closer to the free world and contributed to the normalization of Spain’s external relations. Most of Europe, both Western and Eastern, systematically opposed these attempts, but the signing of the military pacts seemed to signal a significant shift, from open or overt hostility to Spanish membership on the part of Western and some Latin American countries, to gradual acceptance. But it was the democratisation of Spain in the 1970s that would give some impetus to mutual efforts at establishing strong diplomatic relations.

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Chapter 2

Spain and NATO: 1975-1982

2.1 The Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy

For most of the period following the Civil War, Spain, had been isolated from the international community. Unable to participate in international affairs, General Franco constructed an elaborate foreign policy that was designed to maximize Spain’s glorious past as well as exploit its geo-strategic position in the Mediterranean. Central to this policy was Spain’s special relationship with Latin America and its status as a Mediterranean power; close ties to the Arab nations of North Africa and the Middle East; as well as bilateral military agreements with the United States.

With Franco’s death on 20 November 1975, the existing foreign policy that emphasized Spain’s difference compared to the rest of Europe became a painfully negative element of Franco’s legacy. This chapter aims to highlight the major developments in Spanish foreign policy from his death to the consolidation of democracy that was marked by the victory of the Socialist government in 1982, which coming one year after North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) entry, heralded a recovery of Spanish prestige and a rise in international status. This culminated in Spanish accession to the European Community (EC) in 1986. The cumulative effects of those developments enabled Spain to end two of its greatest challenges: her absence from Europe’s economic, political and military organizations and the maintenance of an unequal security relationship with the US. Thus, Spain’s re-integration into the Western community as a democratic nation was the most comprehensive rejection of the Franco legacy in international
affairs. The clear trend towards the Europeanization of Spain’s foreign policy, in conjunction with its position as a key strategic ally of the US, helped Spain to achieve increasing recognition as a global power.

### 2.2 Initial Democratic Missteps and Achievements

In the wake of the Franco era, King Juan Carlos I pointed out the evolving Spanish foreign policy orientation: “Europe would be incomplete without the reference to the Spanish name and without taking into consideration the things that my predecessors did. Europe will have to take Spain into account and Spaniards are Europeans. Both parts have to understand it and assume the consequences. It’s a necessity of the moment.”

Despite the desire to move towards democratization, from the start of Carlos Arias Navarro’s rule in 1975, there remained considerable institutional barriers. Hence, until the first half of 1976 a strategy of continuity was pursued. The foreign policy objectives during that period were as follows:

1. To improve relations with bordering countries: Portugal, Morocco, France, and Great Britain, who held sovereignty over Gibraltar;
2. To renegotiate and renew the bilateral Base Agreement with the US, which was due to expire in 1976;
3. To establish, and develop, contact with the EEC and NATO nations;
4. To improve relations with the Roman Catholic Church; to impress on the Latin American countries the significance of Spain’s move to democracy.

From the above one sees that a chief concern of Spanish foreign policy in the immediate post-Franco period was improving both European and Atlantic relations.

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1King Juan Carlos I, speech at the Cortes on Spain’s foreign policy, 29 November 1975 in Javier Tusell, Juan Áviles, Rosa Pardo (eds.), La política exterior de España en el siglo XX, (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2000), p. 461.
However, this global strategy did not achieve its anticipated goals in the immediate aftermath of Franco’s death. The desire for integration into Western Europe did not lead to any major diplomatic advances during the Navarro era as the international expectations of a swift and dramatic change in Spain’s domestic political and institutional process failed to materialize. Despite claims that Spain was entering the “democratic orbit”, the Spanish system remained fundamentally unchanged: the Franquista political structure maintained control whilst the new regime struggled to establish itself. The domestic policy-making of King Juan Carlos I was, however, more successful. In 1976 he skilfully steered through the Francoist Cortes the dramatic law for political reform, which stipulated the immediate dissolution of the legislative body, in effect inviting the Cortes to abolish itself. Furthermore, the King gave General Gutierrez Mellado a free hand to make the armed forces more ideologically compatible with the armed forces of the NATO countries, an indication of the monarchy’s hopes that Spain would be admitted to NATO once it became a democratic monarchy.

Efforts to augment the Spanish role in the Western alliance system, however, had to proceed in phases. The first major step in this regard was taken in 1976, when the US and Spain concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. During negotiations on the renewal of the bases, which began in 1974, US military representatives wanted to retain what they had in Spain: the naval base of Rota, the air base at Moron, and the air base at Zaragoza. The Torrejon air base, just south of Madrid, had not been used for a number of years. Polaris submarines were stationed at Rota; at Moron there were large Air Force tankers, and Zaragoza was then mainly used as a gunnery range for NATO aircraft. The nature of Spanish demands during the treaty negotiations underlined

Spain’s increasingly tough stance on US use of Spanish territory that potentially could endanger its security. Thus Spain demanded that the air force tankers in Torrejon could not be used to refuel military aircraft. The Spanish government claimed their radar had detected American tankers refuelling military aircraft coming out of the continental US on the way to the Middle East during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. As a result, the Arab states protested to the Spanish authorities over the use of tankers for this purpose. Moreover, Spanish negotiators insisted that all nuclear submarines be removed from Rota.  

The negotiations were difficult, with the first crisis due to a lack of coordination between the delegations over the structure and format of the talks. A similar lack of coordination precipitated a second crisis. The US offered a concrete proposal for consideration, but the lack of a consistent Spanish policy caused confusion within the delegation, leading to a rejection of each point in the proposal. The third crisis occurred as the US delegation prepared to bargain over the details of the framework agreement. Communication problems within the Spanish government prevented its negotiators from agreeing to any of the US compromises. Spain’s Foreign Minister Jose Maria de Areilza insisted on raising the existing executive agreement over the bases to the status of a treaty, which required the approval of the US Senate, so as to underline Washington’s recognition of the fact that it was no longer dealing with a dictatorship, but with a democracy-in-the-making.  

There were considerable advances in regards to the terms of the agreement as on 24 January 1976, US Secretary of State Henry  

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3 US Admiral Hyman G. Rickover did not see it as an issue because he knew that the US was just about to have the Trident submarine on line, with its capability to operate out of the continental US. See: Robert J. McCloskey, “Spain, the 1976 Treaty: Negotiation”, in John W. McDonald & Diane B. Bendahmane, *US bases Overseas, Negotiations with Spain, Greece, and the Philippines*, (Boulder, CL: Westview Press, 1990), p. 19.  
Kissinger allowed Areilza to convince him of the benefits of a new Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which was duly signed by Areilza and Kissinger in Santa Cruz Palace, Madrid. The treaty was ratified in June 1976 and came into force in September 1976. The US Senate expressed the hope that the treaty would “serve to support and foster Spain’s progress toward free institutions and toward Spain’s participation in the institutions of Western European political and economic cooperation.”

The 1976 agreement improved US-Spanish bilateral relations as it included the creation of a Council at Foreign Minister’s level that would meet periodically, as well as the establishment of a permanent commission to coordinate US–Spanish defence matters with NATO; there was also an increase in loans and credits to Spain; and the US agreed to sell to Spain four squadrons of advanced F-16 fighters; it also provided a framework for the start of the denuclearisation of Spain, starting at the end of January 1979, with the removal of all the nuclear submarines from the Rota base by 1 July 1979. Nuclear storage was a very sensitive point during the 1976 negotiations. Spaniards were adamant that not only would there be no nuclear storage, but that this would need to be stated in official documents. According to Philip E. Barringer, an American negotiator, the US denied that nuclear weapons were stored in Spain. Other countries followed the Spanish precedent and asked for similar arrangements with the US. This restriction was a positive development in the US-Spanish relationship, as US negotiators ultimately respected Spain’s stand on the nuclear issue. In spite of the progress, one must acknowledge the veracity of the proposition put forward by Angel Viñas, who argued

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that though, in some respects, the 1976 treaty was a clear improvement over the preceding agreement; it had obvious deficiencies, particularly concerning Spanish control over facilities used by the US.

Interestingly, the 1976 treaty was as much a political as a strategic document. Spain was going through major internal changes that caused much uncertainty. It was important to the US that the 1976 treaty be implemented in a way that made Spain more of an active and accepted member of the European family. In international law a treaty is no more or less binding than an executive agreement, but a treaty has far reaching political connotations. Robert J. McCloskey, one of the principle US negotiators, believed that Franco’s death also helped the US to get the treaty through Congress, as during Franco’s reign there was overwhelming congressional opposition to the treaty. Moreover, in a resolution of 21 June 1976, that accompanied the US ratification of the treaty, the Senate expressed its anticipation of “Spain’s full cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.” The treaty, which entered into force on 21 September 1976, stated that both nations would work mutually towards harmonizing their bilateral defence relationship “within existing security agreements in the North Atlantic area.” To this end, the treaty created a US-Spanish Council to monitor the treaty’s implementation and to work “towards development of appropriate coordination” between the Council and NATO. This treaty served as the bridge to Spanish membership in NATO, and also superseded the existing US-Spanish executive agreement on military installations in Spain. The withdrawal of the Poseidon submarines, the last American units with nuclear armaments from Rota, were agreed and shifted to Holy Loch, Scotland. These were, among others, important signs which

7 Ibid. p. 20.
gave Spanish policy-makers hope that fundamentals of the relationship could indeed be changed.  

The treaty was attacked in the US on several grounds. It was claimed to be unnecessary and excessive. Not only had advances in US military technology meant the Spanish bases had become less useful and more costly to maintain, but opponents believed the treaty perpetuated the Franco regime and inhibited Spain’s transition to democracy. From the Spanish point of view the American presence was unpopular. Nonetheless, King Juan Carlos I, in a speech before a joint session of the US Congress in 1977, said that a democratic Spain was not a threat, but a realization of democratic aspirations. Moreover, ultimately it was widespread support for Juan Carlos that helped him to accelerate the move towards democracy and dismantle the Francoist regime. US arguments in defence of the treaty were presented in strategic and logistical terms, as the treaty was vital for the defence of the South Atlantic and for the monitoring of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean. All of this was performed by a naval security group operating out of Rota. Its work involved all types of maritime intelligence and greatly enhanced the US capability in anti-submarine warfare. It should also be noted that Spanish base facilities (Zaragoza) were virtually irreplaceable training assets for the US because of their location and favourable weather conditions.

10 Ibid.
2.3 Spain’s Other Foreign Policy Strategies

Another important concern that Spain shared with the US and NATO immediately after the death of Franco was related to whether Africa and the Southern Atlantic could be used as part of a Soviet strategy to outflank NATO. The announcement made in early October 1975 by King Hassan II of Morocco to organise a “green march” of half a million volunteers to take over the Spanish Sahara, a territory it had long since claimed, forced Spain to turn to the US for assistance. Prince Juan Carlos feared that an armed conflict with Morocco might divide the army and destabilize an already fragile political situation in Spain. He therefore turned to Kissinger, who agreed to intercede with Hassan II and other Arab leaders, as well as with the French President, Valery Giscard d’Estaing. US involvement permitted Juan Carlos to travel to the Saharan capital of Al Aalun to address his fellow army officers, promising them a negotiated withdrawal rather than a dishonourable retreat, thereby strengthening the Prince’s standing in the eyes of Spain.¹⁵ The Spanish Sahara was partitioned between Morocco and Mauritania in an agreement signed by Spain and the two African states in November 1975. In February 1976 the Sahara tribal legislature voted unanimously for the annexation of Western (Spanish) Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania and the conflicts between those two states and Algeria wavered.¹⁶

continued support for insurgents in the Spanish Canary Islands damaged Spain’s relations with the African state.\(^{17}\)

Conversely, Spain’s relationship with Saudi Arabia, as a result of the Sahara issue had become closer. Although Spain was reluctant to withdraw from the Western Sahara, she did so in cooperation with the United Nations and with Saudi Arabia’s guarantee to sell her oil and gas if Algeria retaliated by cutting off her supplies.\(^{18}\) Moreover, the agreement of 1977 for the creation of a mixed economic commission at ministerial level between Spain and Saudi Arabia made Spain one of only four states with similar cooperation agreements (the others being the US, Great Britain, Japan and West Germany). Thus as Spain, NATO and the USSR had a strategic interest in the Sahara and Canary Islands, it was mutually beneficial for Spain to become a member of NATO. Her geopolitical position would give NATO a better reach into the South Atlantic to counter any Soviet incursion into Africa, simultaneously protecting Spanish interests.

Another aspect of the growing ties between Spain and other states, during these years of transition, was its special relationship with Latin America, Europe and the US. Both Spain and the US had long-standing interests in that region, and the move to democratic rule in Spain had a positive impact on the people of Hispanic America. Thus Spain


began to envisage a role as a bridge between the US and Latin America. After Franco’s death, Spain's transition to a democratic form of government was paralleled by the establishment of various forms of democratic rule in some Latin American countries. The timing of these governmental changes was largely coincidental, although Spain offered its transition process as an example for Latin America to follow. The democratization process in Spain caused a reorientation of Spanish foreign policy. Under Adolfo Suarez, Spain pursued a more insistent foreign policy, which included giving increased attention to Latin America. Both Suarez and King Juan Carlos made official visits to most of the Latin American countries, and Spanish investment in the area increased markedly.  The relationship between the United States and Latin America has been shaped by two main issues since the end of WWII: security cooperation and economic relations based on neoliberal economic policies. According to Pablo Toral during the Cold War this rule was contested on economic grounds, but not on strategic and security grounds, whereas in the 1990’s it was contested on strategic and security grounds, but not on economic grounds. Before the end of the Cold War, the United States understood hemispheric security as the prevention of the emergence of Communist regimes in the hemisphere. For Spain, cooperating with the United States in its Latin American endeavours helped Madrid gain the support of the US when dealing with different issues in other parts of the world. For Spain becoming a member of the Western community through democratisation was its way of rising to international prominence. A close alliance with the United States, forged through cooperation in Latin America helped Madrid to start playing a more important role in the region.

22. Ibid.p.16.
2.4 The Deepening of Democratic Transition

True progress in the transition to democracy in Spain began in earnest with the appointment of Adolfo Suarez as Head of government in July 1976, who was in power until 1977. The modernisation of the Spanish military occurred as the old regime was eradicated and the new 1978 Constitution was put in place. In so doing the “transitional regime” had introduced the structural and institutional changes that were necessary for the establishment of democracy. The style of government changed dramatically and, unlike Ariaz Navarro, Adolfo Suarez sought to make foreign policy a fundamental part of his political strategy. Suarez put together a talented and pro-reformist cabinet, included Marcelino Oreja Aguirre as his foreign minister. Notably, Aguirre was closely involved in Suarez’s efforts to integrate Spain into the EEC and NATO, as a means of furthering the democratization of Spain.

In the first months of Suarez’s government, the political strategy for winning the election was based on the establishment of the Christian Democratic Party (CDP), composed of all sectors from left to right: it was hoped that such a coalition could protect the new government from the Francoist Right and the Communist and Socialist Left. The US Ambassador to Spain, Well Stabler, who had served in Italy and was an expert on the Christian Democratic movement, was believed to favour this strategy, the development of which was entrusted to Alfonso Osorio, deputy vice-premier to Suarez.\(^{23}\) It is interesting in terms of democratic Spain’s approach to the EEC that Suarez removed accession negotiations from the Foreign Ministry’s responsibilities and created a special Ministry for Relations with the European Communities, demonstrating that accession to the ECC was not viewed as just another dimension of Spanish foreign policy. This was also evident in the way the Spanish Constitution of 1978 included an

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article envisaging the transfer of sovereignty to international institutions and the supremacy and direct effect of International Law. Furthermore, Suarez attempted to turn the special relationship with Latin America and the Arab world into a positive factor by making them one of the features of Spain’s re-entry into the Western community.²⁴

Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, who replaced Suarez in February 1981, represented the more Conservative wing of the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD). An avowed supporter of Atlanticism, Calvo-Sotelo identified the steps toward Spain’s entry into NATO as “the main lines of our foreign policy,”²⁵ and he hoped to develop popular support for NATO entry. Calvo-Sotelo opened the parliamentary debate on NATO accession with the declaration, “we must restore Spain’s international position, which was denied to it for a long time while there was dictatorship.”²⁶ Foreign Minister Perez-Llorca stressed that “NATO membership implies breaking away from the tradition of isolation” and that “Spain will be influential in developing the future policies of the entire continent.”²⁷ Defence Minister Alberto Oliart echoed the same sentiment in discussing the impact of Spanish entry into NATO: “Spanish foreign policy will witness something very positive because Spain will play its role as a European power in Europe. In this lies the secret of its strength as a state, as a society and as a nation.”²⁸

The timing of entry was critical, as 1981 was also the year in which the military base agreements with the US came up for renewal.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 32
The real options for Spain therefore were to become a part of NATO and integrate the bilateral relationship with the US into that framework or become neutral, which would disrupt relations with the US. Despite economic problems, Spain had resources and industrial potential which could be valuable to NATO. Spain had a growing military industrial base and was producing its own mechanized Infantry Fighting Vehicle, the BMR-600, which was reportedly as good as any equivalent vehicle, made in NATO. Spain was also producing the French AMX-30 tank under license. Spanish ship-building and repair facilities were among the best in Europe, and Spain had, for several years, provided depot-level maintenance for both US and Spanish aircraft. Spain’s rather intensive automobile industry also has considerable military potential, as it continuously devoted almost a quarter of the government’s (UCD) budget to defence.

2.5 Entry into NATO on the Agenda

Along with foreign minister Perez Llorca, Calvo-Sotelo introduced the issue of NATO membership into the parliamentary debate on 27 October 1981. But it was a contentious issue for the Spanish Left, which saw NATO membership as aggravating the Cold War environment. Those opposed to entry were concerned with the implications for nuclear armament; the modernisation requirements of Spanish military forces; the impact on East-West confrontations; provocation of the Warsaw Pact; the challenge to Ceuta and Melilla, as well as North African security, which would be outside alliance protection; and finally issues related to suitable trade-offs that might not be obtained over Gibraltar and in the negotiations for entry into the ECC. Those in

favour of NATO membership concentrated on the possibility of Spain participating in a political, as well as strategic alliance, at a global level. Given the fact that all of Spain’s security links were with the West, it would have been difficult for any political parties to present serious opposition, and thus the argument for joining the Alliance was the only way forward for Spain in the international arena.

Before it became clear that Spain would join NATO, a principle issue was the question of a mutual security guarantee. As in 1976, the Spanish government made it clear from the beginning that it wanted such a bilateral guarantee, mainly because of worries over the North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Since Britain was more powerful than Spain, it was believed that NATO would always support the UK on the issue of Gibraltar; consequently, membership would restrain Spain’s ability to manoeuvre. Opposition to nuclear weapons, and anti-Americanism, primarily a left-wing phenomenon, were also factors. According to Angel Viñas, “all the Spanish Left was dead set against NATO membership” and the issue was fought over with ardour. The Government never convinced the Left and the Left felt overpowered and frustrated. Although the U.S. connection was also questioned, both the Socialist and the Communist parties did not object to its continuation. In regards to the antinuclear movement in Spain, there was a protest against the Lemoniz nuclear power plant that occurred in July 1977 in Bilbao, with up to 200,000 people in attendance. The building of the power station was also opposed by Euskadi TA Askatasuna (ETA), a terrorist Basque independents organisation and resulted in the number of casualties

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following their attack on the plant workers. The US missile deployment in Spain was thus complicated by the rise of the anti-nuclear movement. Indeed, responding to adverse trends in the military balance, NATO decided in 1979 to reinforce deterrence by deploying US intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF). Thus, the growth of the NATO navy’s combat fleet and exercises in the early 1980’s began to attract the attention of anti-nuclear activists and politicians, both in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. For years NATO had eluded the protests of American and European anti-nuclear groups, in part by “neither confirming nor denying” the presence of nuclear weapons on its vessels. Polls commissioned by NATO and by the US International Communications Agency, suggested that West European sentiment against modernising NATO nuclear weapons by introducing ground-launched cruise missiles and advanced US Pershing II ballistic missiles, was a minority view. However, as John Dorenberg noted in *International Herald Tribune* article in February 1981, “Publicized opinion has a way of becoming public opinion and the more publicized view by far has been that of opposing the deployment of the new missiles authorised by NATO defence ministers in December 1979.”

In the next several years, the negative effects of this decision came to rival its anticipated benefits. According to Richard K. Betts, by the time the first missiles were installed in 1983, many of the leaders who had made the decision regarded the outcome as a Pyrrhic victory. The new missiles provoked the Soviet Union as much as they deterred it, and they shook European confidence in security. Conflict emerged between NATO’s strategic purpose and its political solidarity – or, as Michael Howard put it, between deterrence of the Soviet government and reassurance of the

35 Ibid.
people of Western Europe.\textsuperscript{38} The internal political relationships thus affected NATO’s cohesion, and, therefore, its strategic effectiveness, while in consequence put in doubt the benefits of Spain’s eventual NATO’s membership.

Moreover, NATO was perceived by some as a cover for US imperialism in the form of projecting its power via military presence on foreign soil.\textsuperscript{39} Spain’s concerns on entry into NATO were similar to those of Greece, in many respects, although the motivations were somewhat different. The country’s ban on nuclear weapons was motivated principally by pacifist sentiment and the belief that it would, thus, prevent Spain from becoming a nuclear target.\textsuperscript{40} For some time after NATO entry, Spain refused to integrate formally its forces into NATO’s military commands, primarily out of fear of becoming a nuclear target. As Wiliam H. Kinkade, the executive director of the Arms Control Association in Washington pointed out in November 1983, “In Spain, NATO’s newest ally, fears of US imperialism and the growing concern about nuclear power brings hesitation about nuclear weapons in its wake. Large murals on buildings in poorer sections of Socialist-run Barcelona depict them as equally menacing.”\textsuperscript{41} Spain was thus keen to ask the US for greater defence support in exchange for the dangers posed by the nuclear presence on its soil brought by the US military presence. Spain’s territorial objective was to ask NATO to guarantee the protection of the African enclaves. Spain governed Ceuta and Melilla as parts of the Almeria province and considered these enclaves on the African coast to be integral parts of the country. The


\textsuperscript{40} Thankos Veremis, Yannis Valinakis, Marquino Barrio,\textit{US bases in the Mediterranean, the cases of Greece and Spain}, (Athens: Hellenic Foundation for Defence and Foreign Policy, 1989).

Cortes instructed the government on the “need to guarantee the security of the entire national territory, both inside and outside the Peninsula.” Defence Minister Oliart indicated that the NATO framework might provide for defence of the enclaves if attacked from the sea, but if threatened from land, the allies must be consulted. This speculation presumably rested on the assumption that only the Soviet Union would mount a naval attack, while a ground attack could come from Morocco. He conceded that a specific mention of Ceuta and Melilla in the NATO agreement might “create further tensions” and Spain did not publicly press for an extension of NATO boundaries in subsequent negotiations.  

Supporters also argued that with democracy NATO membership was the logical consequence of Spain’s western and European options, and that the geopolitical situation that the country found itself in made neutrality impossible. Spanish proponents’ corollary hope of NATO membership was that it would reorient the focus of army leaders away from reactionary preoccupations and towards defence of the West. According to Antonio Sanchez Gijon, head of the Institute for International Questions, membership in NATO would rationalize Spain’s role in the West: maintain free access to raw materials; and secure petroleum at a price determined by market conditions and not by political or military considerations. European integration was also an essential factor, in the mind of the civilian political leadership, as a means of successfully consolidating the 1981 NATO membership application. The 1981 Cortes

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44 During Calvo-Sotelo’s investiture debate in Parliament, a small group led by Civil Guard Lt. Col. Antonio Tojero Molina broke into the legislative chamber, held legislations hostage, and attempted a Coup d’Etat. After many tens of hours and the personal intervention of King Juan Carlos I, the coup attempt failed. Nevertheless, it had created a climate of instability. As negotiations proceeded, the Calvo-Sotelo government seemed to be losing political support and the US negotiators found themselves working in an environment of political uncertainty in Spain, which made the negotiations more difficult.
Resolution, which authorised the Spanish government to apply for NATO membership, started with a declaration of “the desirability of Spain becoming integrated into the political, economic and defence structure of the Western world”, and it directed the government to accelerate “negotiations with the EEC […] in parallel with negotiations within the Atlantic alliance.” The evidence suggests that Spain’s interest in joining NATO may have been motivated largely by its need to enter the Common Market, and the government repeatedly made the point that membership in the alliance would be a very positive step towards joining the EEC. Common Market membership, essential for Spain’s economic growth would be considerably less difficult once Spanish military programmes became integrated with those of NATO nations, most of which were EEC members.45 In addition to improving prospects of joining the EEC, it was hoped that NATO membership itself would bring economic benefits.

2.6 US still Key to Spain in Europe and the World

Spain’s position within the Western alliance had been hostage for several years to the bilateral talks with the US over American bases on Spanish soil. Despite protests by the Spanish government that the two issues were separate, both the US and the principal NATO allies saw them as one. On the domestic front, prominent members of the opposition, as well as the wider public, had trouble distinguishing between the two issues. The precise nature of Spain’s relations with the alliance was virtually on hold until the fate of the US bases in Spain had been determined. If anything, there had been a slight hardening of the positions taken by France, Germany, and Great Britain with reference to Spanish participation in the joint military command, Spanish obligations to the alliance, and Spanish access to decision-making within the alliance. It could be

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argued that these difficulties spilled over into the debate within the European Community. In any case, the Spanish government found the bilateral talks with the US over bases on Spanish territory to be hindering progress in the slow process of Spain’s re-entry into the Western community of nations. The outcome of the talks on the bases undoubtedly was to shape the role that Spain played within NATO and on the world stage, including the evolution of its so-called “special relationship” with Latin America.

In 1981 Spain’s military agreement with the US came up for renewal. The Spanish decision not to join NATO or to renew the military agreements with the US was a potentially dangerous precedent for other allies who might seek to reduce the US presence in their countries. As the 1981-1982 negotiations progressed, it was obvious, at least from the Spanish perspective, that the 1976 treaty was not satisfactory. The Spaniards lost no time in pointing out the flaws in the 1976 treaty and argued that the US had taken advantage of Spain at a very vulnerable moment when it was passing through the critical transition to democratic rule. At a press conference in the wake of a visit to the US, Foreign Minister Perez-Llorca clearly implied that Spain would be more reluctant to support US initiatives in the future. He stated that the military application of the alliance “will be established through relevant negotiations in which the sixteen countries of the organization will take part and will not be left to the unilateral decision of the US.” On another occasion he was more precise: “If we join the Atlantic alliance, clearly the bases will be placed at the service of a specific objective, which is stated in the treaty. The US will, therefore, cease to have facilities in Spain for a worldwide policy […] unless it is for the defence of Europe and North
America, as a member of NATO it will have to ask permission in every individual case.  

The government claimed that public opinion and the development of democratic institutions were not taken into account in the 1976 treaty and argued that the political changes in Spain should be reflected in the new agreement. Now that Spain was a democracy, they argued, the new agreement had to be politically sustainable. It had to demonstrate clearly that the US supported Spanish democracy. As such, Spain seemed to desire a reward in any new agreement for its new democratic status and the steps it had taken toward NATO entry. A good example of a clearly pro-Atlanticist stance during the base renewal negotiations was seen in the series of editorials in the periodical Cambio 16, in the autumn of 1981, in which the beneficial effects of possible membership were outlined:

- Spain’s isolation would come to an end;
- Spain would be part of a forum where freedom was defended;
- The unequal relationship with the US would cease;
- The armed forces would be modernized.  

If the country finally moved ahead and became a member of NATO, it was because Prime Minister Suarez’s lack of authority over his party forced him to resign and his replacement, Calvo-Sotelo (1981-1982), who had previously been the Minister for Relations with the EEC, firmly believed that NATO represented the community of free and democratic nations to which Spain should belong if it wanted to be considered a modern Western democracy. Calvo-Sotelo knew that popular support for NATO membership was non-existent and he was also well aware of the fact that Gonzalez’s

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47 “In favour of joining NATO”, Editorial, 9 September 1981.
Socialists, who were likely to win a landslide parliamentary majority in the next elections, firmly opposed NATO membership and had announced a referendum to pull the country out of NATO if they won office. However, it was evident that withdrawing from NATO would be much costlier than simply not joining. Thus, despite accusations, from the Left in particular, that this would jeopardize, not strengthen, Spain’s security and even make the nation a pawn in superpower politics, Spain became a member of NATO on 30 May 1982.

2.7 Grappling for Parity in the Renewal Agreement

During the pre-negotiation period of the bilateral agreement Spain indicated that it wanted an entirely new form of agreement, both in format and content. But officials were vague when it came to specific details. They also expressed much dissatisfaction with the current treaty, stating that they were vitally interested in upgrading the quality of the Spanish armed forces. There is no question that Spanish military pride was involved. Anticipating NATO membership, they did not want to be embarrassed by inferior military equipment. The difference this time was that the Spanish military wanted the most modern equipment available, equipment that was, in many cases, just entering the active inventory of US forces, such as M-1 tanks, F-16 fighters, and the P3C Navy patrol aircraft.

The US also had their own objectives and concerns:

1. Military transit rights: The Spaniards had given a clear indication that they were going to restrict the right of US aircraft to transit Spanish bases to other NATO and non-NATO bases, especially aircraft going to Israel and Egypt. This was a major US concern, not only due to the number of US aircraft which already
transited Spain (over 10,000 a year), but also to the increasing need for transit rights to the Middle East, especially in the event of a war in that area.

2. Logistical Naval Support: The use of Rota was vital to US Navy interests as it provided the logistical, command and control base for US naval ships operating in the eastern Atlantic and western Mediterranean. There was no obvious alternative, as the nearest US bases were either in England or Italy.

3. Nuclear-Powered Warship Visits: Spain was increasingly denying permission for US nuclear powered naval ships to visit Spanish ports. This caused logistical problems for US nuclear ships operating in the Western Mediterranean and reflected Spanish concerns over the nuclear aspect of the bilateral relationship.

4. Tactical Air Training. Due to the year-round good flying weather conditions and the low population density in Spain, the US Air Force in Europe used a range near Zaragoza and eastern Spain for 60 per cent of its tactical training. There was no readily available alternative elsewhere in Europe. The Turks had become increasingly restrictive about US use of tactical ranges in their country, and growing popular unrest threatened to close ranges in Italy.

5. Tanker Support: A partial squadron of US tanker aircraft, used for aerial refuelling and in support of transit was stationed in Zaragoza. There was increasing evidence that the Spaniards might deny basing rights of these aircraft, which would hinder support of transit aircraft denied landing rights. During the 1976 negotiations, Spain had been successful in removing a full squadron of US tanker aircraft from Torrejon because they were afraid of a fully loaded tanker crashing into a populated area with great loss of life. The people of Zaragoza indicated that they had similar fears and believed the threat of a crash was no less in Zaragoza than the outskirts of Madrid. This was due to the disastrous experience of Palomares incident in 1966.
US negotiator Donald J. Planty argued that by the 1980’s the US Congress would no longer approve multi-year aid commitments in treaties even with the “best efforts” of all involved.\textsuperscript{48} However, there was an issue for US operational use of ranges and airspace. The Spaniards continued to object strongly to US proposals to include within the agreement specific US training objectives at the various ranges and other areas. They held firm to their position that the US use of Spanish ranges and airspace must be based on an annual programme decided by the Spanish authorities. Although they never specifically said so, this position seemed to be the Spanish response to the US government’s desire to avoid any specific language, which required Spanish authorization for transit outside the NATO area. The US military and the Defence Department’s concern was that acceptance of the text would mean that a separate approval from the government of Spain would be required for any flights from, or through, Spain to the Middle East or Southwest Asia. Additionally, this could have led to similar restrictive demands by other countries, especially those about to begin treaty negotiations at that time (such as Portugal, Greece, and the Philippines).

From a legal perspective, US objectives in the negotiations were pretty simple. First and foremost, were its concerns about precedent, especially if the US agreed to something with Spain, in later negotiations with Portugal, the latter would demand exactly the same terms. The US had to make sure that Spain understood that Congress would not change the fundamental rules of foreign assistance for the sake of this agreement. Spain had many more problems than the US did during the negotiations. First, it had to deal with public opinion as Spaniards with long memories recalled that one of the reasons for US support of the Franco regime was the dictator’s staunch anti-

\textsuperscript{48} Daniel Druckman, “Negotiating military base-rights with Spain, Philippines, and Greece: Lessons learned”, (Center for Conflict Resolution & Analysis & Resolution 1990), p. 5.
Communism. During the 1980s, surveys regularly showed that more Spaniards thought the United States was a threat to world peace than the Soviet Union. In the US, certain parts of the bureaucracy and some members of Congress were concerned about the agreement, but the Spanish base negotiations were not a front-page issue. This was different for the Spaniards, who had to take account of public opinion, as well as parliament and opposition. Also, the Spanish negotiating team wanted to make sure that it received better conditions than previous negotiators had obtained under the Franco regime. The negotiating sessions continued in vain, until the Spanish delegation realized that its claims to win comprehensive military aid loans, a security clause to cover the territory of both countries in case of attack, technological transfers and joint production of military material, and re-compensation for the purchase of sophisticated war material would be very difficult to achieve outside the context of NATO.

On the other hand Spain was aware that the US could not afford to lose the bases agreement. Neither side wanted to enter the one-year withdrawal period called for in the 1976 treaty, but the negotiations were not close to agreement by the spring of 1982. Both sides finally negotiated for a short time under the one-year withdrawal period. The deadlock was ultimately broken in late June when both sides agreed to terms recognising the principles of sovereignty, while still protecting transit rights. Key to the Spanish agreement was an exchange of notes reflecting the US intent to provide

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49 Following Spanish Parliament’s failed coup of 23 February 1981, instead of rallying to the support of the beleaguered centrist government of Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, the US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, said the coup was ‘an internal affair only of concern to Spain’. This unfortunate remark outraged Spanish democrats as it confirmed their belief that the US government placed little importance on the fate of Spanish democracy and that it hankered after the cosy relationship it had during the Franco regime. (This statement, 25 years after it was made, is still recalled by Spaniards). The left was also antagonised by US intervention in Central America during the 1980s, following the 1978 Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua against the brutal, corrupt US-backed regime of Anastasio Somoza and Washington’s covert support for the Contras fighting against the Sandinistas, and the 1989 invasion of Panama. Successive US Administrations supported Latin American dictators, in general, because they were viewed as a bulwark against Communism in the United States’ backyard, in William Chislett, “Anti-Americanism in Spain; the Weight of History”, Elcano Working Paper (WP), 47/2005, 18 November 2005, pp.7-8.
US$400 million in foreign military sales credits during the first year of the treaty and agreements in areas of military industrial cooperation, science, technology, culture and education.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{2.8 Friendship, NATO and further Integration}

Discussions between Spain and the US aimed at a further revision of their bilateral defence ties led to a new executive agreement of 2 July 1982, on the use of Spanish bases. This Agreement on Friendship, Defence and Cooperation was signed barely two months after Spain became the sixteenth member of NATO on 30 May 1982. The US-Spanish Executive Agreement did not enter into force until 14 May 1983 because of a change of government in Spain after the 28 October 1982 elections. It was the desire of this new government, under Socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, not to have the US-Spanish Executive Agreement prejudice the question of full military integration into NATO. Accordingly, through means of a protocol on 2 July 1982, Spain was able to reserve its position on the NATO integration issue while permitting the bilateral agreement with the US to enter into force. Thus, while the US-Spanish Agreement of 1982 had been linked to Spanish NATO membership, this agreement governing the use of bases in Spain would remain in force even if Spain was not part of NATO.

The goal of the renewed treaty was to enhance Spanish sovereignty and to guarantee the transparency of American activities in Spain. It consisted of the basic agreement on friendship, defence and cooperation, seven complementary agreements, nine annexes, two appendices and eight notes exchanged between the US embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Madrid.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. p. 2.
The agreement contained several new features:

- It was more multifaceted than its predecessor, and based on a broader range of common interests;
- It included strict regulations concerning the movement of US ships and aircraft in Spanish waters, air space and sovereign territory;
- There was a complementary agreement in defence and industrial cooperation.

Defence Minister Alberto Oliart best summarized Spain’s philosophical acceptance of the realities of international politics when he said, “In view of the Spanish-US treaty and of our strategic geographic position, as well as in view of the broadening of the terrestrial area of modern warfare, in which missiles, satellites and so forth are used - all these factors make it impossible for us to remain remote from any international conflict, particularly if it threatens Europe or North Africa.”

Ultimately, the US benefited from the negotiations. It retained the use of territory, for the most part, and flexibility of operations at military facilities. Additionally, the US was able to maintain its principle of providing aid on a “best efforts” basis, primarily through military sales credits. This was important, because the US government was unable to view bilateral negotiations as isolated actions, but rather as a “continuum” or a series, where the precedents set in one negotiation affected all following negotiations.

When looking at the implementation of the agreement, it is interesting to note that issues that were considered to be of major concern during the negotiations did not arise. The Spaniards did not interfere with routine transits within the NATO framework. Although there had been no major test of “out of area” operations, the Spaniards allowed the transit of aircraft to Southern Asia, using approval procedures delineated in

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the treaty. Spain also supported Red Sea mine-clearing operations by allowing the use of Rota. The notions of “operational and support installations” and of “authorisations of use” were introduced in order to define precisely the many nuances that had previously been brought together under the overall term “facilities”. The description “Spanish bases which the US operates” was an amendment added to the agreement to bring it into line with international legal terminology. US military aid and cooperation for updating the equipment of the Spanish armed forces were confirmed and provisions were established for how aid would be increased and technical deficiencies of the 1976 treaty were either removed or resolved. The level of financing for the purchase of military equipment for the US was increased and a complementary agreement on defence and industrial cooperation was introduced.52

A new agreement concerning the status of US forces in Spain was also adopted. It was in line with many others between the US and West European countries, and it was based on the status of forces agreement of 16 June 1951 signed by the US and its European allies within the context of NATO.53 The importance of this new agreement can hardly be exaggerated. The Franco dictatorship had agreed to provisions concerning US forces in Spain, which were incompatible with national sovereignty. A general exemption from the application of provisions of the Spanish criminal code had been instituted for American forces and was bitterly resented by both the Spanish bureaucracy and the population. From the military point of view, it was agreed that in the event of a threat of external attack against either of the two parties, the use of support facilities was to be a matter of urgent consultation between both governments. On this point, the Americans succeeded in introducing a reference to the alleged

52 Ibid.
bilateral and multilateral objectives of the agreement, which implicitly linked it to NATO. The inherent Spanish right to self-defence was not derogated by any clause of the bilateral agreement. Spain was in a position to take any measures deemed necessary to safeguard its own national security in an emergency. On the basis of these provisions, a clear case could be made that the 1982 agreement did not interfere with Spanish freedom to develop a security policy that was not covered by the North Atlantic Treaty.

There was no viable alternative to Spanish membership of NATO. It was considered part of the inevitable process of re-joining the European mainstream. All political constituencies believed that Spain was a Western nation. To have rejected NATO, or to have spurned the EEC, would have perpetuated the marginalization of Spain after Franco’s regime has ended. It was something no responsible Spanish politician wanted, as Spain pushed for re-integration into the Western community. In security terms, the Calvo-Sotelo government essentially perceived NATO entry as a continuation, and improvement, of Spain’s long-standing alliance with the US. Foreign Affairs Minister Perez-Llorca explained that “Spain has been aligned with the West de facto since 1953, Spain’s entry into NATO has a very specific aim of normalizing our defence relationship with the Western world.”\(^{54}\) Furthermore, in light of earlier opposition of member nations to Franco’s Spain, Spanish accession represented an important achievement for the fundamental democratic principles of the Alliance.

While accession to the Alliance did not significantly alter the East-West military balance, Spanish entry into NATO provided a range of possibilities to improve the

military position of the West. The Spanish armed forces could make a contribution to
the European army and increase the number of troops available. Although Spain was
not directly involved in either of the world wars, the interest of Adolf Hitler in gaining
Spain as an ally, and the efforts by Franklin D. Roosevelt to assure Spanish neutrality
underlined the strategic significance of Spain in the era of modern warfare. The Iberian
Peninsula provided NATO forces with badly needed depth for a potential conflict in
Europe, as well as adding reach outside the NATO area, particularly in the Middle East,
North Africa, and Southwest Asia. Spain’s peninsular location, magnified by its
possession of the Canary Islands, astride the vital oil tanker routes between the Indian
Ocean and Europe, was of overriding maritime significance. Its commanding position
flanking the Strait of Gibraltar was also crucial in any conceivable East-West war
scenario. Spain’s thousand-mile Mediterranean coastline, projected eastward 200 miles
by the Balearic Islands, greatly enhanced the ability of NATO to maintain control of
the Western Mediterranean basin and allowed the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces
Southern Region (CINCSOUTH), to concentrate naval assets in the more vulnerable
Central and Eastern areas. Additionally, the oceanic coasts of Spain offered improved
control over the Bay of Biscay and access routes to both the English Channel and
transatlantic Channel and shipping lanes. Moreover, US defence planners realized that
Spanish air defences, if incorporated into the existing NATO air defence system, could
help protect NATO’s southern and south-western flanks.55

The US was always aware of the tremendous opportunities that Spain provided, not
only for the positioning of reinforcements and equipment, but also for staging
movements of personnel and material into the battle area. Spain’s inclusion in the

55 Colonel F.R. Stevens Jr, USA, “Spain and NATO: problems and prospects”, Air University Review,
Alliance was intended to increase the security of the lines of communication between America and Europe and to improve the integrity of the NATO air defence system. Spain also provided relatively safe territory for airfields and headquarters, which would complement existing facilities elsewhere in NATO. According to US Colonel F.R. Stevens Jr, historically Spain had made herself a de facto enemy of the Warsaw Pact by permitting the US military use of her ports and air bases; thus her status as a member of NATO could not aggravate an already consummate enmity. But even without the US bilateral commitment, any Spanish effort to remain neutral would prove inevitably futile as her strategic position simply made her an irresistible target for either side in any future continental conflict. “She must choose to go one way or the other; and the choice for her should be clear,” as Stevens has summed up. Essentially, having joined NATO, Spain obtained protection and was viewed as a platform from which allies could prepare for, launch, and sustain strategic operations against Warsaw Pact forces even if forward defences failed. Other advantages were evident in addition to the above, such as that of Spain’s capacity to provide training areas for the US and also possibly for other NATO members. Indeed in the earlier era, the Moors, on their arrival in Spain, thought the country to be an island, and named it the Hidden Land. The poet W.H. Auden described Spain as a land crudely soldered onto Europe. Yet, whatever elements of “separateness” existed in Spanish society and temperament, for historical, cultural and political reasons, the country could not escape its strategic importance to Western Europe and the world at large.

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56 Ibid. p.5.
Chapter 3


3.1 US Ties for European Integration

The Socialist victory in Spain in 1982, under the leadership of Felipe Gonzalez, raised some questions about the recently signed Base Renewal Agreement, which had not yet entered into force because parliament was dissolved for the elections. Spanish resentment over US support for the Franco regime was immediately reflected by Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) leader Gonzalez’s accusations: “America did not help Europe free itself from Fascism, and not only did it not help Spain but condemned it to dictatorship for many more years […] We have little for which to thank the US, the last country with which we were at war.”¹

However, interestingly enough, Felipe Gonzalez relied on the US for support prior to the general elections in Spain. At a meeting held in Santo Domingo in August 1982, at which Carlos Andrez Perez, an important member of the Socialist International, his assistant, Gustavo Cisneros, David Rockefeller and Thomas Enders were present, Gonzalez made his party’s position clear to his audience on these and other subjects, hinting that the US need not fear the Socialist party’s rise to power.² Yet, in his inaugural address, the new prime minister announced his intention to review, with all necessary rigour, the previous government’s attitude towards the Alliance (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation).

² Coinciding information received by Dr. Antonio Marquina Barrio, España y Los Judios en el Siglo XX-La Accion Exterior, (Madrid: Espaca Calpe, 1987).
Through negotiations with the US, a crucial protocol was added to 2 July 1982, bilateral agreement, which satisfied Gonzalez’s objective. This protocol stated in part that a clause or provision of 2 July 1982 Agreement on Friendship, Defence and Cooperation prejudice the question of Spanish integration into the military structure of NATO. This decision was formalized at the NATO Council meeting in Brussels in early December 1982. Thus, a protocol to this agreement, in late February 1983, emphasized that the agreement itself could not affect the nature, or form, of Spanish participation in NATO. Gonzalez stated that he was stopping the integration process for a period in order to review “all aspects” of the question relating to Spain’s NATO membership. It was his view that the previous government’s decision to join NATO “was hurried and did not adequately guarantee Spain’s interests.” Pending a final decision on Spanish NATO membership, the Gonzalez government stated that it would honour the commitments undertaken by its predecessor in joining NATO. While Spain would not participate in NATO’s military wing, it would participate in various NATO committees, also including the Defence Planning Committee. The Gonzalez government stressed that it did not view membership in the committees as “military integration.”

The measures that the new Socialist government took seemed to be ambiguous regarding the subject of NATO. The Prime Minister chose Fernando Moran to be his foreign minister, a man ideologically opposed to NATO, who had stood in opposition

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5 Washington Times, 9 December, 1982, p. 9. A strong anti-NATO movement had been growing among the Spanish people. In the eyes of many, NATO membership was linked to the issue of the US bases and to the likelihood of an increased military budget. Spanish opposition became part of the movement then gaining ground elsewhere in Europe to resist the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles on the continent. “Spain: Participation in NATO”, the Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook, December 1988, www.photius.com/countries/spain/national_security/spain_national-security_participation_in_nat-120.html
to Gonzalez during the party’s 28th Congress, but who could project a left-wing image to both the party and the electorate. Simultaneously, he proposed the calling of a referendum towards the end of the four-year legislative term. Moran’s attitude was influenced by the belief that it was crucial that foreign policy contributed to the strengthening of Spanish democracy, and also that Spain must pursue national objectives in terms of Realpolitik. As to the agreements with the US, the interests of Gonzalez and Moran lay in keeping them separate from those of the Atlantic Alliance. As Moran put it: “Spain has influence, not power.” Moran also argued that the unequal relationship with the US, following bilateral agreements, for many represented “excessive ideological weight and a limitation of self-autonomy.”

The new cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Gonzalez, Defence Minister Eduardo Serra, and Economics Minister Miguel Boyer remained strongly committed to the following positions:

- Spanish entry into the European Economic Community (EEC);
- The holding of the promised referendum on NATO;
- The reduction of the US military presence in Spain;
- Improving foreign relations with the Middle East and Latin America.

Regarding Europe, the first priority was to work for Spanish accession to the European Community (EC) by intensifying negotiations and diplomacy in various European capitals, improving relations with France by supporting their joint interests; and pursuing better relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. Gonzalez reiterated his conviction that Spain was part of the Western world and that its security interests were

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linked to the West. In time, Gonzalez decided to support formal Spanish membership of NATO, within a uniquely Spanish framework, despite his earlier opposition to it.\(^9\) The elements explaining this change of perspective will be addressed below.

Rather than continue the tradition of making alternate overtures to Algeria and Morocco, the Spanish government wished for a more generalized strategy that would allow for the emergence of fruitful cooperation between Spain and the Maghreb. The situation seemed to improve following the signing of a bilateral agreement with Morocco in 1983. The countries of North Africa themselves were, of course, not immune from domestic troubles, including the possible spread of Islamic fundamentalism. This latent instability could erupt at any time and pose a threat to Spanish interests. Instability in North Africa could take the form of an exacerbated nationalism projected outwards. In Ceuta and Melilla, for example, domestic Moroccan nationalism might be harnessed against Spanish interests.\(^10\) Prior to accepting NATO commitments, much of Spain’s strategic planning had been dominated by the potential threat from North Africa. The immediate objects of any belligerency had been expected to be the port enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Surrounded on the landward side by Moroccan territory and claimed by Morocco, these remnants of Spain’s protectorate years were vulnerable both economically and militarily. Both were fortified towns defended by relatively strong garrisons. Since the fifteenth century, they had formed a line of defence against the Islamic threat to the Iberian Peninsula.\(^11\) In modern times, however, their strategic importance was that, together with Gibraltar, they ensured that


control of the strait linking the western Mediterranean with the Atlantic was in Western hands.

In the context of the East-West conflict, Spain also shared vulnerabilities with other NATO members. Difficulties affecting the supply of certain products in the event of an outbreak of conflict outside Europe could be significant. There was also the possibility that Soviet influence would spread to some countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. Thus Spanish security policy sought to take all of these various threats into account and, hence, it was difficult to develop action that was, at once, both perfectly consistent with that of other NATO members and suited to Spain’s specific security needs. One has also to take into consideration the diversion of Spanish and US strategic interests in regard to the Western Sahara: the US was not sympathetic to the Spanish claims to sovereignty over the enclaves and would not press to expand the NATO area, as this could affect efforts to re-develop potential base right agreements with Morocco and was generally crucial for NATO projects in the region. The NATO members, and particularly the US, were not willing to sign up for the defence of the territories in Northern Africa, as it would have caused the risk of escalating into a wider conflict on the Middle East. This can be explained, for example, by the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Rabat on 7 April 2006, and Morocco’s contribution to

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13 The Naval base of Rota became a valuable asset to the US Air Force when Washington lost its bases in Morocco in 1963. It saved the US government tens of millions of dollars a year as its submarines did not have to go to Charleston or New London every 56 days for replenishment and supply (a 14-day round trip); the runway was lengthened so that it could handle landings of B-52 bombers and KC-135 tankers in emergency situations. Rota became one of the three largest and most important US bases outside continental America for strategic deterrence. Thus Spain expected the US to protect its enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in return for US military use of its soil, in William Chislett, “Spain and the United States: The Quest for Mutual Rediscovery”, Elcano Working Papers, M44417-2005, www.realinstitutoelcano.org
“Operation Active Endeavour.” The success of the Spanish military in cultivating their Moroccan counterparts had thus helped to keep tensions to a minimum. Nevertheless, for a time the short-lived 1984 treaty of union between Libya and Morocco created anxiety in Spain because the military potential of the two countries combined with the belligerency of the Libyan ruler, Muammar al Gaddafi, accentuated its sense of vulnerability. A number of Spanish observers criticized the failure of the Spanish government to secure recognition from NATO of Ceuta and Melilla as failing within the geographical sphere of the treaty, thereby requiring a response from the alliance if they were attacked. On the other hand, Spain’s NATO ties would, at a minimum, act as a brake against actions by Morocco because Spain could avail itself of the consultative provisions of the treaty if it regarded its territorial integrity, political independence, or security as coming under threat. However, other NATO countries viewed the enclaves as remnants of the European colonial past in Africa, and they could not be counted on for assistance, leaving Ceuta and Melilla outside NATO’s area of collective defence.

15 Later on 22 October 2009 Morocco and NATO signed in Naples (Italy) a Tactical Memorandum of Understanding (TMOU) for a Moroccan contribution to NATO’s anti-terrorism mission (Operation Active Endeavour), in Said Saddiki, “Ceuta and Melilla Fences: a EU Multidimensional Border?”, Rabat’s Centre for International Studies Working Paper, Morocco, autumn 2009, p. 16. Furthermore, the involvement of NATO in the issue of the two enclaves did not make sense at least in the medium term because of the Morocco’s strong ties with the most influential countries in the NATO alliance especially France and US. Gerry O’Reilly, “Ceuta and the Spanish Sovereign Territories Spanish and Moroccan Claims” in Boundary & Territory Briefings, International Boundaries Research Unit Publishers, Vol.1 No. 2, 1994, p. 16. 


17 Ibid. It was argued that international Straits do not concern only the coastal states, but it is vital for the whole of the international community as well. So, it is difficult to imagine that any state in the world would accept that one country can control the two shores of the Strait of Gibraltar. This would be the case when Spain restores the Rock of Gibraltar, without giving up the Spanish-controlled territories in North Africa to Morocco. In the words of Jaime De Pinies, who was for a long time a Spanish diplomat and served as President of the UN General Assembly (1985-1986), who said in 1990: “On the day we can restore the sovereignty of Gibraltar to Spain, it would be hard to imagine that the international community will accept that we control the two shores of the Straits”. See Jaime De Pinies, La descolonizacion del Sahara: un tema sin concluir, (Madrid: España Cronica, 1990), p. 55; Cited in Mohamed Larbi Messari, “The Current Context of a Moroccan Claim to Ceuta and Melilla”, Dafatir Siyasiya, No. 107, December 2009; This conception has often been stressed by Morocco. In this context, King Hassan II argued that “the day Spain comes into possession of Gibraltar, Morocco will of necessity get Ceuta and Melilla. No power can permit Spain to possess both keys to the same straits”, L’Opinion, 26 November 1975, cited in Robert Rezette, The Spanish Enclaves in Morocco,( Paris: Nouvelles Editiones Latines, 1976), p. 146.
3.2 Stronger anti-US Sentiment and the Resurgence of Realpolitik

Between 1983 and 1985, the NATO issue continued to be at the forefront of Spanish and Western politics. The nature of Spain’s strategic concerns and of Spain’s participation in the Alliance was continually debated. Spanish public opinion also remained sceptical about US intentions. In a 1984 poll in Spain on the NATO issue, 70 per cent of respondents had a negative view of US bases. The majority was opposed to membership NATO or, at best, very reticent about it. Public opinion in Spain was no less opposed to the US presence. Asked on the eve of US President Ronald Reagan’s visit to Spain if “the US and its President are loyal and sincere friends of Spain”, only 13 per cent agreed, 74 per cent disagreed, and, among PSOE voters, the negative result was 76 per cent. Nevertheless, NATO membership was an issue increasingly linked to Spain’s application for EC membership. Between 1982 and 1986 Spain entered into a number of international obligations (entry into the EC, and reconfirmation by referendum of the decision to join NATO), which symbolized the Spanish role in the European integration “project”. Spain’s capacity to impose itself in the international system increased. Spanish interests, objectives and traditions in foreign policy would henceforth be affected by the various forms in which most other European democracies also participate. Spain’s Left wing hoped that this would lead to a reduced Spanish dependence on the US. For the Socialists, overcoming the Francoist origin of the bilateral agreement was only going to be achieved by reducing the US presence and not just by joining NATO, but by Spain’s integration back into Europe.

Withdrawing from NATO between 1983 and 1985 would have been a severe blow to the organization. NATO’s strategy of facing up to the Soviet challenge in Afghanistan

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and Poland with the deployment of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) was being severely questioned by many European citizens, and even by some West European governments, who were wary of US President Ronald Reagan’s and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s policy towards the Soviet Union. The new missiles provoked the Soviet Union as much as they deterred it, and they shook European confidence in security. Conflict emerged between NATO’s strategic purpose and its political solidarity – or, as Michael Horward, a British politician put it, “between deterrence of the Soviet government and reassurance of the people of Western Europe”.

Yet, weakening NATO, provoking trans-Atlantic divisions and conceding a great propaganda victory to the Soviet Union was not the best way to launch Spain’s attempt to be considered a normal Western democracy in the eyes of its European partners, which, with the exception of Ireland, were all members of NATO. Following these considerations and to the surprise of the Spanish public, his European colleagues, and even Foreign Minister Moran, who was not warned beforehand of this change, were surprised when Gonzalez emerged out of his first meeting with Germany’s Chancellor Helmut Kohl in October 1983 declaring his support for the deployment of the Cruise and Pershing II nuclear missiles. Then, in 1985, Gonzalez presented the Parliament with a ten-point security policy, which included remaining in NATO, though out of its military structure: and the promotion of European foreign and security capabilities.

20 A strong anti-NATO movement had been growing among the Spanish people. In the eyes of many, NATO membership was linked to the issue of US bases and to the likelihood of an increased military budget; Spanish opposition became part of the movement that was gaining ground elsewhere in Europe to resist the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles on the continent, in “Spain: Participation in NATO”, The Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook, www.photius.com/countries/spain/national_security/spain_national_security_participation_in_nato-120.html


Gonzalez’s drastic change of attitude with respect to NATO was due to a learning process he underwent in dealing with the West. Foreign Minister Moran did not follow Gonzalez’s path and was removed from government in 1985. Interestingly enough, Moran says that he deemed that Gonzalez meeting with Germany’s Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Italy’s Bettino Craxi greatly influenced the Spanish Prime Minister’s views on the question. Also, while Moran rejected any direct pressure or linkage between EEC and NATO membership, he recognized that he and Gonzalez were completely aware of the fact that all their European colleagues expected them to keep Spain inside NATO.23

3.3 The Draw of Europe and the Acceptance of Atlanticism

It could therefore be concluded that Calvo-Sotelo was proved right: when the Socialists gained office in 1982, Gonzalez firstly postponed the referendum and, when he finally called it in 1986, it was to ask citizens to ratify Spanish presence in NATO, not to withdraw from the organisation. Continued membership in NATO was supported by 53 per cent of voters. The referendum thus marked the end of Spain’s intense domestic debate over membership in the Atlantic Alliance, although this did not involve integration into the military command or the deployment of nuclear weapons on Spanish territory and did include a clause calling for the diminution of American military personnel in Spain.24 Never before had a NATO member taken the issue of participation in the organization to its voters. A rejection of continued membership in NATO would have presented a strategic problem for the alliance since Spain was an important geographic base for re-supplying forces in Western Europe and controlling the Strait of Gibraltar in the event of a conventional confrontation with the Soviets in

23 ibid, p. 309.
West Germany and France. Furthermore, given popular tensions throughout Western Europe over the deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles, a rejection of NATO by the Spanish public, if followed by government withdrawal from the organization, could have set a precedent leading to demands for similar referendum throughout the alliance, especially in Greece. Spain, the newest member of NATO (1982), could have seriously damaged the integrity of the Atlantic defence system.

The agreement on Spain’s role in NATO was marked in May 1986 with the signing of a final communiqué of the NATO Defence Planning Committee. Spain would contribute to collective defence, but would remain outside the military structure; participation in political councils within the organization would be continued. This new accord reaffirmed the Spanish character of the bases and established a strong link with NATO. The presence of US military personnel would be reduced by approximately 50 per cent. During the course of 1986, exploratory talks and negotiations were undertaken to reduce the US military presence, as stipulated in the NATO referendum. One of the reasons put forward to explain Spain’s reluctance to accept a full measure of military responsibility within NATO stems from its perception of the threat from the South. Former foreign minister, Perez-Llorca, stated that there were two “hot potato” issues, which occupied his time in office: Spain’s entry into Europe and Morocco. He felt that in his negotiations with NATO officials there was too little appreciation of the fact that Spain was a nation of islands and that the NATO command made too few concessions to Spain’s need to defend its outlying possessions.25 Angel Viñas, perhaps the leading spokesman for PSOE foreign policy, made a similar argument in claiming that NATO did not deal adequately with the most likely threats to Spanish security, which were

from the South. In fact, according to Viñas, from the Spanish perspective the US bases agreement failed to deal adequately with any of these threats.²⁶

Politically, the US and other NATO countries believed that, by establishing a closer association through NATO, Spain’s new democratic course would be strengthened. They hoped that membership would offer the Spanish armed services a well-defined military mission and would distract them from involvement in domestic politics. Greater professionalism in the Spanish military was expected to result, also from efforts to modernize and improve the armed forces through collaboration with NATO, perhaps at a lower cost than would otherwise be the case. However, Prime Minister Gonzalez justified, in part, Spain’s failure to accept the integrated military structure by pointing out that Spain had joined the Alliance many years after its formation, when the command structure was already well established. A complex readjustment of existing commands would have been necessary, said Gonzalez, which would have created conflict with other members. For example, Spain’s maritime role in the Atlantic would appropriately fall under the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (SACLANT). Under the system prevailing when Spain entered NATO, a command subordinate to SACLANT, the Iberian Atlantic Command (IBERLANT), headquartered at Lisbon under a Portuguese admiral, was responsible for surveillance and control of large ocean areas west of Portugal and south to the Tropic of Cancer. Spain would appropriately have an important role in IBERLANT, but Portugal made it clear that it would be unwilling to cede command responsibilities to Spain, even on an alternating basis. Similarly, for fully effective defence of the strait, Spanish cooperation with British forces on Gibraltar would be indispensable. Spanish sensitivities on this issue,

however, made it hardly imaginable for Spanish officers to be part of a combined NATO command, or to engage in area cooperation with British officers on Gibraltar, so long as Britain refused to negotiate seriously on the future of the stronghold.\footnote{“Spain: participation in NATO”, The Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook, www.photius.com/countries/spain/national_security/spain_national_security_participation_in_nat~120.html}

Though the Socialist government tried on numerous occasions to present NATO membership to public opinion as another cost of EEC membership, the Socialist foreign minister at the time insisted that this was just merely a tactic to help secure a “yes-vote” in the 1986 referendum. The Spanish government, Moran recalled, never received any direct or indirect pressure suggesting that staying in NATO would facilitate EC membership.\footnote{Moran F., España en Su Sitio, (Madrid: Plaza y Janas, 1990), p. 311.} However, the circumstances that facilitated Spain’s entry into the European Community late in 1986 proved different. Indeed, Spanish Socialists abandoned their neutralist preferences and decided to stay in NATO, because they understood that NATO membership could facilitate Spain’s leading role in pushing for a European defence identity. In other words, at a time when Spanish Socialists disliked both neutrality and Atlanticism, EU membership provided an alternative security policy, i.e. Europeanization, which was fully coherent with the Socialists’ interpretation of Spanish needs and interests.

Spanish participation in the EEC framework facilitated this process: it proved decisive to socialize Spanish diplomats in the habits of coordination and consensus-seeking and to have Spanish policies gradually converge with those of the other member states. Spain and Portugal, as would be members of the EEC, had already been associated in 1982 to the Community. The result of this process of association was impressive in terms of foreign policy convergence: as the Report of the Luxembourg Presidency to
the European Parliament on the functioning of the EEC highlighted, even before Spain had become a formal member, the Ten, together with Spain and Portugal, had adopted common positions on a wide range of issues relating to the Middle East (with Spain’s adherence to the 1980 Venice Declaration and its announcement of the imminent establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel), apartheid South Africa (respect for the Code of Conduct to be followed by European firms in trading with South Africa), the San Jose Dialogue in Central America, and East-West relations.²⁹

3.4 Stability and Prosperity through EC Membership

In retrospect, it would appear that the conclusion of negotiations for Spanish entry into the EEC was facilitated by the reshuffle of the Cabinet in July 1985. Fernando Moran, the chief opponent of Spain staying in NATO, was replaced by Francisco Fernández Ordóñez (1985-92), a pro-Atlantic alliance foreign minister, who revived European confidence in Spain’s commitment to the multilateral defence of Europe. In 1986 Spanish membership of the EC, with the help of the US, resulted in immediate economic benefits as the Spanish economy rapidly integrated with its EC partners. Once Spain became a member of the EC, Spanish foreign and security policy continued a process of Europeanization. After the NATO referendum was held and won by 52% in favour, the government further emphasized the European dimension of its security policy with important symbolic and practical gestures: it became a member of the Western European Union (WEU) and subsequently was involved in the 1990-1991 Gulf War by providing three frigates to the WEU’s naval force in the Persian Gulf.³⁰ Spain also participated as an observer in the 1986 Franco-German brigade and continuously

²⁹ Jose I. Torreblanca, “Ideas, preferences and institutions: Explaining the Europeanization of Spanish Foreign Policy”, ARENA working papers WP01/26.
³⁰ González made a bid for Spanish membership in the Western European Defence (WEU), a seven nation European defence grouping, originally formed in 1948, that experienced revitalization in the 1980; on 19 April 1988, Spain and Portugal were formally invited to join the organization, in “Spain and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation”, December 1988, www.mongabay.com
supported and actively contributed to the strengthening of Europe’s international identity and military independence, especially in the security (participation in the Euro corps and Euromartor) and industrial fields (the Eurofighter project), but also at the citizen level, as exemplified by the proposals on diplomatic representation and consular protection for EU citizens abroad.\(^{31}\) Entry into the EC and the multilateralization of defence indicated that the PSOE Government, which successfully gained another five-year term of office following the June 1986 legislative elections opted for full European integration. According to Angel Viñas, “membership in the EC was important for the Spanish, for whom outside acceptance of the successful transition to democracy served to confirm a process that had taken a long time to consolidate.”\(^{32}\)

The Spanish believed that the best way to manage East-West relations was through Europe.\(^{33}\) Specifically, the Spanish government appreciated the growing importance of the “Europeanization” movement within Western Europe, and Spain intended to play a role in this emerging process.\(^{34}\) The Spanish Socialists’ view of Europe was based, in many respects, on the often-quoted observation by the famous Spanish essayist Jose Ortega and Gasset: “If Spain is the problem, Europe is the solution”.\(^{35}\) The idea of Europe provided the basis by which European states’ interests were formed. European integration, driven by the belief that peace and prosperity came from economic and political interdependence, is what dictated the calculations of European leaders. The PSOE was firmly convinced of the beneficial effects that their European values would have on post-Francoist Spain. However, after Spain’s entry into the EC, Spanish

\(^{34}\) Ibid. p. 15
foreign policy was shaped less by developments in Spain’s domestic politics but by the on-going Euro-Atlantic integration process. Also, in the late 1980’s, Spain’s Socialist government sought a greater role in shaping European politics. Finally, and perhaps the most telling indication of changed attitudes in Spain about Western security institutions, was the accession of Spain’s Socialist Foreign Minister Javier Solana to the position of NATO Secretary General in December of 1995.

3.5 Spain and Latin America: a Sense of Hispanic Commonality

Whereas Foreign Minister Moran believed that building a special relationship with Latin America outside the EC would increase Spain’s autonomy in international affairs and boost its value to the EU and the US, Prime Minister Gonzalez and Ordóñez opted first to align Spanish relations with other EC member states through Europeanization, before seeking the leadership role in managing relations between the EC and Latin America.\(^{36}\) The special relationship Spain claimed to have with Latin America, however, during the Moran years, at times exacerbated tensions with the US. It represented a potential dilution, or at least a confusion of US influence or hegemony in Latin America. This was especially true in times when the US government insisted on defining the situation in Central America in terms of national security. Gonzalez reiterated on many occasions that Spain had to bring new ideas to NATO and to the European Community. But while new ideas were very badly needed, they were not always received with enthusiasm by Spain’s new partners. For instance Spain, at least rhetorically, supported a policy critical of US security concerns in Central America throughout much of the 1980s. This placed Spain in the curious position of decrying American concerns with events in the US “backyard”, while expecting sympathy from

the US for Spanish concerns in its own “backyard” in Morocco, a country with which, of course, the US has good relations. For instance, when war broke out between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands (Malvines) in the spring 1982, Spain supported Argentina’s claim to the islands, even though the Spanish government opposed the military junta that ruled Argentina at the time. The Falklands crisis arose at a time when the US was attempting to strike a precarious balance between its dedication to the West and its fear of a creeping Communism. Rather than a breaking of fellowship with the other nations of the Americas, Washington’s eventual support for Britain was evidence of the 200 year-old Anglo-American special relationship.37

In 1982 Foreign Minister Moran asserted that the amount of influence Spain could exert in Europe and on the US would depend on Spain's maintaining special relationships outside these areas, particularly with Latin America. In keeping with this policy, the Socialist government created a special assistance programme for Latin America that had a budget of tens of millions of dollars in 1985. A particular area of concern for Gonzalez was the intensifying conflict in Central America. Under his leadership, Spain took an active part in the Contadina Group, an association of Latin American republics seeking peaceful solutions to the bloody struggles in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Before becoming prime minister, Gonzalez had been involved in the articulation of the Socialist International's policies toward Latin America and had served as the president of that organization's committee for the support of the Nicaraguan Revolution, which was formed in 1980. Although Gonzalez was sympathetic with the early goals of the Sandinistas, who had seized power in 1979, he later became highly critical of their radical Marxist policies. He favoured the more pragmatic approach of

Latin America's social democrats. It became increasingly apparent that the prime minister's moderate views were in marked contrast to the Marxist orientation of his foreign minister.\textsuperscript{38} Gonzalez was also less stridently anti-American than Moran. Although critical of US actions in both Nicaragua and El Salvador, the prime minister recognized that the United States had legitimate interests in the area and that it could not be excluded from the negotiating process. These increasingly divergent views between Gonzalez and his foreign minister led to the latter's removal in the summer of 1985.

Moran's successor, Francisco Fernandez Ordoñez, followed a more restrained approach---calling for Spain to be the Iberian American conscience of Europe--in furthering Spain's active role in Latin America. Spain continued to support efforts for a peaceful resolution to the strife in Central America. In January 1988, Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega requested that Spain take part in the verification of the peace process in Central America. Gonzalez accepted the proposal, provided that other Central American governments were in agreement and that a ceasefire were in effect. The prime minister reiterated his support of the Contadina Group and emphasized that the countries involved had the ultimate responsibility for finding a solution to the conflict. He also called for an end to US aid for the armed forces fighting against the Sandinista government (Contras) so that the peace plan could be implemented.\textsuperscript{39} Although Spain had again become a significant presence in Latin America in the 1980s, there was no indication that it was on the way to supplanting the United States in the region or, indeed, that it wanted to assume that role. The relationship was not free of friction though, as the Socialists strongly opposed the US invasion of Panama in 1989.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.

same time, a vital sense of Hispanic commonality between Spain and Latin America appeared likely to continue. The Spanish government was also taken by surprise by the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas and, over the summer of 1990, faced a severe deterioration in the traditionally good relations with the Castro regime in Cuba.\textsuperscript{41} Thus, for Spain, in regard to Latin America, it was advisable to work on a case by case basis. And in time with this, it is obvious that the Socialist’s preferences changed dramatically during the period between Franco’s death and Spain’s entry into the EC and NATO.

3.6 Spain remains the Sixteenth Member of NATO

The outcome of the 1986 referendum on membership in NATO committed Gonzalez to negotiate the reduction of the US military presence in Spain, creating another issue of tension. Ordoñez, the foreign minister, put the position clearly to George Shultz, the US Secretary of State: “What we want is a balanced relationship, not subordination. We want a relationship between allies, we want a relationship between equals, we do not want a military overextension.”\textsuperscript{42} Spain now had its first chance to achieve this. Use of the bases in Spain for non-NATO purposes was a matter requiring Spanish approval, which was not likely to be forthcoming unless the mission had Spain’s endorsement. The issue of “out-of-area” use of Spanish bases by the US was first raised by the American raid on Libya in mid-April 1986, when Gonzalez was reportedly approached indirectly regarding the possible use of the Spanish bases and over flights of Spain in connection with this raid. His negative response necessitated a long detour over international waters by the aircraft flying from British bases.\textsuperscript{43} While the US did not use Spanish bases to carry out the attack, it proved necessary for an American F-111

\textsuperscript{43} “Spain: military cooperation with the United States”, December 1988, www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-13104.html
fighter-bomber to make an emergency landing at the Rota Naval base. Gonzalez pointed out that this emergency landing was consistent with the provisions of the US-Spanish base agreements as well as “international regulations.” He also made clear that the American action against Libya was likely to prove ineffective and, therefore, he did “not approve of it.”

Gonzalez emphasized that “Spanish airspace” had not been used by the US during the raid, and that he did not even know the raid had occurred until he heard about it from a Spanish news agency. He viewed the American action as having nothing to do with NATO. Other sources said that Gonzalez’s response was to thoroughly discourage any thought that he would approve either action.

The major tension resulting from the decision to seek security through multilateralism had thus revolved around the future of US military bases in Spain. Gonzalez insisted that seventy-two F-16 aircraft be removed from Torrejon air base as a condition for renewal of the base agreement, and he threatened to expel all US forces in Spain if this demand was not accepted. His stand was considered unduly inflexible by the US and inconsistent with an earlier Spanish commitment. The US felt that Spain, the military contribution of which was minimal, was permitting domestic factors to dictate a weakening of NATO defences.

Officials in Washington considered Spanish demands for a reduction in troop levels in Spain as coming at a particularly unfortunate time. But from the perspective of the US government, the bases in Spain were only one piece of the puzzle. They believed that the Spanish demands had to be evaluated within the context of the security requirements of the Alliance. This latest round of negotiations between the two governments to renew bilateral agreements exposed a glaring

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asymmetry of priorities between the importance of the US and of the bases, in Spanish public opinion and Spanish foreign policy compared with the low priority of Spain and the bases in US public opinion and US foreign policy. In March 1987 US Secretary of Defence Caspar W. Weinberger flew to Madrid on behalf of the Reagan Administration to plead the case for Torrejon air base, which the Pentagon claimed was “irreplaceable and vital.” However, it was difficult to persuade Spanish authorities to avoid the reduction of US troop level in Spain. Weinberger understood that the strategic importance of the bases had to be justified over and again to the host country and the newest member of NATO and the Reagan Administration understood that in order to persuade the Spanish government to keep the western Defence balance in the form of a US military presence in Spain, financial compromises too had to be made.47

When it became clear that Spain was having difficulty integrating into NATO, the US faced a difficult situation. Washington wanted Spain to agree to the NATO Status-of-Forces Agreement (with its dozens of provisions on almost every possible military issue) so that US representatives would not have to negotiate these issues but could simply refer to them. The Spaniards found themselves very discomfited by the NATO arrangement. Under the preceding bilateral agreement, if the US had a military exercise in Spain and the US caused some damage, it would pay 100 per cent of the damage. However, NATO rules were different. Under the NATO Status-of-Forces Agreement, if the US destroyed a farmer’s crop, the US would pay 75 per cent and the host country would pay 25 per cent. The Spaniards took issue with this and protested that many exercises were not even NATO-related. It was finally agreed that the US would recognize Spain’s political need for an agreement and that it would in turn recognize

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that US negotiators could not change US law. On that basis US representatives worked up a detailed agreement that granted them every right that they had already under US law, but spelt out those exact rights. Thus Spain was the only bilateral Status-of-Forces agreement that the US had in existence with any country. Furthermore, in 1987 Spain changed its status from observer to full member on NATO’s Nuclear Planning group. It continued, however, to adhere to the policy, approved virtually unanimously during the parliamentary debate on NATO, that it would remain a non-nuclear power and that it would not agree to stockpile or to install the nuclear weapons of NATO forces on its territory. In this respect, its position was similar to two other NATO members, Norway and Denmark. Spain had initially rejected adherence to the 1968 treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), asserting that the treaty was unbalanced in favour of the nuclear signatories. But in 1987, after finding that its non-adherence was complicating supply relationships in the EC and with other countries as well, Spain reversed its position and acceded to the treaty.\[^{48}\]

### 3.7 Significant Shifts in the New Agreement

On 1 December 1987 Spain and the US reached a consensus, in principle, on a new bases agreement to last eight years, with the option to extend it over successive year-long periods. The most significant points of the agreement, which was signed on 15 January 1988, included the closure of the air base at Torrejon and thus the removal of the F-16 fighter wing within three years, by mid-1991 (it was expected that this step would reduce the number of US personnel in Spain by nearly one-half); a prohibition on stationing or transiting nuclear weapons through Spanish territory, and a reduction in

the US presence in Spain. The new defensive agreement allowed the US to continue to use support installations in Spain and authorisations for entry into Spanish territory, airspace and territorial waters. Agreements were concluded regarding American access to installations, national territory, airspace and waters during times of crisis or war, in corroboration with NATO planning. In consequence, it was quite clear that the role of the Spanish bases and installations was not purely a bilateral one. The withdrawal of the 401 Wing represented the departure of all US combat forces stationed in Spain. KC135 tanker aircraft were to remain in Moron to reinforce the southern zone of Spain in its proximity to the Strait of Gibraltar, while the state at the air naval base at Rota was to remain unaltered. The base at Zaragoza continued to house the 406 Tactical Wing and, in turn, the principal section of the Spanish Air Force was to be concentrated at Torrejon. The latter continued to lend support to the American Air Force units in transit to other bases.

Spain’s ban on nuclear weapons was motivated principally by pacifist sentiment and an apparent belief that it could thus avoid becoming a nuclear target. US negotiators agreed

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49However, under the Agreement it was understood between the parties to it that while Spanish authorities may forbid or permit, case by case, the visit of warships to Spanish ports, the Spanish government will not inspect warships in Spanish territorial waters or in Spanish ports. No information concerning their armaments will be required, in T. Veremis and Y. Valinakis, “NATO, US Bases in Mediterranean: The Cases of Greece and Spain”, Occasional Papers 7, (Athens: Hellenic Foundation for Defence and Foreign Policy, 1989).

50Studies began on finding an alternative base for the unit. During the Gulf War the 401TFW sent a squadron to Qatar and one to Incirlik to support Allied operations. Torrejon Air Base supported 10,000 MAC sorties carrying 85,000 troops and 130,000 tons of cargo through the base to the Gulf. Torrejon handled 80 percent of the airlift missions. During the build-up and war, the base pumped 200 million gallons of fuel to transiting aircraft. During 1992, USAFE withdrew most of its forces from Spain. The 401st began inactivating its squadrons and redeploying aircraft to other USAFE bases and to the US in July 1991. The last F-16 aircraft left Torrejon on 24 March, ending 26 years of Air Force fighter presence in Spain. On 4 May, in formal ceremonies, the 401st transferred to Aviano without personnel or equipment. Headquarters Sixteenth Air Force also moved to Aviano AB from Torrejon during 1992. Torrejon AB drew down quickly once the fighter squadrons inactivated and by early April, the base was a virtual ghost town. Air Force base operations closed on 1 April 1992 and thereafter USAFE air traffic control information was given only in Spanish. Throughout the spring and summer, the Air Force continued to turn over buildings and facilities to the Spanish Air Force. On 20 February 97 Air Mobility Command concluded that Torrejon was no longer needed as an en route support base. The base was officially returned to the Spanish Air Force on 30 June 1998 and remains an active Spanish Air Force base. www.torrejonairbase.com
to such arrangements because over time Spanish bases were losing their strategic importance due to improved US missile capabilities and the end of the Cold War. However, the importance of US-Spanish ties was never underestimated by US officials, so the shift to a more equal relationship was seen as a “progressive” move by the US, while still having access to important strategic bases in Spain without “rent payment.” The increased costs for Spain were compensated for by the political benefits offered by the Socialist government. Spain would no longer receive any more economic counter-loans for use of the bases. This in itself was a great novelty. The change in philosophy of the agreement thus became clear. It was already becoming so after the 1982 agreement, but the terms of the 1988 agreement broke with the idea of “bases for dollars.” It also implied an aspect, highlighted by the Spanish authorities, of the Spanish contribution to NATO.

Further to the 1988 agreement there was another improvement seen in the equalization of US-Spanish relations. The agreement on cultural and educational cooperation by the US and Spain was signed on 7 June 1989. A new policy, supported by both the public and private sectors, gave a different dimension to the programmes carried out by the joint committee for cultural and educational cooperation. These joint committee activities complemented the Fulbright programme for graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and visiting professors, which in 1989 became the largest in the world. In this regard, the Spanish foreign minister at the time, Javier Solana, remarked that Spain desired a relationship with the US that went beyond one primarily built around military security. He pointed to the importance of education exchange programme like the Fulbright programme, under which he himself studied in the US. He believed it had a tremendous impact on generations of Spanish students and marked the deepening of the
US-Spanish partnership. "51 Once the bases agreement and the NATO issue were settled, Spain’s political relations with the US were more even and this enabled the Socialists to develop a generally good working relationship with Washington.

3.8 A New Era: US-Spanish Cooperation in the Middle East and Balkans
The end of the Cold War significantly helped in resolving the contentious bond with the US. Despite the resentment that had accumulated on both sides over Spain’s opposition to the use of its bases facilities in the 1980’s and 1990’s, Spain became a major staging area for the US presence in the Persian Gulf in 1990-1991 conflict.52 Spain deployed naval forces of its own to operations in the Gulf, including one frigate and two corvettes. Cooperation with the US was a remarkable contrast to that of the previous years: even under the relatively cooperative Franco regime, Spain denied landing rights to US F-15 planes during the Iranian crises of 1979, and refused permission to the US to use airspace in the 1986 bombing strike against Libya. During the Gulf War, Spain allowed US B-52 bombers to operate from Moron air station and even offered Spanish F-16’s as escorts. The US was also allowed to use Spanish military bases as major supply centres, and over 85,000 US troops transited through Spain.53 In short, the Gulf War allowed the Spanish military to gain legitimacy in the eyes of its own nation, as playing on its essential role in external affairs rather than promoting internal oppression. Spain’s support for the allied coalition effort in 1990-91 in participating in the Gulf War

51 Inauguration USA-Spain Forum, Spain and the US: Economic, political and social prospects, Seville, Spain, 12 November 1995.
52 In 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and threatened to annex the northern oil fields of Saudi Arabia. In response, US President George H.W. Bush declared that the invasion “would not stand” and secured both a UN mandate and a European consensus in favour of military action to push Saddam’s armies out of Kuwait. After a series of direct communications between the White House and the Prime Minister’s office, Gonzalez agreed to grant the US unprecedented use of the bases in Spain as a transit point and logistical back-up for the massive movement of American troops and equipment to the Gulf region in preparation for war. Spain also contributed forces to the combined military effort to liberate Kuwait, in Adrian A. Basora, “US-Spanish Relations from the Perspective of 2009”, Foreign Policy Research Institute, November 2009, www.fpri.org/enotes/200911.basora.usspanish2009.html
was highlighted when Gonzalez, speaking before the Cortes, defended his decision to deploy Spanish ships, and grant permission to the US to use its air bases in Spain as a staging point for troop deployment as “conviction that it is Spain’s obligation in defence of the national interests as a country, in defence of our interests in accord with our European vocation, and in defence of our interests as members of the international community.”\textsuperscript{54} In other words, the decision to send troops to their first overseas military missions since the Spanish-American war was defended by Gonzalez on the grounds that it served Spanish interests in cementing Spain’s place in Europe. From the viewpoint of NATO, and Washington in particular, Spain was proving to be very much a friend in need.

Security challenges came not only from the Persian Gulf, but from central Europe due to the collapse of Yugoslavia. Spain’s role in Bosnia and Herzegovina marked a prominent shift from military isolationism to international activism. Spain’s defence industry swiftly modernized and, in many respects, became technologically compatible with those of its European partners. Spain demonstrated its commitment to the post-Cold War international system by providing a large number of military personnel to the United Nations (UN), they becoming the ninth-largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping missions.\textsuperscript{55} As Kenneth Maxwell has remarked, “Spain’s participation in UN peacekeeping forces in Namibia, Angola, Bosnia, and Central America marked a qualitative shift from rhetorical engagement to active participation in international activities.”\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{54} Sesion Informativa Sobre el Conflicto del Golpe Persico: comparecencia del Presidente del Gobierno, Felipe Gonzalez, ante el Congreso de los Diputados, Madrid, Ministerio del Portavoz del Gobierno, 11 September 1990, p. 17.


A renewal of the Israeli-Palestinian quest for peace began at the end of Cold War as the US took the lead in international affairs. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western observers were optimistic that the end of the Cold War heralded the beginning of a new international order. President George H.W. Bush, in a speech on 11 September 1990, spoke of a “rare opportunity”, to move toward a “New World Order” in which “the nations of the world, east and west, north and south, can prosper and live in harmony”, adding that “today the new world is struggling to be born.”

The Gulf War did much to persuade Israelis that the defensive value of territory had been overstated, and that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait psychologically reduced their sense of in security. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) realized the loss of its most important diplomatic patron, due to the collapse of the Soviet Union that started in 1989. Moreover, as Arafat took a pro-Iraqi stand during the war, the Arab Gulf states cut off financial assistance to the PLO. In its policy towards the Middle East, after decades of disagreement with the US, Spain followed more the line of its EC partners. The Socialist government established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1986, and Spain emerged as an important player in the Middle East. The profound transformation of Spanish foreign policy was possibly best exemplified by the convening of the 1991 Middle East Peace conference in Madrid. The fact that the Israeli government agreed to Madrid hosting the meeting was remarkable given the fact that Spain and Israel did not maintain diplomatic relations prior to 1986. Spain was forced to recognise the Israeli State during its accession to the European Economic Community, which represented a break from the policy followed during the Franco regime.

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following that recognition, Spain showed willingness to deepen its relations with all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict. By hosting the 1991 peace conference in Madrid, Spain showed its readiness to contribute to the peaceful resolution of a conflict that had always threatened to turn into a destabilising factor in the wider region.

The historical importance of the conference being held in Madrid in 1991 was that it was the first-ever public talks between Israel and its neighbours (except Egypt) aimed at achieving peace treaties between the 3 Arab states and Israel (Syria, Lebanon and Jordan). The talks with the Palestinians were based on a 2-stage formula, the first consisting of negotiating interim self-government arrangements, to be followed by permanent status negotiations.\(^{60}\) They opened immediately following the conference on 3 November 1991 in Madrid, and were followed by over a dozen formal rounds in Washington, DC from 9 December 1991 to 24 January 1994.\(^{61}\) However, although the conference led to few practical and legal solutions, it still signified a remarkable “twist in events.”\(^{62}\) Importantly, the Madrid Conference of 1991 was a cornerstone for further negotiations and had a positive impact on the Middle East Peace process, and it also brought US-Spanish relations to a common objective to promote peace and security in the post-Cold War environment. The historic affinities of General Franco with the Arab world, and even King Juan Carlos’s excellent personal relationships with King Hussein

\(^{60}\) The Madrid conference was hosted by the government of Spain and co-sponsored by the US and the USSR. It convened on 30 October 1991 and lasted for three days. It was an early attempt by the international community to start a peace process through negotiations involving Israel and the Palestinians as well as Arab countries including Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. It was the last conference held with both the USSR and US present; the USSR collapsed in 1991 in Israeli Government Guide, www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/The%20Multilateral%20Negotiations

\(^{61}\) Palestinian peace files, www.pna.gov.ps/Peace_Proc/Peace_files/madrid.asp; Israel Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir’s conditions, which the US accepted, were that the PLO be excluded from the talks and that the Palestinian demands for independence and statehood not directly addressed, in “The Madrid Conference”, Middle East Research and Information Project, www.merip.org/palestine-israel Primer/madrid-conf-pal-isr-primer.html

and the Saudi Royal family were other factors behind Spain’s willingness to increase its influence in Middle Eastern politics.

The US showed key support for Spain’s aim to play a greater role in NATO. To this end, former Foreign Minister Javier Solana asserted that, “cooperation between the US and Spain in that region is essential, with each country playing a complementary role in facilitating a dialog in the Middle East and coordinating the distribution of aid.”

Interestingly, Prime Minister Gonzalez (1982-1996) on various occasions rejected offers to head the European Commission, a clear tribute to the global vision shown during his time in office. Also, in a bid for Spain to further reaffirm its wish to be considered a normal and reliable partner, the government accepted the challenge of the EC Presidential term in the first semester of 1989, a challenge which Portugal refused. Other Spaniards also obtained prominent positions in the EU foreign policy sphere: former Foreign Minister Carlos Westendorp (1995-1996) became the EU High Representative in Bosnia; the Mayor of Valencia, Ricardo Perez-Casado, became Administrator of Mostar, while career diplomat Miguel A. Moratinos became as EU special envoy to the Middle East.

3.9 A Credible and High Profile Partner

Thus it can be concluded that the ascent of the Socialists to power and the solution of the NATO problem, along with EC membership created a new situation in which Spain

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63 Inauguration USA-Spain Forum, *Spain and the US: Economic, political and social prospects, Seville, Spain*, 12 November 1995 p. 2. It is fair to say that, without this new warmth, Javier Solana, Felipe Gonzalez’s third foreign minister and an anti-NATO activist in his 40s (as a young man he wrote a pamphlet called *50 Reasons to Say No to NATO*) would not have won US support to become NATO Secretary General in 1995. Disapproving of those who had argued that Spain’s Latin American or Mediterranean dimension would prevent it from acting as a truly Western country, Javier Solana was subsequently appointed High Representative of Common Foreign and Security Policy, in William Chislett, “Spain and the United States: Quest for Mutual Rediscovery”, *Elcano Working Papers*, 44417-2005, www.royalinstitutoelcano.org p. 33.

64 Carlos Alfonso Zaldivar, “El año que nucéacabo. La política exterior de España”, *Armario Internacional*, 1990, p. 27.
became a legitimate international player. By the 1990’s, with the Cold War over, the
US was in the process of defining its political goals, but as it has been pointed out the
US continued to consider its privileged relationship with Spain, including access to
Spain’s military bases, as an important strategic element in providing protection against
the new dangers that NATO had to deal with in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.65
Furthermore, the US-Spanish Council became a vital player in the new transatlantic
relationship especially in strengthening essential contacts between the two countries.
To reinforce this point, it is worth remembering Under Secretary of Commerce for
International Trade Stuart Eizenstat’s statement on this matter: “The relationship is
characterized by the increased mutual trust and cooperation. Spain has played a
courageous leadership role in many challenging and demanding issues of the world
today, such as peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and in the Middle East, the
development of a Mediterranean initiative, the expansion of NATO, and the
improvement of transatlantic trade.”66

Important factors bringing Washington and Madrid closer during this period was the
personal chemistry and open communications between the first President Bush and
Prime Minister Gonzalez. This relationship began with a Bush invitation to Gonzalez to
visit the White House in October 1989, a visit that not only attracted considerable
positive media attention but also proved successful in terms of building personal
relations. Thus, when the Persian Gulf crisis erupted in the summer of 1990, the
groundwork had already been laid for highly productive direct telephone contacts
between the two leaders to discuss an urgent common response. According to US
Ambassador to Spain, Adrian A. Basora, “this relationship continued throughout to the

66 Inauguration USA-Spain Forum, Spain and the US: Economic, political and social prospects, Seville,
end of Gonzalez’s era, where by the beginning of the 1990’s most Americans viewed Spain as a “normal” European ally, and this view was reciprocated from the Spanish perspective. The result was that in 1996, ten years after EU membership, when the Socialists left office to be replaced by the conservative People’s Party (PP), Spanish foreign policy had acquired a high profile. The positions Spain had adopted in areas such as disarmament and non–proliferation, multilateral trade and investment, international financial cooperation, human rights and democratization, peace-keeping or global warming, could only be understood in the framework of Spanish membership in the EU. But it is no less true that by the end of the Socialist era in the mid 1990’s the US-Spanish partnership had been transformed, leading to a relationship that was stronger and more diverse during the Jose Maria Aznar, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush Administrations that were to follow.

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Chapter 4

Spanish-US Relations in an Age of Global Terror

4.1 Introduction

On the morning of 11 September 2001, the United States awoke to an unprecedented attack. America’s enemies had hijacked airplanes in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania and turned them into weapons, killing nearly 3000 innocent people. The Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre collapsed and it became instantly clear that a new era in international affairs had started and that America was being drawn into a dangerous new war.1 The US was under attack from an enemy it could not see and who was not clearly defined. This new enemy required America to fight a new form of warfare that it was not prepared for. The al-Qaeda terrorist network had posed a threat to the US for almost a decade prior to the attacks of 9/11.2 Throughout that period - during the eight years of the Clinton Administration and the first eight months of the Bush Administration – the US government had already looked to counter the al-Qaeda threat. However, the evidence suggests that America was not ready on the intelligence level to counteract terrorism of this type.3 As a result, it was almost impossible to develop an understanding of the threat.

Apart from highlighting the shortcomings of US intelligence capabilities, the attacks on the US by al-Qaeda immediately called into question America’s role and status in the international system: if the world’s sole superpower could be assaulted so dramatically

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by a non-state entity, could the international system be rightfully described as unipolar. In an effort to punish al-Qaeda, avert future attacks and restore its shaken confidence, the US embarked on an open-ended, global “war on terrorism.” GWOT was to be fought on three fronts: domestic, military and political. As President George W. Bush stated in his 20 September 2001 address to the nation, the coming conflict would be a “lengthy campaign”, calling upon all states to make a choice: “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”\(^4\) Like nearly all leaders across the world, Spanish officials reacted with horror to the events of 11 September. Aznar’s position echoed the view of all other EU governments. For instance, the leaders of Washington’s three main European partners were resolute in their support. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of Germany described the attacks on New York and Washington as “a declaration of war against the entire civilized world” and pledged Germany’s “unresolved solidarity.”\(^5\) President Chirac of France promised “total solidarity.” \(^6\) While British Prime Minister Tony Blair promised that his country would be “standing shoulder to shoulder with the US.”\(^7\) Immediately, the Spanish government pledged its support for the US and for a global commitment to “join forces to confront together the dangerous threats and challenges that humanity will face in the twenty-first century.”\(^8\) Following the attacks of 9/11, instead of withdrawing from its place on the world stage, America appeared to be reassessing its dominance within the international system. Support for a unilateralist foreign policy increased both within the Administration and amongst the American public. Moreover, the Bush Doctrine, outlined in the President’s June 2002 West Point commencement speech and officially presented in the 2002 National Security Strategy

\(^6\) Christophe Chatelon, “Le monde entire exprime sa solidarite a l’egard des victims américaines”, Le Monde, 14 September 2001
\(^7\) Prime Minister’s Statement to the House of Commons following the September 11 attacks, 14 September 2001, www.number-10.gov.uk
of the US, disavowed containment and deterrence in the war on terrorism and instead embraced a strategy of preventative military action. Spain under the leadership of Aznar, realized the increasing reality of unipolarity in the world order and therefore the importance of backing the US campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. Aznar made it his priority to side with the US because only through partnership with the US could Spain achieve its global objectives. As a personal adviser to Aznar, Rafael L. Bardaji has put it: “By being more important for America, Spain became more influential in Europe, North Africa and wherever else it acted. It meant finally rising from the bush leagues and taking part in the big league.”

This chapter will examine the deepening of US-Spanish bilateral ties following the 9/11 attacks and will attempt to explain its root causes and effects. The “clash of civilizations” theory and the evolution of terrorism will be important factors to consider when asking these questions:

1. Whether Spain’s role in international relations shifted from that of a “balancer” to that of a “leader” in the wake of 9/11?
2. Whether this shift was durable, based on shared, long-term interests with the US, or a short-term coalition of convenience?

\[\text{(9) Ibid. p. 28.}\]
\[\text{(10) Jason W. Davidson in his paper “From Harmony to Hard Times; A neoclassical Realist Explanation of Transatlantic Burden-sharing in Afghanistan and Iraq”, argued that the neoclassical realist explanation suggests that states are more likely to provide support when they value their alliance with the US, when their national interest of prestige is implied in the intervention case, and when public opinion favours support or is electorally irrelevant, which was the case both for the UK and France’s participation in the global war on terror. (Aspen Institute Italia: 2008-9, Paper prepared for presentation at the 2009 International Studies Association Annual Conference in New York, New York). Contrast this outcome with the transatlantic clash prior to the 2003 Iraq war, which generated widespread attention and commentary from journalists, scholars and policymakers. Britain and Spain provided political support and ultimately provided significant allied contribution of ground forces, UK predominated in numbers, when the US initiated Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) on 20 March 2003. In contrast, France refused to provide any military support and opposed the US-led war politically.}\]
\[\text{(11) Rafael L. Bardaji, personal adviser to Jose Maria Aznar, “Beyond Iraq: Spain in a unipolar world order”, ABC, GEES, 11 March 2003.}\]
When addressing these issues it is necessary to explore Spain’s initial reaction to the terrorist attacks; the US initiation of the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan in fall 2001; the invasion of Iraq in spring 2003. Particular attention will also be paid to the debate between Aznar and other Spanish policy-makers about the need to side with the US in the context of Spain’s long domestic fight against ETA.

4.2 Cultural Conflict in a Unipolar World

There is no doubt that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were a defining moment in international affairs. The attacks inspired a period of profound introspection, and marked the beginning of a new World Order to replace the vacuum created by the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Communism. The theory of cultural conflict, clearly defined in Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* and the theory of “transformation of cultural difference into cultural conflict” examined by Rubenstein and Crocker, and echoed by John Burton and others, came to the fore in the wake of 9/11. They have argued that destructive social conflict is the result of unsatisfied basic needs, common to all human beings, rather than particular cultural differences. These needs are for identity, security, meaning and development. These needs cannot be bargained for, as interests can, nor are they tied to any specific culture, as values are. The resolution of conflicts caused by unsatisfied needs requires social and political adjustment of institutions and power. If we need to modify existing theories of international relations to reflect changes in the international system after 9/11, the clash of civilizations as a paradigm does not provide a persuasive alternative. Rather, the characterization of the attacks of 9/11 as a clash of civilizations confuses our understanding of its causes. The US response to the attacks was in self-defence, to end

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state support for a terrorist organization posing immediate danger to its security.\textsuperscript{14} Moreover, the direct support of Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Turkey and the endorsement of Jordan and Egypt were also inconsistent with the idea of a unified Islamic civilization in opposition to the West.\textsuperscript{15} Though the context in which state power was exercised has changed, the \textit{Clash of Civilizations} paradigm as a new world order was too simplistic as nation states were still the preponderant entities in global politics.

It is important to remember that terrorism is not a simple twenty-first century phenomenon. There are countless examples of terrorism and terrorist actions through history. The contemporary use of terrorism implies an attempt to undermine the concept of sovereignty (the control of territory, population and the use of force) and even the structure of the state system itself. Terrorism particularly undermines the state’s presumed monopoly over the use of force. “Globalization”, drug cartels, multinational corporations and non-governmental organizations are widely recognized non-state phenomena of obvious and growing importance; as such the term “terrorism” is now notoriously difficult to define. For the purposes of this thesis, terrorism is the sudden use or threat of use of violence against innocent targets for political ends. “Sacred” or religious terrorism is the oldest type of terrorism, with a history going back to the first century AD and arguably earlier.\textsuperscript{16} Despite its nomenclature, religious terrorism actually mixes both political and religious motivations and is, as a result, probably the most dangerous, least predictable and, in recent years at least, has tended to cause more casualties than other types. It could also be argued that terrorism is a

\textsuperscript{14}Lavina Rajendram, “Does the Clash of Civilizations Paradigm Provide a Persuasive explanation of International Politics after September 11\textsuperscript{th}”, \textit{King’s College London, Cambridge Review of International Affairs}, Vol. 15, No 2, 2002, pp. 216-231.


direct response to globalization and the desire by governments to continually increase their spheres of social, political and economic influence.

Through the Cold War and since, American strategic thinking favoured the rational calculus of loss and risk, minimized for the US and maximized for the enemy. By the end of the twentieth century, that is how the US had become accustomed to facing the prospect of major interstate war: especially after the Vietnam War, where the ultimate purpose was to raise the enemy’s costs and risks and lower those of the US. Following 9/11 the US faced an entirely different type of threat, one that could not be approached within familiar American strategic thinking. More to the point, the costs of disruption and defence engaged in by the US, both before and after 9/11, have been, and always will be, much greater than the costs of opportunistic terrorist attacks. As a result, the Bush Administration dealt with both complications by a process of selective redefinition. It redefined self-defence to include attacks such as 9/11 as threats to a state’s survival, which would allow a US right to self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations (UN) charter. The US therefore led the way towards establishing a new and dangerous precedent, in which a military attack against another sovereign state could be justified by a link between that state and a prior to non-Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) terror attack. This is how the US was able to justify leading a coalition of forces against Afghanistan in October of 2001. This doctrine of “pre-emptive action”, gave the US justification to attack their enemies, with or without the support of the international community. The reasons and justification given by the US government for the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 was a prime example of the wide reaching effects of this doctrine.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, terrorism evolved much more quickly than the US strategic, political and budgetary processes and 9/11 forced the US into re-orientating its strategies and resources. 9/11 marked a new era in international relations, where the traditional tools of power politics became less important than in the past, coupled to the omnipresent threat of terror. Civil war, ethnic conflict, international crime, and many other sources of violence in the globalized community were also obvious threats to the state’s monopoly on the use of force; but none of these had shown the ability to wreak large-scale destruction in a single incident primarily directed against an uninvolved civilian population located far from the territory of the perpetrators.

Spain had suffered for years through the terrorist campaign of Euskadi TA Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom, nationalist and separatist organisation - ETA). Prior to the dramatic events of 9/11, Spain suffered another blow from ETA when the financial director of *Diario* (the Basque Daily), Santiago Oleaga Elejabarrieta, was assassinated in San Sebastian on 24 May 2001. A month later, on 10 June 2001, ETA assassinated in Madrid with a car bomb a police officer, Luis Ortiz de la Rosa. This incident was followed by another attack of ETA when three people were injured with a powerful explosion that occurred in front of the la Caixa bank in downtown Madrid. In the same day, Spanish authorities deactivated what was described as a “massive” car bomb in an airport in Malaga, a major tourist destination. An ETA call warned ahead of time that the bomb was set. It is important when talking about Spain and its fight against ETA to understand ETA’s motivation. ETA is fighting for the creation of an independent Basque nation, and was launched with its fist killing, that of Guardia Civil member Jose Pardines Arcay on 7 June 1968. This was followed by first planned assassination that of

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18 “The murder sent a bloody, defiant signal that the Basque extremists’ campaign to silence media critics will continue despite the electoral defeat of ETA’s political wing this month”, in Tim Brown and Anton La Guardia, “ETA assassinates news executive in defiant warning”, 25 May 2001, www.telegraph.co.uk
police commissioner Meliton Manzanas on 2 August 1968. Furthermore, the assassination of Franco’s Prime Minister, Luis Carrero Blanco, in 1973, was an act that highlighted ETA’s skills and resources to threaten the central power of the state. Prime Minister Aznar was no stranger to the terrorist threat posed by ETA having himself survived a failed assassination attempt. Fighting Basque terrorists was a high priority on Aznar’s governmental agenda and he saw close cooperation with the US and the support of the world’s leading strategic power as essential to combating this threat internationally.

4.3 President Bush’s Faith in Aznar

The common understanding between George W. Bush and Jose Maria Aznar on fighting terrorism was strong from their first official meeting. The fact that Bush began his first trip to Europe that year with a visit to Spain on 12 June 2001 did not go unnoticed. In their talks the two leaders renewed their commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) alliance and showed a willingness to respond to new threats, particularly terrorism. As Bush stated: “Part of the missile defence dialogue is about fighting terrorism. If someone is able to blackmail free countries, it could prevent countries like Spain and the United States from being forward-thinking about terrorism.” At the joint press conference Bush continued by acknowledging that “our government is committed to stand side by side with the Spanish government as it battles terrorism here in Spain.” Bush added: “I appreciate so very much our close cooperation and security arrangements with Spain. Spain is a loyal friend and a strong ally. And I’m so appreciative that the Prime Minister has been straightforward and frank on a number of subjects. Our lunch today was one of the most beneficial lunches.

I’ve had since I’ve been President of the US [...] parts of the discussions were about our military agreements. Part of it was on issues that we don’t agree on. Most of it is on issues where we do agree. And I leave Spain fully confident that our relationship will be very strong, and our personal relationship will be very beneficial to the US and, hopefully, to Spain, as well.”

In these talks the government of Spain offered to install the US Aegis weapons system, including its sophisticated radar system, capable of deterring and tracking ballistic missiles, on four of its new F-100 frigates. Spain offered to employ this early defence capability off the Libyan coast, in an effort to identify any missile launched by that country. Aznar showed great enthusiasm for saying that such a system would be “strictly defensive” and would provide “more security” in the post-Cold War world. Putting the Spanish offer into operation, together with the prompt deployment of American sea-based missile defences, demonstrated the US determination to fulfil the Bush Administration’s commitment to deploy effective anti-missile systems and establish that this global capability would also benefit America’s allies.

Speaking to several European newspapers during his visit to Spain, Bush added that “The Europeans are going to find that they have got a trustworthy friend in the Bush Administration, one that will stay steady and true.” However, many Spaniards did not think this way and anti-Americanism resurfaced. That Aznar and Blair were the only EU leaders who supported the development of the US anti-missile shield, was a clear example of Aznar’s place, outside the EU consensus, as in Madrid, Bush found a willing reception, at the governmental level, that other European capitals did not show him.

23. "Those new threats of terrorism, based upon the capacity of some countries to develop weapons of mass destruction, and therefore, hold the United States and our friends hostage. It is so important we think differently in order to address those threat”, President Bush added during Joint Press Conference with President Jose Maria Aznar, 12 June 2001, www.whitehouse.gov


In deciding its response to the attacks of 9/11, the US explored all options. The Pentagon had been working for months on developing a military option for Iraq. The US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld asked the question about Iraq and raised the possibility that they could take advantage of the opportunity offered by the terrorist attacks to go after Saddam Hussein immediately. His deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, was committed to a policy that would make Iraq a principal target of the first round in the war on terrorism. Once advised that there was no evidence that Iraq was responsible for 9/11, the US President told his National Security Council on 17 September 2001 that Iraq was not on the agenda and that the initial US response would be to declare a “Global War on Terrorism” and to initially target al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.²⁶ Aznar saw this as an opportunity for Spain to work more closely with the US and garner support for its own war against ETA as part of the GWOT. To show his immediate support to the US, Aznar suspended his first tour to the Baltic countries and returned immediately to Madrid and called a crisis cabinet meeting in Spain. A clear sign of Aznar’s willingness to support Bush and the US government to the full was that the Spanish government did not consider it necessary to request parliament to sanction participation in the US led counteroffensive in response to the attacks of 9/11.

On 15 September 2001, Aznar stated to the US the determination of Spain “to fight together and to defeat the terrorists.”²⁷ On 20 September, the Spanish government authorized the US to place and support installations on Spanish territory and to use its military bases for refuelling and humanitarian aid transfers. Consequently, this action helped the US with their planning and preparations for removing the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan for the atrocities of 9/11. These actions of support from

Spain pre-empted UNSC Resolution 1368, passed on 12 September 2001, which declared the 9/11 attacks a threat to international peace and security.\(^2^8\) During a press conference on the anti-terrorist coalition, between the Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and the Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique, Powell praised Spain for being “forthcoming” in allowing its bases and air space to be used for US deployments and mentioned that six individuals in Spain connected to al-Qaeda had been arrested. He said: “Spain has spoken out very strongly against terrorism. They have experience in dealing with terrorists. And we have mutual agreements that we will work together against international terrorism. And as President Bush said when he visited Spain, we want to help Spain in their struggle against terrorist activities and their struggle against the ETA. And we will continue to find ways to cooperate.” Spanish readiness to fight the war on terror together with the US was further underlined by Pique: “Unfortunately we know this phenomenon, because we are suffering from terrorism for more than 30 years, 32 years, and we know very well the importance of international cooperation for winning this battle and this struggle to confirm the superiority of our values and our institutions. We have common views; we have a common political joint declaration, which is the framework of our relationship. We want to develop it. We have a bilateral relationship also in defence, because we have a bilateral agreement in this sense. We are allies in NATO. So I think that we have to continue with these efforts.”\(^2^9\)

### 4.4 Enthusiasm for Closer US-Spanish Ties to Defeat Terror

The officially stated purpose of the US invasion of Afghanistan was to target al-Qaeda members to the threat of the Taliban government in Afghanistan which had provided support and a safe haven to al-Qaeda and to capture its leader Osama Bin Laden:


\(^2^9\) Ibid.
Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader. Every nation has a choice to make. In this conflict, there is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers themselves. And they will take their lonely path at their own peril.”

The Afghan-Northern Alliance provided the majority of forces, while the US, fellow NATO members and other members of the international community including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Pakistan, France, New Zealand, Italy, Portugal, Germany and Spain provided support for Operation Enduring Freedom. Prior to the invasion, the Taliban had refused to hand over Osama Bin Laden without being shown evidence of his connection to the attacks. While the primary objective of capturing Bin Laden has failed at the time, the invasion did succeed in uprooting the Taliban from power and in enabling the implementation of a government more cooperative in the search for Bin Laden and more supportive in general of the War on Terrorism. The war in Afghanistan had major worldwide political effects. Many countries introduced tough anti-terrorism legislation and took action to cut off terrorist finances, including the freezing of bank accounts suspected of being used to fund terrorism.

Law enforcement and intelligence agencies stepped up cooperation to arrest terrorist suspects and break up suspected terrorist cells.

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31 In June 2002, The EU enacted a framework decision on combating terrorism. It established a joint definition of terrorism that member states were expected to insert in their national legislation. Following 9/11 and the new anti-terrorism EU policy had also given rise in Spain to new legislative developments, but outside the scope of the criminal law. The political Parties Act No 6/2002 outlawed a new form of action or conduct which did not carry any criminal or administrative sanction, but allowed for the dissolution of political parties which pursued activities damaging to the foundations of democracy, particularly where the aim of these activities was to destroy or undermine individual freedom, eliminating or disabling the democratic system (Article 9) (68). On the basis of this new legislation – which was strongly criticized by civil liberty movements but nevertheless declared constitution by the Constitutional Court (Judgement of 12 March 2003) - the Special Division of the Supreme Court (Judgement of 27 March 2003), formed for this purpose, held that Batasuna, the political party which formed part of the so-called National Liberation Movement, of which ETA was a member, was unlawful, in Jose Luis de la Cuesta, “Anti-terrorist Penal legislation and the Rule of Law: Spanish Experience”, ReAIDP /e-RIAPL, 2007, www.penal.org/IMG/JLDLCTerrorism.pdf
around the world. Spain’s extensive antiterrorism provisions, though developed in response to internal ETA violence, placed the country at the forefront of international antiterrorism efforts in the wake of the September 11 attacks. In response to those attacks, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1373 on 28 September 2001, mandating all UN member states to adopt specific measures to combat terrorism and creating the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) to monitor states’ compliance. From the start Spain was an active participant in the work of the CTC. The US and Spanish authorities launched a multi-phased police operation to dismantle alleged al-Qaeda cells located in Spain; most of those detained had been under police surveillance for several years.

Indeed al-Qaeda has been known to the US to operate cells in Spain, both logistically to support operations in other countries and potentially to mount attacks within Spain itself. Spanish investigative services and the judicial system had aggressively sought to arrest and prosecute their members, with the most notable Barcelona raid that occurred later in January 2003. In that operation, Spanish authorities arrested 16 suspect terrorists and seized explosives and other chemicals.

In parallel to bilateral efforts to combat terrorism on Spanish soil, the US-Spanish efforts to prevent terror internationally culminated in their joined mission in Afghanistan. Most European leaders were quick to make televised statements of support following the launch of the US attacks against the Taliban. The EU’s High Representative, Javier Solana of Spain, said the EU’s support for the strike was “unambiguous”. The Taliban, he said, was facing the consequences of their actions. Jose Maria Aznar was also vociferous in his support of US action, describing it as “an

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act of legitimate self-defence.”\textsuperscript{35} The enthusiastic Spanish support and cooperation with US counter-terrorism was swiftly rewarded with ETA being included on the State Department’s terrorist group list on 2 November 2001, for the first time. As a result, the US Treasury had the authority to block any bank accounts relating to ETA in the US, further reiterating the global aspect of the fight against terrorism. In his address to the Spanish nation, Jimmy Gurule, Under Secretary of Treasury for Enforcement, underlined that the US was willing to assist the Spanish government against ETA.\textsuperscript{36}

Aznar used Spain’s rotating EU presidency in January 2002 to promote further Spain’s bilateral relationship with the US whilst balancing its multilateral relationships with the other EU countries: “Spain counts on three anchorages in its politics of security and defence. The first one is North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; the second is the bilateral relation with Washington; the third, the emerging dimension of security and defence of the European Union, the Common Foreign Security Policy,” Aznar said.\textsuperscript{37} Any political-military response to 9/11 by Spain had to follow this hierarchy before it became policy. During Spain’s EU Presidency with Aznar’s confidence growing, Spain undertook a policy of mediation in international affairs. Together with Romano Prodi, at the time President of the EU Commission, Aznar underlined the need for closer judicial cooperation between the EU and the US in the fight against terrorism. On 8 January 2002, Aznar said: “It is vital that priority be given to stepping up relations between the EU and the USA, especially in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters.” Aznar added “successful cooperation needs to work in both directions, since terrorism is

\textsuperscript{37} Rafael L. Bardaji and Ignacio Cosido, “España y la lucha contra el terrorismo global”, \textit{GEES}, 6 November 2001, www.gees.org
A problem, which affects all of us. Aznar’s willingness to judicial cooperation was more specifically expressed in the development of an extradition policy with the EU. Spanish attempts to establish an accelerated procedure in relation to extradition had its origins in Felipe Gonzalez Socialist administration, but it was under the mandate of Aznar’s Conservative Popular Party, that the main steps were taken towards the elimination of national borders for the execution of sentences. Spain’s interest in acceleration of the extradition procedures was very closely related to the fight against terrorism. One of the best examples of the interest shown by Spain in this field was found in the declarations made by the then Spanish Interior Minister, Jaime Mayor Oreja. At the First European Conference on Terrorism, held at the beginning of 2001, Mayor Oreja stated that the free movement of people should not become an “ally to terrorists”, which is why it was necessary to implement a European arrest warrant. “Terrorism” he said, “poses a very serious threat that affects the political, social and moral principles on which we base our state of law and on which the EU is constructed.”

The political will exercised by Spain met with an unexpected ally: the attacks of 9/11. The Extraordinary European Council meeting held on 21 September 2001 to prepare the EU’s reaction to the attacks included in its conclusions a Plan of Action and proposal for adopting a European arrest warrant that preserved “the rights and fundamental freedoms of the affected.” As a result of this meeting, a roadmap for the series of measures in the fight against terrorism was adopted by the Justice and Interior Ministers of the EU.

Press Conference, Jose Maria Aznar and Romano Prodi underline the need for closer judicial cooperation between the EU and the United States in the fight against terrorism, Palacio de la Moncloa, 8 January 2002, www.ue2002.es


By 13 June 2002, after some intense work under the Spanish Presidency, the Council of the EU adopted a Framework Decision related to the European arrest warrant and procedure for surrender between Member States. This decision required Member States to adapt their national legislation before 31 December 2003 and allow for its earlier application for those Member States that wished it.

Ibid.
February 2004, Spain received nineteen requests for extradition, ten of which have been executed, of its seventy-two requests, only one with Portugal, had been executed. From this it was obvious that Spain had clearly become the EU leader of in the adoption of measures establishing accelerated extradition procedures between its Members. For the Spanish government these measures represented the European dimension to its fight against terrorism, and against ETA in particular. They were therefore a continuation of the Spanish internal policies in the judicial and police fight against terrorism.

Although, Aznar emphasized that the extent of cooperation between the US and Spain in fighting terrorism, he did not specifically endorse the Bush Administration’s decision to allow the use of military tribunals to try non-US suspected terrorists. Spanish Court official confirmed to CNN that extradition might be difficult because of the death penalty in the US, as well as the military tribunals, which would provide fewer guarantees to the accused than are normally provided in Spanish courts. “If and when the United States requests that extradition, we will study it”, Aznar said in the White House during the meeting with Bush in November 2001. Most importantly Aznar said that any extradition request would be reviewed “with full respect of Spanish and United States law and also will be studies at the European Union.”Bush downplayed reports of any differences, saying Spain has been “incredibly helpful” to the US in the war on terrorism and had offered military support to fight international terrorism - although it ruled out the deployment of Spanish troops to Afghanistan. Spain’s support for the US was articulated further on 13 December 2001, when US Attorney General John Ashcroft and Spain’s Minister of Home Affairs, Mariano Rajoy declared: “We will stand shoulder to shoulder in this fight against international terrorism and together our nations.

will prevail.”

However, overall it was obvious from Aznar’s position that when it came to the extradition policy, as part of the cooperation in the war on terrorism, he used Spain’s EU membership and its obligations to downplay the differences over the issue. Thus indicating that cooperation in the War on Terror was somewhat a coalition of convenience, where Aznar saw it as a way to internationalise Spain’s internal security threat with the help of the US.

As the GWOT progressed, the term “Axis of Evil” originally used by Bush in his State of the Union Address on 29 January 2002, naming governments that he accused of helping terrorism and seeking weapons of mass destruction such as Iran, Iraq and North Korea, caused controversy. The response to the Bush Doctrine and “Axis of Evil” speech from the wider EU was negative as from the EU member states point of view the “Axis of Evil” implied unilateralism on behalf of the US. Gunnar Wiegand, spokesman for EU External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten, said that the European Commission considered differences of opinion among allies normal, and that in this case, he did not agree with US policy: “We do not use such words.” Wiegand said, referring to Bush’s “Axis of Evil” remarks, adding that the EU believes “engagement and rapprochement” are better ways of influencing developments in countries like Iran and North Korea. Javier Solana, the High Representative for EU foreign policy, joined those cautioning the US against succumbing “to the dangers of global unilateralism” and Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique became the first high-ranking European politician to insist that the European Union would continue its negotiations with Tehran

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46Ibid. Javier Solana, the High Representative for EU foreign policy, joined those cautioning the US against succumbing “to the dangers of global unilateralism.”
despite US opposition. However, it was reported that while addressing foreign journalists in Madrid, Spanish Prime Minister Aznar said he did not think the EU had anything to gain by “focusing on differences” or aggravating the US. From this it was clear that Spain, which itself had long been battling extremism in the form of the Basque separatist group ETA had made the fight against terrorism its pre-eminent presidential priority. The “Axis of Evil” speech stretched Aznar’s dual roles as a politician and a mediator. In the Spanish Parliament on 20 February 2002, when discussing the speech, he said: “I think that there is no such thing as the “Axis of Evil”, that’s to say, there is no relation between Korea, Iran and Iraq.” Yet Aznar was also quoted in The Guardian as thinking that Bush’s “Axis of Evil” speech was a great defining moment, as good as the Marshall Plan or Ronald Reagan’s definition of the Soviet Union as an “evil empire.” Iran, Iraq and North Korea, he agreed, were “an expression of evil” and “a risk to us all.” Whilst there were evidently differences of opinion over Bush’s “Axis of Evil” speech, Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State and Joseph Pique, the Spanish Foreign Minister were quick to confirm solidarity between the US and Europe. Pique stated: “we agree that we should reinforce the transatlantic link, this is in the interest of our collective security and therefore we have to maintain a relationship with the US who safeguards that link and who reinforces it [...] there are matters in which we are in disagreement, over the climate and some trade issues but we can come to an agreement. The conflicts between the US and Europe are routine in the framework of the strategic relations that we should have.” Pique added: “Our point of view on absolutely every topic is not always 100 per cent congruent, but the amount of harmony is extremely, extremely high. And we hope this will continue to be the case.

47 Ibid.
49 Giles Tremlett, “Europe’s centre leans to the right,” 30 April 2002, www.guardian.co.uk
and our solidarity and friendship will increase as time goes by. What we intend to do is to continue emphasizing what brings us together, what unites us, and not emphasizing the things that separate us, which are very, very few indeed.” Powell responded by saying “The US and the EU have a common understanding and a common view about countries with regimes that can legitimately be called evil and that develop weapons of mass destruction that might get in the hands of terrorists or might be used by these despotic regimes.”

4.5 Spotlight on Aznar as Key Broker

Aznar was keen for Spain to play a special role, between the US and Europe and decided that the best way to maintain US support for his own war on Basque separatists was to publicly support US foreign policy. Spain was noted in the EU not simply for its support of US foreign policy but also for the absence of criticism over the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. The Spanish Left joined the criticism. A Socialist former Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez, noted in an opinion piece in the daily El Pais that “The European Union was not even mentioned in the State of the Union speech […] neither the European Union nor NATO seems to have a relevant role.” In talks with Israeli leaders on the Palestinian conflict, on behalf of the EU, Aznar acted as a mediator saying that isolating Yasser Arafat was “a mistake” and he warned of “serious additional risks” in the Middle East if the situation continued to escalate. He said that EU efforts were aimed at “going from a situation with no way out to a situation that offers a way out” and that a breakthrough could only happen if the US took a firmer stance, Pique added: “A solution is not possible without the US. They cannot resolve

51 Ibid.
52 “España, Estados Unidos y el ataque a Irak”, GEES, Madrid, 4 March 2002, www.gees.org
the problem on their own, but we need them.” As Aznar’s confidence grew on the world stage, so did his boldness and, with it, Spain’s favoured position as a staunch ally of America. Aznar and his spouse were invited to Camp David as Bush’s guests. In the lead up to the Spanish Premier’s visit, Bush had remarked that the level of their bilateral relations was indeed very high. He said Aznar could turn to him with any problem, any time and that the two of them were always sure to find common ground. Aznar said the US and Spain had developed a relationship of close friendship and said he wanted “to send out a very positive message concerning the strength of the relationship between the EU and the US, and especially [our] determination that the strong relationship be further strengthened in the extraordinary circumstances both countries are currently experiencing politically, economically, and in terms of security that [we] must face together.” This speech was a clear indication that in the eyes of the US, Aznar was progressing from mediator to leader in terms of his international role.

The signing of the Protocol of the Agreement on Defence Cooperation in April 2002 between the US and Spain and the Declaration of Principles for Enhanced Cooperation on Matters of Defence Equipment and Industry, demonstrated the further deepening of the relationship between the two countries. Minister of Foreign Affairs Pique explained to Congress that for the first time the agreement includes cooperation between both Spanish and American intelligence in order to fight international terrorism. In this regard the US Ambassador George L. Argylos commented: “When US Secretary of State Colin Powell and Foreign Minister Josep Pique sign the Protocol of Amendment to the bilateral Agreement on Defence Cooperation on Wednesday, they will take our long

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56 Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique, Madrid, 10 April 2002, www.state.gov
relationship into the twenty-first century. This agreement, together with the Declaration of Principles, will lay out a road map for defence cooperation between our two countries for the next decade, and beyond. At a time when the threat of global terrorism seeks to destabilize, these agreements make sure our countries are prepared to respond to the threats of the future [...] The international sense of responsibility is being demonstrated by the presence today in Afghanistan of Spanish soldiers. They are serving under harsh conditions; helping to bring desperately needed humanitarian relief and medical care to a population that has suffered so terribly under Taliban rule. Spain shares our commitment to Afghanistan.”57

The extent of Aznar’s political manoeuvrings to gain favour with the US was recognized and highlighted by Bush in a speech in Washington on 3 May 2002 on “The present and future of the transatlantic relationship”. He stated: “The US knows that it has found a firm and constant ally in Spain. The Spanish people are very familiar with the suffering caused by terrorism in its resolve to destroy the democratic values of our societies [...] following the attacks of September 11 the international co-operation must be directed from the European point of view, to strengthening and deepening our relations with the US. In this sense, within the jurisdictional ambit, the Spanish Presidency has achieved the adoption of a mandate to negotiate a Treaty on Extradition and Judicial Co-operation in criminal matters between the EU and the US.”58 US gratitude for Spain’s support under Aznar can be evidenced from US intervention in the ten day Spanish-Moroccan dispute in July 2002 over the Island of Parsley, a tiny, usually uninhabited Mediterranean island: the US intervened upon Aznar’s personal request and because it did not want a dispute at the western end of the Mediterranean,

which was close to the unstable part of the world. However, according to Aznar, Colin Powell’s call to the King Hassan II of Morocco saved the situation because Spain was an important European ally in its “war against terrorism” and Morocco a moderate Arab-Islamic ally in that same war, and because, first and last, it was the only credible guarantor to both sides.”\(^{59}\) The US intervention also highlighted divisions and weaknesses within the structure of the EU to formulate a cohesive common foreign policy. President Jacques Chirac of France considered that his interests in Morocco were more important than his relations with Spain. Once again, France overrode the EU and exposed the limits of a common foreign policy, or rather lack of one. As Aznar acknowledged: “In view of the failure of the EU, we requested assistance from the US, and thanks to their intervention the affair could be appropriately dealt with. This crisis was a small one, but the lesson we learned as to who helps us when we need it will not be easily forgotten […] We do not regard the US as a threat, but as part of the solution to many current problems. We still believe in the transatlantic link.”\(^{60}\)

4.6 Fissures across the EU and Domestic Opposition over Iraq

The sympathy and goodwill generated around the world for the US after September 11 quickly disappeared, as the 80 nations that supported the Afghanistan campaign back in late 2001 were now questioning the motives for the US invasion of Iraq. The prevailing view was that the US seemed prepared to use its power to go after terrorists and evil regimes, but not to help to build a more stable and peaceful world order. In the eyes of the international community, the US appeared to be degrading the rules and institutions of the international community, not enhancing them. In Spain, various leftist parliamentary groups were now questioning the whole situation. During a parliamentary

\(^{60}\) Florentino Portero, Address to the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Madrid, 26 June 2003, www.gees.org
debate in Madrid, on 8 April 2002, on the defence agreement between Spain and the
US, Socialist Party representative from Galician National Block, Pedro Vazques, voiced
his party’s discontent and its belief that: “US flights over Spain’s territories can be
dangerous for the Spanish population and continued presence of US forces in Spain
encourages US military policies that Spain’s Socialist party does not support.” 61
Furthermore, MP Don Gaspar Llamanza Trigo (from the Left United Federal
parliamentary group) argued that Aznar had presented the choice as one between liberty
and tyranny, when the real choice “is between a unilateral war, international law and the
UN.” 62 However, Aznar was unmoved, and defended his views in the parliamentary
debate: “Sirs, I mean to say clearly that (Iraq) is in possession of chemical weapons, that
it is in possession of biological weapons; it is known in a clear form that Iraq
permanently intends to acquire the material that permit it to manufacture a bomb and
nuclear armament and moreover has given protection to different organizations and
terrorist elements. All that is known [...] is the threat is not the US, neither the
democratic nations, as they are the ones that defend the cause of the liberty
everywhere.” 63 While Aznar was defending his view in favour of the Iraq invasion,
Bush spoke with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Abdullah Gul of Turkey, EU
leaders and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien in order to build international
support for a military campaign against Iraq, on the grounds that Saddam Hussein’s
regime was harbouring weapons of mass destruction. 64 The US President laid out his
justification for a pre-emptive military strike in an address to the UN on 12 September

61 Cogreso: Comparecencia, a peticion propia, del Senor Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores (Pique y
Campos) y del Señor Ministro de Defensa (Trillo-Figueroa y Martinez-Conde), Conjuntamente para
informar sobre el Convenio de Defensa entre España y Estados Unidos, numero de expediente
214/000113) num 460, 8 April 2002.
62 Congresso, Cual va a ser la implicacion de España en el ataque Estados Unidos-Irak?, no 180/0014555,
18 September 2002, num 187, pp. 15-97 (“Nosotros, a pesar de lo que usted dice, no nos parecemos en
nada, ni siquiera en el bigote, al presidente de Irak”.)
63 Ibid.
64 EU conservatives call for US diplomacy on Iraq”, Reuters, 9 September 2002,
www.famulus.msnbc.com
2002, a year and a day after the attacks on New York and Washington. Javier Solana, speaking as the EU’s Senior foreign policy representative, as early as February 2002, explained, that “we oppose a preventative war against Iraq, the US is thus neglecting the EU’s view.”\textsuperscript{65} This speech on the intricate topic highlighted the key issue of difference between the US and the EU.\textsuperscript{66} Before the war, in a study of opinion carried out by the Real Institute Elcano, 60 per cent of the Spanish population said they would support an attack against Saddam Hussein if there was proof that he had weapons of mass destruction, but the Spanish public did not have sufficient information in this respect and did not believe in the immediacy of the threat.\textsuperscript{67} However, by 10 September 2002 ahead of the 9/11 commemoration day, Aznar expressed on the phone to Bush his continued support to the GWOT and that Bush could rely on Spain’s support in case of a military attack in Iraq.\textsuperscript{68} Moreover, he stated that the UN should not become an obstacle to a necessary military intervention.\textsuperscript{69}

Florentino Portero, a member of a leading political think tank GEES in Spain, argued that it was the Spanish government’s duty to explain to the Spanish people the motives for Spain’s participation in a military campaign in Iraq and warned that Spain’s position would make it a target for al-Qaeda who could try to attack American interests in Spain: for instance the jointly used military base in Rota, the US embassy in Madrid or the headquarters of US firms or national symbol of the Spanish state.\textsuperscript{70} While the Popular Party (PP) tried to persuade the Spanish public of the need to disarm Iraq, Spain’s Foreign Affairs Minister, Ana Palacio, tried to convince the EU. A stark divide emerged

\textsuperscript{65} Jonathan Freedland, ‘Patten lays into Bush’s America’, \textit{The Guardian}, 9 February, 2002
\textsuperscript{66} G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition”, \textit{Foreign Affairs}, September/October 2002 p. 50.
\textsuperscript{67} “España, Naciones Unidos y Irak”, 8 January 2003, www.gees.org
\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Le Monde}, 14 September 2002.
\textsuperscript{70} Florentino Portero, “España y el terrorismo internacional”, \textit{GEES}, Madrid, 13 October 2002.
between the US stance on Iraq’s alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction and the policies of France and Germany, who both strongly rejected the option of a military action in Iraq. Palacio urged the duo to take more account of the positions of other European nations and their NATO ally, the US. France and Germany must “continue to play an essential role in the EU and make real non-judgmental proposals for integration, which do not ignore the role which Europe and the US must play together on the world stage in the twenty first century,” she said. At that time both Spain and Germany occupied two of the ten rotating seats on the UN Security Council, while France was a permanent member. Iraq became such a divisive issue that the world’s key international bodies, the UN, NATO and the EU, were gradually splitting over the issue. A NATO emergency session was deadlocked on 10 February 2003 when three leading European Nations: France, Germany and Belgium, encouraged by Russia, a non-member, blocked an American request to extend protection to Turkey, chiefly AWACS surveillance planes, Patriot missiles and anti-chemical and anti-biological warfare teams. On 14 February 2003, Aznar announced to his government his wholehearted support for Washington’s position over Iraq. Consequently, more than three million Spaniards came together around the country in protest over the government’s stance and his political opponents accused Aznar of breaking European unity.

Aware of mounting opposition to the impending invasion, on 14 February 2003, President Bush released the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, whose stated aim was “to strengthen American security at home and abroad.” He argued that

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modern threats to the world order required modern solutions: “In leading the campaign against terrorism, we are forging new international relationships and redefining existing ones in terms suited to the trans-national challenges of the twenty first century.” On 22 February 2003, Aznar and Bush met at the US President’s ranch in Texas and planned a strategy to give the UNSC one last opportunity to pass a new resolution in support of the invasion of Iraq: “I welcome my good friend, President Jose Maria Aznar, to Crawford. President Aznar and I agree that the future of peace depends on the disarmament of Iraq. We agree that Saddam Hussein continues to be in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1441. We agree that the terms of that resolution must be fully respected. By Resolution 1441, the Security Council has taken a clear stand, and it now faces a clear choice. With the entire world watching, the Council will show whether it means what it says. Our coalition draws its strength from the courage and moral clarity of leaders like Prime Minister Aznar. In times of testing, we discover who is willing to stand up for the security of free people and the rights of mankind.” Moreover, when Aznar was asked about making calls to world leaders and members of the Security Council to try to change their minds, he replied: “It’s difficult to ask for an agreement on something that doesn’t exist yet. We’ll ask for people’s agreement when it does exist. We hope it’s soon. We hope it’s good. And we hope it assembles the greatest possible supporters. Because we cannot forget that our aim is disarmament and to avoid the threat that weapons of mass destruction, a possible use by Saddam Hussein, the threat that this poses to the world […] and what we cannot do is play this game in which you have inspectors and handed over something, everything is going well, but if it isn’t, that means they’re hiding weapons.” Aznar’s response to Bush’s question showed the extent to which he was supporting Bush and his intentions to invade Iraq. When on 26

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75 Ibid.
February 2003, French President Chirac and Aznar met in Paris and publicly talked about their differences over the war in Iraq. Chirac reminded Aznar that there was currently no evidence of weapons of mass destruction and hence no valid reason for invading Iraq.  

4.7 Aznar Holds Firm

Disagreements with EU partners as well as Spanish public discontent did not prevent members of Popular Party, during a secret vote on 4 March 2003, from giving their support for the war in Iraq. The opposition was losing ground in its campaign and during one parliamentary session Aznar called Socialist party leader Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero “a fellow traveller to Saddam.” Not acting to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction is neither politically nor morally acceptable,” Aznar told a meeting of members of his Popular Party as he reiterated charges that Iraq has failed to disarm since the 1991 Gulf War. The meeting came shortly after opposition politicians joined government workers and others in a 15-minute work stoppage on the 14 March 2003 to protest a possible war in Iraq as Aznar, ahead of a weekend of the US-British-Spanish summit, continued to stand firmly by Washington’s efforts to disarm Saddam Hussein. In support of the US, Aznar compared those who opposed military action to those who sat back and watched while Hitler started World War II or Yugoslav leaders carried out ethic cleaning in Kosovo. “The Balkans appeared on TV but there are human rights abused in Iraq”, Aznar stressed. “Does that make it right to act in former

77 Interestingly during the Gonzalez era, Valery Giscard D’Estaing, former French President, gave shelter to ETA in France and ignored Spain’s requests for assistance. When Franoise Mitterrand assumed the French Presidency, he ushered in a period of greater cooperation, when Spain called for agreements within the EU to smooth the path of the fight against terrorism, it met with no understanding. Spain was reminded that her problems with ETA were an internal problem. Thus from Aznar’s point of view Spain had suffered ETA actions for more than thirty years and often found itself alone without the support of its European neighbours, in Florentino Portero, Address to the Sub-Committee of Transatlantic Economic Relations of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Madrid, 26 June 2003, www.gees.org

but not in latter? I don’t think so after so many years of tyranny, murders and torture,” Aznar said as he hoped “the Iraqi people will see freedom soon and Spaniards can proudly say in that moment that we were capable of assuming serenely and calmly our responsibility”. However there was little acceptance of Aznar’s view among the Spaniards. On March 15, Spanish and Italian cities showed some of the largest turnouts against their government’s pro-war stance, with more than 400,000 protests in Milan, more than 300,000 in Barcelona forming a mile-long human chain and, more than 120,000 in Madrid. Marches also took place in Seville, Aranjuez, Palencia, and in the Canary Islands. In the meantime, on 7 March 2003, France could somehow reap the harvest of its anti-war stance. In a Security Council (SC) debate, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dominique de Villepin succeeded in rhetorically out-performing his US counterpart and yielded unprecedented applause from the audience. When the UK, Spain and the US attempted to gain a majority in the SC in favour of a second UNSC resolution, France actively lobbied against and, finally, French President Chirac publically announced France’s veto of any resolution legitimizing war in Iraq. On the basis that the war would destabilize the entire Middle East, it would also weaken the West’s fight against terrorism. In addition, the role of the UN, of International Law and the weapon’s inspector’s successful work were also part of the argumentation.

80 “Centenares de miles de manifestantes contra la Guerra en Iraq”, 15 March 2003, www.yahoo/news.com
82 Daniel Rizotti of Argentina, captain of Green peace’s flagship Rainbow and Carlos Bravo from Spain, a Greenpeace “No War” campaigner were handcuffed by Spanish police on 15 March 2003 as the vessel blocked a naval base in southern Spain preventing a US military supply ship from leaving as they protested against the US war plans in Iraq, in Reuters, 15 March 2003; “Millones de personal en el mundo gritan ‘No a la Guerra’”, 15 March 2003, www.yahoo/news.com
84 Televized interview of M. Jacques Chirac, President de la Republique by M Patrick d’Arvor, (TV1) and David Pujabas (France 2), 10 March 2003. and Dominique de Villepin (Le Figaro, 26 February 2003) as well as majority of speakers in the National Security Assembly debate on 26 February 2003.
A senior advisor to Aznar, Rafael Bardaji, summed up Aznar’s thinking: “Long-term friendships are built on short term actions and now we are faced with Iraq [...] overthrowing Saddam is a just and necessary strategic objective in the interests of the international community, but for Spain it is this and much more. To play in the big league we need top players. Spain, in collaboration with the US, can achieve this. Without the US - it would be difficult. Against the US - totally impossible.” The endgame diplomacy aimed at disarming Iraq began in the Azores on Sunday 16 March 2003 in a rapidly called meeting attended by President Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Manuel Barroso. Bush argued that military action would liberate Iraq and “would be the beginning, not the end, of our commitment to its people”, and continued by saying “we will supply humanitarian relief, bring economic sanctions to a swift close, and work for the long-term recovery of Iraq’s economy. We’ll make sure that Iraq’s natural resources are used for the benefit of their owners, the Iraqi people.” Aznar in turn declared: “We are well aware of the international world public opinion, of its concern. I would like to remind you that we all said before we came here that we were not coming to the Azores to make a declaration of war. That we were coming after having made every possible effort, continuing to make this effort, working to achieve the greatest possible agreement, and for international law and for UN resolutions to be respected.” On 18 March 2003 Aznar announced to the Congress that Spain would be joining the war against Iraq in the coming days as a fait accompli, however at the time he told parliament that Spain would not participate in offensive missions: “There will not be Spanish troops in offensive attacks,” Aznar said but added that “Spain would contribute 900 troops – for roles such as medical support and anti-mine capabilities-and

87 Ibid.
three ships.” The announcement that Spain would not send combat troops to Iraq was met by applause in Parliament. However, as all of the Spanish opposition parties in Parliament – from the Socialists to the Catalan nationalists – opposed Aznar’s stance on Iraq. Aznar believed that the task of disarming Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was the biggest international crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union. “It’s about living in a world with rules, or a world without rules”, Aznar told Parliament, to howls from the opposition. Nevertheless hundreds of thousands of Spaniards took to the streets in protest at this decision. During that anti-war protest against Aznar, PSOE unveiled a banned reading, “No War. Aznar resign.”

The Azores Conference ended on the evening of Wednesday 19 March 2003 (Thursday morning in Baghdad) when US bombs and missiles destroyed a bunker thought to harbour senior Iraqi leaders, including President Saddam Hussein. Consequently on the 20 March 2003 hundreds of thousands took to the streets across Spain to demand the resignation of Aznar to meet the first attack that preceded the invasion of Iraq.

The photo of the four leaders at the Azores summit was the culmination of Aznar’s rise to a world leadership. Ironically it was this picture that would be used by his opponents a year later when the invasion of Iraq became the focal point of politics at home.

Spanish opposition to the war was immediate. As soon as the “Shock and Awe” military operation began, there were protests at the US bases in Rota, Moran, Torrejon,

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88 In support of US war of terror, Aznar announcement of participation in the war in Iraq included Galicia ship, which was equipped as a field hospital and had troops trained in dealing with nuclear, chemical and biological contamination. The Galicia was to be escorted by a frigate carrying other troops, and the flotilla was to be accompanied by the oil tanker supply vessel the Marques de la Ensenada. While Spanish army engineers were to defuse land minds. In addition to sending support troops and ships, Aznar said Spain would supply military aid, under its NATO commitment, to help protect fellow NATO member Turkey from possible attack in Iraq, “Spain: No combat role in Iraq war”, CCN, 18 March 2003.


90 Spanish police fired rubber bullets at protesters in Madrid, The demonstration, protesting against the government’s support for the war, included well-know actors and celebrities, in “Mass protests at US peace demo”, 21 March 2003, www.bbc.co.uk

Betera, San Javier, Asturias and Zaragoza. Spanish diplomacy found itself deeply involved in a battle that it was not looking for. According to Florentino Portero of the political think tank GEES, there was no political opportunism in the attitude, nor the intent to achieve compensation from the US. As in the case of the UK, Spain’s position was ideological. However traces of political opportunism reflected in the Spanish stance in the war with Iraq were reported on in *Die Welt* in April 2003: “Madrid plans to establish a special role for dealing with post-war Iraq that would include coordinating the humanitarian aid of major rebuilding projects amounting to millions of euros.” These duties, according to the newspaper, would be taken over by Spain’s Defence Secretary, Fernando Diez Moreno and Spanish businessmen were hoping to be involved in the huge rebuilding programme, and other infrastructure projects, once the war ended. *Die Presse* reported that Moreno paid a visit to Washington to discuss these matters at the beginning of April 2003. Ignacio Cosido, of the Elcano Strategic Studies Institute, argued that: “In politics the difficulty is not to do what is correct, but to convince the majority about what is the correct thing to do.” He felt that Aznar acted appropriately over the war in Iraq and had brought Spain to the fore of international politics. The problem, he argued, was that Aznar was not able to convince his electorate of the benefits of his actions. This was the biggest challenge facing Aznar. He continued by saying that: “Aznar had consolidated a strategic relationship with the US. This alliance has a special importance in an increasingly unipolar world. In doing so, Spain had destroyed the French plan to convert the EU into a counter balance to the US in the global arena.” Speaking at a press conference in Madrid in early 2003 Colin Powell emphasised Aznar’s support for the US: “Prime Minister

96 Ibid.
Aznar and President Bush have remained in very, very close touch since the very beginning of the Bush Administration, and the President values the advice and the sharing of experience that transpires between him and Prime Minister Aznar. And nowhere was that more in evidence than during the recent crisis in Iraq. We understand perfectly that this was a difficult issue for the Spanish government and for the Spanish people. The bilateral relationship between the US and Spain has been strong and will remain strong and will strive into the future, and we look forward to working with Spain in all of the regional and international issues that are on our agenda.”

4.8 Advantages and Costs of Aznar’s Stance on Terror

Addressing the question of whether Spain benefited from its relationship with the US, Aznar stated that the naming by the US of three Basque terror-linked groups on US black list had given a boost to Spain’s fight against terrorism: “What are the fruits of our relationship with the US?” Aznar asked rhetorically, “this is one of those fruits.” Even White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, discussing the 7 May 2003 meeting between Aznar and Bush suggested a possible connection between the war and the designation decision: “I think the State Department may have something to say today in regard to the designation of terrorist organizations in Spain. The US and Spain have a very strong relationship and the President is very grateful to Spain for the leadership they took in helping to free the world from the threat of the Iraqi regime.”

Nine days after Fleischer’s comments, on 16 May 2003, Islamist terrorists attacked a Spanish target for the first time: a suicide attack against a Spanish business in Casablanca, Morocco causing the death of 41 people, two of them Spanish businessmen. Indisputably, Spain had suffered selective personal damage as a consequence of its

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97 Press Conference of Secretary of State Colin Powell and Spain’s Foreign Minister Ana Palacio, Madrid, 1 May 2003, www.embusa.es
involvement in Iraq as a part of the GWOT. The first Spanish casualty was on the 7 April 2003 with the death of *El Mundo* journalist, a son of the ex-Communist party leader, Julio Anguita Parrado, whose life was tragically taken by an Iraqi missile. This was followed by the death of Spanish camera man from *Telecinco*, Jose Couso, who was killed when a US tank fired at a Baghdad hotel where journalists were staying in April 2003. Moreover, the involvement in the US led coalition military missions saw further loss on 26 May 2003, when sixty two Spanish military died as a Ukrainian Yakovlev 42 plane crashed in Turkey on the way back to Spain from a mission in Afghanistan. Another casualty that took place due to the Spain’s continued support of the war in Iraq was when on 9 October 2003 Jose Antonio Bernal Gomez, a Spanish secret agent was murdered in Baghdad, Iraq. Following the confirmation of Bernal Gomez’s death, Spain’s opposition called for Aznar to report to Parliament on the safety of Spanish nationals in Iraq. On 19 August 2003, a brutal suicide truck bombing demolished part of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, killing Brazilian Sergio Viera de Mello, head of the UN mission, and twenty two other officers and workers, while causing serious injuries to numerous others. Unnoticed among the injured was Spanish Navy Captain Manuel Martín Oar. While suffering apparently only superficial body damage, he died of brain trauma hours later while waiting for treatment on a stretcher placed on the street outside the gutted building. Attached to the UN mission as an assistant to the Spanish embassy, Captain Martín was Spain’s first military casualty.

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99 “Julio Anguita Parrado 32,” 29 May 2003, www.guardian.co.uk

100 Couso, who worked for the television station *Telecinco*, and a Ukrainian cameraman for the *Reuters* news agency were killed in the attack. The US has maintained that the soldiers acted appropriately in circumstances of the war, in Katya Adler, “*Spanish Diplomat killed in Baghdad*”, 9 October 2003, www.bbc.co.uk; Mohit Joshi, “*Spanish Judge re-launches case against US soldiers for death in Iraq*”, 21 May 2009, www.topnews.in;

101 Seven more were killed later in an ambush south of Baghdad in fall 2003, “*Seven Spanish agents killed in Iraq*”, 29 November 2003, www.ccn.com


casualty not only of the overall conflict but also in the highly controversial relationship between the Spanish government and the United States in the Iraq crisis.\textsuperscript{104} He was the first Spanish to arrive in Madrid, a sensitive issue that became the centre of acrimonious accusations between the government and the opposition.

A few days earlier, in the garden of the royal residence in Palma de Mallorca, the Balearic islands capital, just seconds after Captain Martin was warmly received by King Juan Carlos I in the annual protocol summer visit, Aznar ended a customary press conference with a dramatic remark. In a controversial cautionary manner, he stated he felt “sorry” for those “who are going to be glad when Spanish soldiers come back from Iraq in coffins.” This statement was perceived as a shocking and veiled “pre-emptive strike” (according to the label used by journalists) against the opposition. The incident was badly taken by the King, whose relations with Aznar had been characterized by a well-informed press as cold and distant. Jealous of getting upstaged by the popular monarch, the prime minister was notorious for pointing out that the role of the King was constitutionally limited and from the political point of view had to adhere to specific functions.\textsuperscript{105} In any event, the unfortunate comment was strategically placed in the

\textsuperscript{104} Following the incident of Mr Couso death for instance, during the Press Conference between Powell and Palacio, the US Secretary of State stressed that the incident like the other incidents are purely “an incident of war, there was no fault we believe, on the part of our soldiers. They were acting in self-defence and they used appropriated force. And we regret that it happened”. This statement consequently only provoked further debate in Spanish mass media over its participation in the war in Iraq. Press Conference of Secretary of State Colin Powell and Spain’s Foreign Minister Ana Palacio, 1 May 2003, www.embusa.es On his part, Aznar urged media professionals to “look not to the past but the future.” Earlier Aznar said that the journalists were killed in the “line of duty” and “serving the profession which they themselves have chosen”, and that Sadam Hussein was responsible for all the victims in Iraq. At the event, where Aznar said this, journalists were holding portraits of their dead comrades. On the eve of this incident they made the premier an obstruction in Parliament, turning their back on him during his speech, then left the room and decided not to cover his speech in Parliament. The Spanish Government later requested the US authorities for payment of material compensation to the family of Spanish journalist. RIA News channel, 11 April 2003.

\textsuperscript{105} The most famous occasion for taking the opportunity for remarking on the political dependency of the King was when Aznar answered a press conference question regarding a possible trip of Juan Carlos I to Cuba with a terse: “he will go when he is due” (“cuando toque”). The Palma de Mallorca threat was the last drop for a royal family that has felt much better treated by the Socialist Administrations of Felipe González than in the eight years of Conservative Administration, in Joaquin Roy, “Spain’s Return to ‘Old
background of the aggressive tactics executed by the opposition against the Spanish government’s policy in backing the US effort in Iraq by sending Spanish troops to substitute for occupation-weary US soldiers. Aznar’s comments caught his political opponents off-guard, while most of Spain was experiencing the worst and longest heat wave of the century. The media commentary and the response issued by the opposition turned into political battles in the fall. The new political season in Spain was going to be a mix of electoral confrontations and historical commemorations (the September 26 50th anniversary of the U.S.-Spanish agreement for the establishment of military bases in Spain, the December 6 anniversary of the Spanish Constitution of 1978), all leading to the finale of the national parliamentary elections of March 2004 for the renewal of the Spanish Congress.  

By summer 2003 the Spanish CNI intelligence service had itself ruled out that Baghdad had the capability to build nuclear weapons, and El Pais initiated a campaign for an inquiry over the issue, stating in its June 23 issue that the government had distorted intelligence on weapons of mass destruction in the lead-up to the war. This was followed by a demand from the leader of the Socialist Party, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, for a Parliamentary Committee meeting to clarify whether the Prime Minister had misrepresented the intelligence he had. Such demands highlighted the growing concerns within sections of the ruling elite over Aznar’s support for the on-going occupation of Iraq.

By end of the summer of 2003, Aznar faced intense opposition to his policy, with opinion polls registering 98 per cent of Spanish people against the war in Iraq. Having neglected Spanish public opinion, Aznar’s government chose to lift the limit of Spain’s

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106 Ibid.

initially pledged contribution of logistical support and approved sending combat troops to Iraq. On July 22, *El Pais* carried an editorial titled “In search of a mandate” that said the following: “This week, Spanish troops will begin heading to Iraq. They do so without a United Nations mandate, and they will be under the command of the occupying forces there. This is not a peace operation, but one of occupation and the maintenance of order. Resolution 1483, adopted unanimously on May 22 by the Security Council, limited itself to ‘taking note’ of a letter drafted by the United States and the United Kingdom that referred to their presence in Iraq as ‘occupying powers under a unified command’, and recognising the ‘authority, responsibility, and obligations.’ But the resolution did not legitimise the invasion after the event. Nor did it give any mandate to the occupying forces, nor those ‘other states that are not occupying powers, but are carrying out tasks, or that might do so at some future time’, as is the case with the Spanish troops.” The paper argued that the difficulties the US faced in Iraq necessitated international support and that this held out the possibility of fixing the rift between the US and Europe. “Post-war Iraq could be an opportunity to improve relations with Europe if the Bush Administration agreed to seek the help of the United Nations, thus reinforcing its role,” the paper said. Citing the efforts of Russia, Germany and Chile to line up behind a new UN resolution that they hoped was to “reinvest the UN with authority,” the editorial said that “the Spanish government has missed out an excellent opportunity to show international leadership by hearing this movement, particularly in light of its two-year rotating presidency of the Security Council.” While *El Pais* saw the alliance with Bush as a destabilizing factor in Spanish politics, Aznar saw it as integral to the central thrust of his government’s policies. Thus, in August 2003 over a thousand Salvadoran, Honduran, Dominican and Nicaraguan troops arrived at Spanish military airports and briefly received routine training for a few days.

at a lightly used military installation in north-eastern Catalonia. Their final destination was Iraq, where they were inserted into a multinational division led by Polish officers, under the overall oversight of a Spanish general. Scheduled to substitute US troops in occupation duties in central Iraq, the Spanish and Latin American troops were organized into a brigade of about 2,500 men and women, named Plus Ultra.\(^{109}\)

As the war with Iraq progressed in the autumn of 2003, Spain’s involvement continued to be heavily criticized by the majority of Spaniards. Even though the US government and US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, in particular, lauded Aznar, as “a great friend of the US” and “a representative of the New Europe”, the Spanish Prime Minister had difficulties persuading his country to have faith in the war on terror.\(^{110}\) On 22 September 2003, Aznar held discussions with UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, on the fight against terrorism. During their talks, Aznar underlined the progress Spain had made in the global war on terrorism: he alluded to the High Court judge in Spain, Baltasar Garzon, who had indicted Osama Bin Laden and thirty four other alleged members of the al-Qaeda terrorist network, accusing them of involvement in terrorist acts, including 9/11. The indictment also claimed that Spain had served as a base for the indoctrination, preparation, support and financing of al-Qaeda agents. More than forty Islamic extremists had been arrested in Spain as suspected al-Qaeda operatives. But, apart from the eleven indicted, most were released for lack of evidence.\(^{111}\) Aznar’s efforts were once again lauded in a speech made by US Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge speaking at the Strategic Studies Institute in Madrid where he thanked the


Spanish government, King Juan Carlos and Prime Minister Aznar for “acts of great political courage, and for their commitment to the cause of freedom worldwide. We are more than just allies; we are friends.” He continued by saying: “be it through murder, intimidation revolutionary taxation, political front organizations, ETA is involved in all of the worst practices of terrorism. Aznar, who was himself a victim of ETA terrorism, is one of the strongest leaders in the war on terror.”

After the end of the military phase of the war in Iraq, in fall 2003 Spain also assisted in the early efforts of reconstruction in Iraq. At the Conference of Donors in Madrid on 24 of October 2003 US$13 billion were pledged to Iraq by some 75 countries and international organisations. Weeks ahead of the conference, Spain pledged US$300 million of economic aid to Iraq up to 2007, making it “one of the world’s most generous donors to Iraqi reconstruction”, according to the Economy Minister Rodrigo Rato. Simultaneously in Brussels, Aznar pointed out that Spain’s contribution – worth about 258 million Euros (US$299.5 million), was greater than the 200 million Euros pledged by the European Union as a whole. Whilst in London, on 24 November 2003, shortly before the capture of Saddam Hussein in Tikrit, Aznar made a formal recognition that there were “errors in the handling of the post-war Iraq”, after being interviewed with the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. Nevertheless, the US gratitude to Spain continued with Secretary Powell thanking Ana Palacio for the “support we have received from Spain with respect to Iraq, the continuing commitment

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112 Remarks by Secretary of State Tom Ridge, Elcano Royal Institute, Madrid, 28 October 2003, www.embusa.es
115 14 December 2003 US captured Saddam Hussein tucked away in a hideout near his hometown of Tikrit.
that Spain is making to keeping troops there and the willingness of the Spanish government to take on additional responsibilities as we move forward. With respect to 2004, I expect to see our friendship deepen. There will be an election in Spain. But I think that what pulls us together, the values we share, the principles we share, that the Minister spoke of, suggest to me that 2004 will be another successful year of US-Spanish relations. And we are looking forward to continuity, even with the elections in Spain. I think the American people and the Spanish people understand the importance and the value of this friendship."

He also thanked both Aznar and Palacio for their friendship saying that this would continue long into the future. A week later Bush thanked Aznar personally: “And again, in front of the cameras, I want to thank you for your steadfast leadership, for your courage, for your wisdom and your advice.”

November 2003 saw the highest number of casualties among coalition troops in Iraq and the deadliest single month for US armed forced since the Gulf War. The killing of seven Spanish military intelligence officers in an ambush at Mahmudiya, south of Baghdad, together with the death of two more US soldiers brought the monthly toll of coalition dead to 111. In response, Democratic presidential candidate Wesley Clark, a former NATO supreme commander, described Iraq as “a distraction from the war on terror.” “Are we safer with Saddam Hussein gone? That’s a very tough case to make,” he told CNN. Notwithstanding, in his support for the US, Aznar continued to head off criticism from opposition politicians and newspapers of his unpopular policies in Iraq. He vowed that the troops would not be brought back, as “withdrawal is the worst

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possible path to take.” Aznar believed that the killings in themselves were proof that his own policies were correct for Spain: “The fanatical hatred that has accompanied this new atrocity has provided unimaginable pictures that we will never forget. We have no option but to face this fanaticism head on.” By that stage opposition leader Zapatero, backed by the Basque Nationalist party, praised the bravery of the dead but also led calls for the 1,300 Spanish troops in Iraq to be “brought home”. “Nobody who saw the glee with which passers-by trampled the corpses of our countryman can still maintain the majority of Iraqis consider troops to be their liberators,” El Mundo newspaper said. However Aznar was convinced that “against fanatical terrorism there is no other option than confronting it.” When speaking to the US Congress Aznar reiterated Spain’s desire to consolidate its leadership position: “We want to occupy a position in the first line of defence of democracy and the rule of law alongside friends and allies, in good times as well as in times of difficulty.” He continued: “we share with you the principles. And let me say that our commitment to freedom is unwavering.” In Afghanistan and Iraq, Aznar said, “the most important phase of the fight against terrorism is currently taking place. In Iraq, terrorists are trying to prevent the Iraqi people from taking their own destiny in hand. We refused to countenance the repeated violations of international reconstruction and I can guarantee you that we fully intend to see our commitments through.” Within Europe, Spain wanted to act as a key player inside a strong EU that “doesn’t entail working to be a counter power to the US. It means working towards an Atlantic-minded Europe”, he said.

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118 Giles Tremlett and Duncan Campbell, “Body bag count puts strains on coalition”, 1 December 2003, www.guardian.co.uk
119 Ibid.
120 Elisabeth Nash, “Aznar resists mounting pressure to withdraw troops as bodies of agents are flown home”, 1 December 2003, www.independent.co.uk
121 Aznar Speaks to US Congress on Terrorism, US-Europe Ties, State’s Spain’s commitments to fighting terrorism and weapons proliferation, 4 February 2004, www.usinfo.state.org
Chapter 5

The Art of Diplomacy: The US-Spanish Partnership under the Leadership of Bush and Aznar

5.1 The Election of Jose Maria Aznar and the Rise of Atlanticism

Jose Maria Aznar was barely known outside Spain when, in March 1996, he led the Popular Party (PP) to victory after thirteen years of rule by Socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez. Aznar took over the leadership of a consolidated democratic Spain, which was now a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and European Community (EC) among other international organizations. Aznar was committed to lead Spain to the role of a global player in the international affairs.¹ Contrary to the Socialists, the Conservatives were not opposed to strengthening US bilateral ties, and were keen to enhance the partnership between the two countries. The arrival of George W. Bush in the White House in 2001 had a profound impact on Spain’s international, regional and domestic environment. A mutual affinity between the two leaders was observed from the early stage of their cooperation. Spain was the first stop on Bush’s first visit to Europe in June 2001, the first time any US president had given Spain this privilege. The Joint Statement by President Bush and Prime Minister Aznar in Madrid, on 12 June 2001, reaffirmed the close relationship between their two countries. Building upon the previous Joint Declaration, both presidents confirmed their commitment “to the shared goals of enhanced bilateral relations, a stronger Transatlantic Alliance, and a Europe whole, free and at peace.”² Since Spain had joined the EC in 1986, its policy

objectives fell into line with Europe, but convergence with the European Union (EU) was reconcilable with Spain’s transatlantic common goals, bilaterally with the US and multilaterally within the EU and NATO. During the presidency of Bush, Aznar decided to press for the Spanish equivalent of the UK’s special relationship with Washington. This significant shift in Spanish foreign policy broke with the post-Franco, essentially Europe-focused, policy, partly forged because of the overriding priority of becoming a counterweight to France and Germany in the EC. Aznar had become increasingly disillusioned with the policies of the German and French governments and their predominant role in the EU. A closer relationship with Washington was a way to escape from their tutelage and to enhance Spain’s position in Europe and as a world player.

Aznar clearly understood that Spain, by capitalizing on its history and geographic location, had an Atlantic as well as a European vocation. He reasoned, correctly, that a geopolitically marginal country like Spain could increase its international influence only by having strong ties to the US. After the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001, Aznar became a key ally in the fight against terrorism. Spain backed the military action against the Taliban in Afghanistan and took a leadership role within the EU in pushing for increased international cooperation on terrorism. The Aznar government, with a rotating seat on the United Nations Security Council (autumn 2002-2004), supported the intervention in Iraq in 2003. Aznar visited the White House many times when he was prime minister and, after he decided not to run for re-election in 2004, was

3 “Re-establishing itself on the world stage”, www.internationalspecialreports.com
the first foreign dignitary to meet Bush after the American president’s re-election. Aznar was also accorded the honour of addressing a joint session of Congress and was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest award bestowed by the US government – which Tony Blair had received in 2003. His two terms in government were clearly marked by his determination to bring Spain to an equal footing with leading world powers. The Madrid bombings of 11 March 2004, that took place just few days before general elections, ended Aznar’s popularity in Spain, but his strong stance against terrorism secured him a favourable position with the US even after he left office.

5.2 Spain’s Relations with the EC

After a hard fought campaign, focusing on the corruption scandals that plagued Felipe González's Socialist government, Aznar won the 3 March 1996 general election with 37.6 per cent of the vote. With 154 of the 350 seats, Aznar had to reach agreements with three nationalist parties: Convergence and Unity (Catalan), the Basque Nationalist Party and the Canary Islands Coalition, in order to govern. He was voted prime minister with 181 votes in the Cortes General on May 4 and sworn in the next day by King Juan Carlos I. Aznar moved to decentralize powers to the regions and liberalize the economy, with a programme of privatisation, labour market reform, and measures designed to increase competition in selected markets. During Aznar’s first term, Spain fully integrated into European institutions, qualifying for membership of European Monetary Union (EMU). The earlier attempt by the US, during the Carter Administration of the late 1970’s, to include Spain in the EMU failed, as Germany’s

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7 Ibid. p. 336.
Chancellor Helmut Schmidt vetoed it together with Europe’s social democratic governing parties. Primarily they vetoed the entry of the Spanish dictatorship.

In its relationship with the EC, Aznar was determined to secure economic benefits for Spain and to block any policies detrimental to the national interest. Spain’s membership of the Euro, in accordance with the Maastricht Treaty, followed the March 2000 elections, which gave Aznar’s PP an absolute majority in parliament, thus freeing him to become more independent and ambitious in his policies. The key feature of his economic plan, which was considered his greatest success, placed growing emphasis on the stock market. In this, Spain merely followed a trend in the economies of all developed countries, but at an exceptionally fast rate. Under Aznar Spain turned into an aggressive financial economy, reflected in a growth rate that exceeded the average for the EU. While France and Germany struggled to avoid recession, Spain grew at a rate of 2.3 per cent. Aznar achieved this transformation without infringing the rules on monetary policy established by the Maastricht Treaty, with inflation under control, a public spending deficit of less than three per cent and national debt below 60 per cent of GDP. Aznar’s hostility to the EC founding members later influenced the debate on the European Constitution. Backed by Poland, he prevented agreement by obstinately refusing to give up the voting system introduced by the Treaty of Nice in December 2000. At the same time he criticised France and Germany for their budget deficits. In the EC convention of 2002-2003 under the leadership of Giscard d’Estaing, Aznar found an ally in Prime Minister Tony Blair, by presenting an alternative to the Franco-German proposals on institutional reform. Aznar was very keen to emphasize national

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interests by negotiating hard on policies important to the country such as structural funds, fisheries and the institutional settlements negotiated in Intergovernmental Conferences. Thus, the qualified majority voting system agreed in the Nice Treaty was regarded by Aznar as a major victory as Spain got as many necessary votes as France.\(^{11}\)

During his two terms of government (1996-2004), Aznar progressively modified the position of Spain in relation to the EU’s Common Security and Foreign Policy (CSFP), which became an instrument for the self-protection of Spain in international affairs and for the internalisation of its domestic problems. Aznar maintained his strident stance, as illustrated by an interview in *Le Monde* on 9 March 2003: “he was scornful of France’s President Chirac, attacked the European Council, called the US an example to the world, criticised everyone else and boasted about his ideas and achievements.”\(^{12}\) This behaviour was a response to a feeling of exclusion in the pact. The exclusion lead Spain to search alliances outside the Union, and more concretely, in the US and the candidate countries. The claim by France and Germany to speak for Europe was decisively undermined in January 2003 by the “letter of eight”, a pro-American declaration by eight European governments — Britain, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Spain — that was co-ordinated by the Spanish and UK governments (and later found the support of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia). As well as being a gesture of support for the Bush Administration, it had an undeclared sub-text in the EC. Henceforth France and Germany could no longer presume that, wherever they led, the rest of the EC would naturally follow.\(^{13}\) The tilt of balance of power within the EC, pointed to Aznar’s desire to be seen as an equal and


respected player within the EC while staying aligned to the Bush Administration. To this end Mariano Rajoy of the PP noted that the “US is essential to ensure European security, and ultimately an international order that respects the values and interests that define us. Our businesses must know that the US market is a dynamic and capable of providing opportunities for all, who are willing to fight for them. The quality and strength of the relationship with the US is an asset that Spain should look after.”

5.3 Spain and Latin America: a New Approach

By mid 1990’s Spain had not only changed its pattern of foreign policy, but had also changed the mood and attitude in international affairs. “Latin America is where the future of the twenty first century lies”, stated Aznar. He was quick to note that there was another important mission for Spain in the new world order: “the expansion of relations and deepening of trust between Europe and the United States.” Aznar tried to use Spain’s historical influence on Latin America as a facilitating tool for a rapprochement with the US. In fact, Aznar’s Latin American policy was a close transatlantic alliance that he made a crown jewel of his foreign policy, especially after the 11 September 2001 attacks. Following the first joint Press Conference by Bush and Aznar in June 2001, in reference to joint efforts in Latin America, Bush underlined that Spain and the United States shared strong common interests, notably, to promote peace and democracy and human rights in Latin America: “We will continue our efforts in support of the peace process in Colombia. In this context, the July 2000 Madrid Conference on Colombia is an example of the transatlantic cooperation that we seek to foster in the region,” he

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15 “Re-establishing itself on the world stage”, 2001, www.internationalspecialreports.com; The idea of Spain helping open door to the EU was accepted in Latin America, as it was worded by the Chilean President Ricardo Lagos during his visit to the Spanish Senate in June 2001: “Spanish America wants to be placed in the world and in Europe through Spain”, in Angel Bermudez, “Spain and Latin America; a Forking Bridge” published in Special issue: “Spain in Europe 1996-2004”, EE03/2004, Observatory of European Foreign Policy, March 2004.
The cooperation effort in Colombia from the Spanish side was the inclusion of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) in the EU’s terrorist list. In his speech before the US Congress on 4 February 2004, Aznar stated: “The Atlantic relationship shall not be complete until including the American continent as a whole. In the medium and long run, our common commitment must be the creation of a real community of values and common interests, including a large free trade area. Spain is ready to work for it.” This quote is relevant since it referred to what was considered to be the most important change in Spain’s foreign policy during the eight years of People’s Party’s government– the alliance with the US, an issue that impinged on the relations with various Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Mexico, Chile and Cuba.

The ties with Venezuela were affected after the US and Spanish ambassadors to Caracas met the interim President, Pedro Carmona Estanga, during the short and failed coup against Chávez in April 2002. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that prior to those clashes, Aznar managed to persuade Chávez’s government to help extradite to Spain alleged members of ETA. The signing of the association agreements with Mexico and Chile in the second EU–Latin America Summit (Madrid, 2002), during the Spanish presidency of the European Council, allowed Spain to include in the Madrid Commitment (the final document of the Summit), a reference to the decision of the signatory countries of combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In this final document, both Latin Americans and Europeans rejected all measures of unilateral

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character and with extraterritorial effect, thereby clearly referring to the United States post–September 11 policies. Such rejection was not later ratified by Spain, which backed up US unilateralism. According to Angel Bermundez, this was the reason why Latin American countries lost their interest in Spain, which promoted itself as the gateway to acceding to the EU8, as well as their hope for the EU to become an alternative to the “Northern colossus.” Aznar’s Latin America’s policy approach also suffered a degree of disagreements and major consequences for mutual relations with Mexico and Chile, both of which at the time were non-permanent members of United Nations Security Council. Mexico and Chile, albeit the latter to a lesser degree, were irritated at Aznar’s lobbying for the vote of both countries within the United Nations Security Council to approve a favourable resolution to the war on Iraq. As for Mexico, Aznar’s visit to the President Vicente Fox was categorically condemned both by the ruling party and by opposition parties, which described it as an unacceptable interference. The resolution was never approved. The outcome of this action showed the real limits of Spain’s influence over two of the most important countries in the region, and was witness to Aznar’s limited capability at using Latin America as a bridge for bringing closer Spain and the United States. At the height of the Spanish government’s cooperation with the US, a marketing campaign was launched in the United States carrying the tagline: “Your friend in Europe.” The fact that Spain supported Washington considerably impaired Spain’s image at Latin America’s

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potential partner and advocate in the international community of states, thus driven a wedge into Ibero-American relations.

As US Ambassador to Spain Edward L. Romero (1998-2001) pointed out in 1999, “Even in Cuba, our goals are the same: to encourage a peaceful transition to a democratic post-Castro government that respects its international obligations and the rights of all Cuban people.” In fact, from the time Aznar came to power, Spain’s policy towards Cuba has completely changed, and the strategy of cooperation and pressure – which was followed by Felipo González – was substituted by a harassment strategy, which brought bilateral relations to a serious crisis that overcame after Spain rectified in 1998. One of Aznar’s first steps was to suspend official cooperation with the Cuban government, except for humanitarian aid, and support the Miami-based opposition to Fidel Castro more actively than the Socialists. By 2004 Spain, together with the EU, took a tougher line against Castro due to the imprisonment of dozens of opponents as well as the execution of three people who were trying to flee the island after hijacking a vessel. The latter has worsened the relationship, so much so that Aznar himself has publicly made his wish that Castro’s regime comes to an end, the wish that was shared by Bush Administration. According to the US State Department, Cuba remained on the list of States who sponsor terrorism as it opposed the global war on terrorism, supported members of two Colombia insurgent groups FARC and ELN,

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23 Ibid.
24 In response, by summer 2003, Fidel Castro led protests by hundeed of thousands of dutiful Cubans outside the embassies of Spain and Italy. Aznar was denounced as “a little Fueher” and Silvio Berlusconi, his Italian counterpart, as “a fascist”. Both were said to be pushing the EU into a “fascist-imperialist” alliance with America, in “No eating my canapés any more”, The Economist, 21 June 2003.
25 Aznar largely succeeded in raising the position of Spain’s new government towards Fidel Castro’s dictatorship in Cuba to the European level. The “common stand” of the EU with its special emphasis on democracy and human rights from then on became the core of Europe’s common policy vis-a-vis Cuba. Ibid.
and provided safe haven to several Basque ETA members from Spain.\textsuperscript{26} Thus both the US and Spanish governments wished to work together towards advocating a peaceful transition to democracy in that region. Undeniably, the US and Spain used a different approach, but they had common goals in their policy making towards the region.

5.4 Aznar Elected: Atlanticism in Practice

During Aznar’s government Spain’s national interests were much more aligned with NATO than the government of Gonzalez had been. In fact, Aznar wasted no time in moving Spain’s foreign policy closer to Washington. Thus, having made his first trip to the White House in April 1997, in July 1997 when Madrid hosted the NATO summit under Javier Solana, the Spanish secretary-general, Spain completed its NATO membership. As Aznar would recall “Spain went through very hard times in the twentieth century, largely because of the isolation that was found. Spain should be ambitious enough to regain its position among the largest in the world, and for that we need a clear Atlanticist position.”\textsuperscript{27} Indeed, Aznar was a very keen Atlanticist and voiced his pro-American stance from his first day in government: “In my opinion, US-Spanish ties should be further explored with an eye to the grandeur of the Spanish nation in a Europe able to progress and influence the world and in the Atlantic and the American dimension of our country. The task had only just begun.”\textsuperscript{28} As a result of Spain’s full military integration in NATO, Spain was now able to participate fully in the US led military campaigns. The challenge for Spain in the 1990’s was to reach its much vaunted potential in international affairs. Thus in 1998 Spain supported the bombings

\textsuperscript{26} The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) are Colombia's two predominant rebel groups. Stephanie Hanson, “US-Cuba Relations”, \textit{Council on Foreign Relations Papers}, 14 April 2009, http://www.cfr.org/cuba/us-cuba-relations/p11113


\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. p. 296.
carried out by the US and Britain over Iraq. As a member of NATO, and under the UN Security Council mandate by 1999 over 3,500 Spanish troops and over 200 Civil Guards were on missions around the world. Hence, Spain participated, along with the US and other NATO allies, in military operations in the former Yugoslavia, at the time home to the largest contingency of Spanish troops. The Spanish air force took part in the airstrike against Serbia in 1999, and Spanish armed forces and police personnel were included in the international peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and Kosovo. Izquierda Unida (United Left – regionalist and radical groups led by the Communist party), was the only party that strongly opposed the Spanish involvement in Kosovo. IU called on minister of defence to order the immediate return of the Spanish pilots, to whom it appealed to become war objectors. Their opposition to NATO, however, was based in an uncritical defence of Serbian nationalism.

In the Kosovo crises Spain agreed to a NATO request to provide six F-18 fighter jets and a KC-130 Hercules refuelling plane for an eventual strike, manned by a total of 180 military personnel. Spain also contributed the frigate Victoria and the tanker Marques de la Ensenada to NATO’s Mediterranean fleet and the frigate Estremadura to the European fleet. The first military action of the Spanish F18s was to bomb fuel depots in the airport of Podgorica (Montenegro) and military shelters near Belgrade. The Spanish government under Aznar also authorised the deployment by the US of up to 40 KC-135 planes from the base at Moron de la Frontera base. The authorisation was extended to the overflying, landing and resting of crews in Torrejon and Rota bases.

32 Ibid.
This was possible as the majority of the Spanish parliamentary groups gave their backing to the government, including the Secretary General of NATO, Javier Solana, for the decision to intervene in Yugoslavia and for support of Felipe Gonzalez, who was at the time the special envoy both for Yugoslavia and for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Aznar pledged his full support for the NATO air campaign in Yugoslavia when one month into the bombing he reiterated that NATO must not rule out military option to prevent dictatorship from triumphing over human rights. In a strong message of solidarity to the NATO campaign, that was particularly welcomed by the US and Britain, Aznar said: “As things stand unfortunately, there is no reason, no cause for the Atlantic alliance to change its strategy or have some pause in the bombing.”

Furthermore, during Euro-Forum in April 1999 Aznar stated that “increased military and political pressure may motivate the Serbs against Milosevic and in favour of peace.” The intervention in Kosovo for Aznar primarily played an important role in raising Spain’s position as a world player where his views were supported both by the US and the UK. Thus Spain’s full participation in NATO’s military structure paved the way for Aznar’s desire to make Spain a fully committed and influential member of the Alliance whose voice was heard. While the conduct of the air war had become a matter of increasing debate in the Alliance after NATO’s mistaken bombings that led to civilian casualties in hundreds, Aznar alluded approvingly to NATO’s US General Clark’s targeting plans that included ground invasion. “I do share the point of view that the military alliance may have to have new targets,” Aznar said. “New targets may allow us to continue so that we can achieve a speedy political and

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33 NATO’s conditions for an end to air strikes were the withdrawal of Serb troops and police from Kosovo, the return of Albanian refugees, the deployment of an international peace force in Kosovo and an agreement on Kosovo’s future status. “25 May: UN reports ‘massive’ war crimes”, 25 May 1999, www.guardian.co.uk

34 Accompanied by Foreign Minister Abel Matutes, Azar was the featured guest at the 26 April 1999 CSIS Senior European Dialogue, 26 April 1999, www.csis.org/europe/frm990426.html
diplomatic solution." Interestingly, during the crisis, Aznar, was reported having had a decisive influence on the state run media, RTVE and EFE, forbade military personnel from making any statements to the media. This was quite different from the Gulf War and from what was reported on the war in Kosovo in countries such as Great Britain and the US. According to Felipe Sahagun, editorial writer with the daily *El Mundo*, and Professor of International Affairs at the Universidad Complutense, it was quite clear from its first day that the Aznar government wished to keep a low profile, in accordance with the relatively meagre military Spanish participation in the war and the exclusion of Spain in the Committees that directed, decided and negotiated during the conflict: the so-called Contact Group and the G-8. So, it would be difficult to judge whether Aznar would have been in a position to advise NATO on the military campaign in former Yugoslavia.

Overall, Spain’s participation was welcomed and appreciated by the US. Their role was the maintenance of law and order, ensuring safety of ethnic minorities, preventing attacks, guarding borders and distributing humanitarian aid. Similarly, they cooperated in the successful return of the Serbian minority to their homes in Istuk. In Kosovo, Spanish troops supported the peace and security mission until July 2004. In Macedonia, Spanish troops took part in the NATO and EC led missions from the end of 2001 until the end of 2003. At the beginning, in Macedonia they were there to disarm Albanian guerrillas, and later oversaw the maintenance of peace. They protected international observers and assisted the Macedonian government in security issues, especially in the fight against organised crime. The Cervantes Spanish-led programme, since 1999,

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taught Spanish language and culture to the young Bosnian population and the programme included lessons on protection from mines and explosives, road awareness, health and hygiene. Spain’s former foreign minister, Javier Solana, was Secretary General of NATO during the Kosovo Campaign before taking the role of heading the European Union’s foreign and security policymaking apparatus. All conclusively, pointing to the fact that military relations between Spain and the US intensified as a result of Spanish membership of the Atlantic Alliance.

5.5 The Importance of Spanish Bases to US Military Operations

The importance of Spanish military bases continued to be vital in US led military operations. As commentators put it in 2001: “A few hour’s walk through the Rota and Moron military bases during the Kosovo war would have been enough to understand the growing and decisive importance of the Spanish bases to the US global strategy in the late 1990’s and early 2000s.” For the US the use of the Rota facilities, as the Gulf War (1990-91) and the war in Kosovo demonstrated, was vital to reach any target quickly. In addition to US and Spanish cooperation in NATO, defence and security relations between the two countries had been consolidated when Spain and the Clinton Administration signed a Joint Statement on the framework of future military relations on 11 January 2001. This document established the creation of a bilateral committee for defence and restated a commitment to “closely cooperate in order to improve military

39 Ibid. p. 52.
40 Yet, the form of military engagement was against the constitutional order of some states participating in the US led missions, including that of Spain, since both in the case of Yugoslavia and in Iraq has acted without the authorization of Parliament, as required by Article 63 of the Constitution. p. 731 in Luis V. Perez Gil, “La implicacion de España en el conflict de Iraq desde la tesis del espacio tridimensional en la practica del derecho en los asuntos internacionales”, Foro Internacional, No. 178, XLIV, 2004 (4), pp. 726-745.
installations." The US obtained from Spain an agreement on the modernization of military installations at Rota Naval Base and Moron Air Base (total cost: € 227 million) to have a strategic point for operations in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. To facilitate intelligence-gathering co-operation, the Aznar government encouraged the establishment of a mechanism of regular bilateral annual consultations. The Joint Declaration of 11 January 2001 also included five areas for expanded cooperation including political consultation; science and technology; culture and combating new threats and security and cooperation on defence matters. This was boosted by the Cooperation Treaty on Defence in April 2002, which gave the US better access to the bases as the previous system of authorisation on a case-to-case basis for flying over and landing was replaced by one of blanket clearance for period of three months (a clearance much used during the Iraq War in 2003). The new treaty included the creation of a high-profile bilateral defence committee, greater cooperation in the defence industry and much closer coordination between Spanish and US security and intelligence services in the fight against terrorism. Following the signing of the Defence Agreement, at a joint press conference, Spain’s Foreign Minister Jose Pique promised

43 Frank Moderne and Pierre Bon, “Espagne: les anees Aznar”, (Paris: La documentacion Francaise ,2004). Although US ambition to supply more military hardware to Spain remained largely unfulfilled as Spain increasingly turned towards procurement cooperation with European partners, Aznar’s government had hoped that one by-product of the renaissance in political relations would be in the expansion of the shared US-Spanish naval plans to invest upwards of US$150 million in the expansion of the shared US-Spanish naval base in Rota. It was even hoped that the US would eventually transfer the headquarters of the Sixth Fleet from Naples to Rota, a move which presumably would yield further economic benefits for the surrounding Andalusian economy. The spill-over from Aznar’s US renaissance was also supposed to spark more US purchases from Spain’s military producers, like the much talked of purchase of planes from the Spanish branch of EADS-CASA by the US Coast Guard. Many of these hopes – however unrealistic or intangible they may or may not have been – appeared at the very least, to be in question. (p. 8) Zapatero’s troops withdrawal from Iraq in 2004 that immediately knocked Aznar’s renaissance off track. These supposed future benefits therefore remained hypothetical and, as such, highly intangible. Indeed, many Spaniards operating in the military sectors remained doubtful – even before the March 2004 elections – that much of significance scepticism produced by repeated Spanish disappointment at the results of Spanish-US military arrangements over the years, in Paul Isbell, “Spanish-US economic relations: How important are the Aznar-Zapatero Gyrations?”, Real Istituto Elcano: Working Paper 2005/4, 28 January 2005, p. 9.
that the possible extension of the US Rota base lease would not compromise Spanish sovereignty or violate provisions stipulated in the 1989 US-Spanish agreement. Pique’s comment underlined Spain’s views that the unequal bilateral agreements signed in the past were gone forever. In turn, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright emphasized that Spain was one of Washington’s “closest and valued” allies, and that the US was eager to continue good relations with Spain in defence matters.\textsuperscript{45} The extension of Rota facilities included the construction of 16 hangars for Galaxy strategic transport planes and the further development of fuel installations and docks as Rota remained the strategic bridgehead of the US military operations in the Middle East and beyond. In the same year Spain offered to deploy the US missile defence system. The US Aegis weapons system – including its sophisticated radar, capable of detecting and tracking ballistic missiles.\textsuperscript{46} Not surprisingly, Spain’s willingness to cooperate in these areas was acknowledged by the US Ambassador to Spain, Edward L. Romer: “the US has come to rely on the leadership of the Aznar Administration in the European Union to advance our shared objectives, both within the EU’s borders, and in areas as far away as Bosnia, the Middle East or Cuba.”\textsuperscript{47} All of the above pointed to the intensification of bilateral relations and consequently secured its objective of annual summit meetings with the US at the level of US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs.

\textbf{5.6 Spain’s Foreign Policy towards the Mediterranean and the Middle East}

If the prospects of peace in the Middle East during the Socialist government were marked with the Madrid Conference of 1991 and the 1995 Barcelona Process initiative, the arrival to power of the Popular Party coincided with a key hope of 1990’s, the

initiation and implementation of the Oslo Accords in the Middle East Peace process. Consequently, the new government reaffirmed its commitment to the Mediterranean as one of the natural foreign political scenes of Spain. The same year, a Spanish diplomat and specialist in Middle East issues from the Socialist period, Miguel Angel Moratinos, was appointed as the Special Envoy of the EU for the Middle East Peace Process. In 1998, on a trip to Egypt, the Palestinian Territories and Israel, Aznar reaffirmed the four pillars of Spain’s Middle East policy: the UN resolutions, the peace agreements, territorial integrity and security of the two states, and the rights of the Palestinian people. He also gave his support to the US mediation efforts and reiterated the offer to organise another Middle East conference.

When Spain took over the rotating Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2002, it was forced to tackle the increasing levels of violence developing in Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a result of the second Intifada. For Spain, stability and security in the region were considered essential also to succeed in the struggle together with the US against terrorism that had become a Spanish priority. Furthermore, Spain aspired to

48 The Oslo Accords, officially called the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements or Declaration of Principals (DOP), was an attempt to resolve the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of the major continued issues within the wider Arab-Israeli conflict, it was the first direct, face-to-face agreement between the government of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). It was intended to be the one framework for future negotiations and relations between the Israeli government and Palestinians, within which all outstanding “final status issues” between the two sides would be addressed and resolved. The Oslo Accords were a framework for the future relations between the two parties. The Accords provided for the creation of a Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The Palestinian Authority would have responsibility for the administration of the territory under its control. The Acords also called for the withdrawal of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) from parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. It was anticipated that this agreement would last a five-year interim period during which a permanent agreement would be negotiated, beginning no later than May 1996). Permanent issues such as positions on Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, security and borders were deliberately left to be decided at a later stage. Interim Palestinian self-governent was to be granted by Israel in phases. www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/dop.html


50 Ibid. p 3.

51 The end of series of peace talks in 2000-2001 without an agreement and Cabinet changes in Israel and the US were followed by increasing violence under the name of second Palestinian uprising or al-Aqsa intifada. In 2001, Aznar travelled to the region, yet the results were modest. In November, however, Spanish efforts contributed to a short meeting between Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres in Foro Formentor, a Spanish-sponsored Mediterranean forum for exchange of ideas and opinions. Ibid. p. 4.
unite the positions of the US, the EU, the UN, Russia and the Arab countries affected by the conflict. In practice, the management of the events that unrolled during the presidency severely tested the Spanish and the European diplomacy and its relations with Israel. Already in early January 2002, Spain faced an uneasy situation when Israel discovered a Palestinian ship that carried Iranian weapons. While the US and Israel attributed the responsibility to the Palestinian Authorities (PA) and its leader Yasser Arafat, Spain as part of the EU remained silent until the end of the month when it requested the PA to clarify the case. Moreover, Aznar, as the rotating President of the EU, held talks with both Yasser Arafat and Israel’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. According to the Aznar’s press office, Arafat called on Aznar, to influence the government in Tel-Aviv, so that the military action in Ramallah by Israeli forces would stop. In response to such request, Aznar in his talk with Arafat, and later with Sharon expressed EU’s concern regarding the increase of violence in the Arab-Israeli conflict that according to the EU was a result of Israel blocking the entries to the residence of the Palestinian leader. On his part, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Pique, who chaired the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU, held phone conversations with Ramallah, Tel-Aviv, and Brussels, in an attempt to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Both Aznar and Pique in their statements confirmed EU’s view that Arafat was the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and an important figure in the peace process.

52 At the height of the Second Intifada, the PA Chairman Yasser Arafat promoted a strategic agreement with Iran to enhance considerably the arsenal at his disposal in order to attack Israeli targets or to deter it to attack the Palestinian strongholds. In January 2002 Israeli forces seized the Palestinian freighter Karine A in the Red Sea. The ship had loaded weapons at the Iranian island of Kish off the coast of Iran, then sailed through the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. The vessel carried 50 tons of weapons, including 122 mm and 107 mm Katyusha rockets, antitank missiles, 120 mm mortar shells, and two and a half tons of high explosives. Ashkelon, the Ben-Gurion International Airport and various major Israeli cities would have been threatened by these Katyusha rockets if they reached Gaza. The shipment also included rubber boats and diving equipment which could have facilitated seabeam attacks from Gaza against the coastal cities. http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/iran_e035.htm.
talks in the region. Moreover, EC reiterated its view that Palestine’s independence should be recognized and both parties have to stop armed conflict in order to solve the issue. This position was confirmed by Aznar himself at the Arab League Summit in Beirut, where he was invited as the President of the EC in the first half of 2002. This created tension between the EU and Israel, in consequence having made Jose Pique’s efforts to re-launch peace talks with Sharon, more difficult. Simultaneously, President Bush expressed his support to Israel and its right to defence in response to the rising violence in the region. These standpoints of the US and the EU towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict became consolidated in the course of the months.

The escalating conflict, however, tried the capacity of Spain to co-ordinate positions within the EU as well as with the US. A meeting between Piqué and the American State Secretary Colin Powell, in which the two welcomed the Saudi peace plan, re-established trans-Atlantic understanding. Yet relations between the EU and Israel deteriorated to the point that the Sharon Administration neither received Piqué and Javier Solana nor allowed them to meet Yasser Arafat during their visit to the area, who was besieged by Israeli forces in his residence. “It is wrong,” called Aznar, the decision of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to refuse him as EU President to visit Ramallah and meet with Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat. Aznar called a "mistake” a policy of isolation, which Tel-Aviv put Arafat in. Moreover Aznar stressed that the EU

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53 Press Statement Remarks, Foreign Ministryo of Spain Josep Pique, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Foreign Minister of Russia Igor Ivanov, and EU Senior Official Javier Solana, Secretary Colin L. Powell, Madridr, Spain, 10 April 2002.www.moncloa.es
considered Arafat a competent leader of the Palestinian National Authority, with whom to negotiate. The fact that he warned Sharon Administration that it should “draw a clear difference between fighting terrorism and what his troops were doing then in the Palestinian territories”, did not reach the anticipated goal of finding a solution to the conflict. Likewise, Pique’s statement, in which he stressed that “one should not underestimate the role of the EU in the Middle East conflict”, because the Europeans trust in the Arab world, by that stage was not taken sincerely by Tel-Aviv. While acknowledging that America’s role in the Middle East was still great, Aznar stated that “The US forces alone were not enough to solve the Middle East Conflict”, pointed to Spain’s desire to make the difference in the Middle Peace process during the six months of its rotating presidency. The incapability of outside parties to halt violence led to a new UN resolution that, for the first time, referred to an independent Palestinian state. The resolution expressed concern both at Palestinian suicide bombings and at the Israeli military attack on Arafat’s headquarters. As a result, the positions of the EU, the US, the UN and Russia began to approach and on 10 April 2002 a Quartet was created with the objective to coordinate peace efforts. Following the EU-US summit that took place in Washington on 2 May 2002, after talks with Aznar, and with Roman Prodi, European Commission President, Bush cited an example of effective US-EU cooperation: “We share a common vision of two states, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security.” Yet, Spain’s economic ties with Syria were contradictory to its willingness to be a respected mediator in the conflict as Syria was considered “a friend
of Spain” as it “firmly adhered to its international obligations and did not threaten anybody.” This was stated by the Spanish Foreign Minister Ana Palacio, on a visit to Damascus in spring 2003, reported the state National Radio of Spain, with reference to the Spanish Foreign Ministry. Palacio trip to Syria, which was preceded by her visits to Iran and other Middle Eastern countries, according to Spain’s Foreign Ministry were meant to strengthen Spain’s role in the resumption of Middle East Peace process. Despite its best efforts, the policy followed by PP towards the Arab-Israel conflict backlashed towards the end of Aznar’s second government due to its clear-cut support of the US offensive against Iraq. This decision was detrimental to Spain’s image in the region. Conclusively during Spain’s EU Presidency Spain demonstrated that it could bring together the Quartet, and generally during eight years of Conservative government, Aznar’s team tried to build a more impartial image in the eyes of Israeli and Palestinian leaders in order to increase Spain’s chances as a possible mediator and, eventually, as a suitable host for a second Peace Conference involving the whole region. Yet, Aznar’s economic interests in the wider region, made him favour EU’s general position, which gave preference to Palestinians in the conflict and strained the relations with Israel, in practice leaving no possibility to be the preferable host for the next Peace Conference in the Middle East.

64 For instance the constant growth of Spanish financial support for the Palestinians, amounting to US$50 million for the period 1997-99, has made the Palestinian Territories the most important destination for Spanish bilateral development aid in the region, although not exceed four per cent of total Spanish aid. See Jesus A. Nunez Villaverde, “The Mediterranean: A Firm Priority of Spanish Foreign Policy” in Richard Gillespie and Richard Youngs (eds.), Spain: The European and International Challenges, (London: Frank Cass, 2001).
On other foreign policy matters in the Mediterranean and Middle East, the US and Spain were mostly in agreement, but of course there were nuances reflecting both country’s different geopolitical situations and historical links. Relations with Russia in the region were high on the agenda of the Camp David talks between President Bush and Prime Minister Aznar. On the other hand, Spain’s preparation for economic cooperation with Iran posed major complications. Iranian President Mohammed Khatami noted that “Spain is the bridge between Islamic and Western civilizations and it can be an initiator of the dialogue among civilizations.” Aznar praised its relations with the US, but also stressed Spain’s own national interests, including its relations with countries like Iran. “Spain is following up developments in Iran and is willing to expand relations with Iran especially in the economic, cultural and scientific fields”, said Aznar, adding that he held a constructive meeting with President Khatami at UN headquarters in New York in November 2001. During the meeting Aznar also acknowledged that Spain was already a leading investor in Latin America and Spanish companies were poised to invest in Iran to increase the level of bilateral ties. Even though Spain shared US position and concern over Iran’s nuclear programme capabilities, it was nevertheless not prepared to abandon its economic interests in the region. The signing of agreement between Iran’s First Vice-president Hassan Habibi and the Spanish Prime Minister, in which the two sides expressed their willingness to broaden economic and trade relations, could not be directly opposed by the US. This was due to the fact that Spain was an important ally in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and provided its military bases for the NATO operations. Bush Administration was nevertheless concerned that economic ties will not stabilize the region but rather enhance the build-up of Iran’s nuclear sector. The repercussions of this bilateral deal were only seen later during

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67 Ibid.
Zapatero era. The incident between Spain and Morocco in July 2002, however illustrated the US’ understanding and support for its bilateral partner, notwithstanding the intricate situation with Iran.\textsuperscript{68} On 20 July 2002, Spain and Morocco resolved their ten-day confrontation over a small, usually uninhabited Mediterranean Parsley Island, which was resolved thanks to the efforts of US Secretary of State Colin Powell. The US intervened because it did not want a dispute at the western end of Mediterranean, but also because it was the only credible guarantor to both sides. The fact that Morocco seized control of a small Perijil island belonging to Spain led Aznar to authorise a military action. Importantly, the military action received support from the US, as well as of that of the large majority of the European capitals. Aznar believed that Spain should defend, through all available means, what international law recognised as its own, seemed to go beyond widely held belief. He believed the operation was successful because “Spain was now seen in an entirely new light, and not only in Morocco”, emphasizing the growing importance of Spain as a world power, with regional player status through the backing of its US counterpart.\textsuperscript{69}

5.7 The Effect of 9/11 on US-Spanish Ties

An added expression of cooperation between Spain and the US was the war on terrorism following the September 11 attacks. The 9/11 attacks allowed Spain to internationalise one of its main domestic problems, the fight against terrorism. Aznar – who narrowly survived a Euskadi TA Askatasuna (ETA) Basque Fatherland and Liberty assassination attempt in 1995, in which his armoured car was destroyed but he was unhurt – had spoken at great length to Bush about terrorism during the latest visit to Spain and was quick to offer immediate and unconditional support for the overthrow of

\textsuperscript{68} Morocco rejected a fishing agreement with the EC that would have benefited Spain especially. This resulted in the standoff over the Mediterranean island of Perijil.

\textsuperscript{69} Jose Maria Aznar, Speech delivered at the Georgetown University: “The Atlantic Community: How to Overcome the Current Crisis” Washington D.C., 10 November 2004.
the Taliban regime in Afghanistan by US and British forces. Powell praised Spain for being “forthcoming” in allowing its bases and air space “to be used for US deployments”, and thus the Spanish decision benefited US military planners in their preparations for military action against the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda forces based in Afghanistan. Like many Western leaders, Aznar was vociferous in his support of US action against the Taliban in Afghanistan, describing it as “an act of legitimate self-defence.” However, Bush’s “Axis of Evil” made up of Iran, Iraq and North Korea, generated much criticism within the EU, but was supported by Aznar, who said he did not think the EU had anything to gain by “focusing on differences” or aggravating the US.

Furthermore, during President Bush’s visit to Spain in September 2001, he expressed a wish “to help Spain in their struggle against terrorist activities and their struggle against the ETA.” Later, in 2004 during a lecture given at Georgetown University recalling that he was the target of "domestic Basques terrorists" in 1995, Aznar began to quote the legendary Chinese strategist Sun Tzu to stress the need to understand the enemy to accomplish his defeat. In this context, Aznar reiterated that “the 9/11 has forced a conventional war, unsought, in which one cannot placate the enemy and in which the West must not give up until a total victory.” To that end, to show the deepening of bilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism, a bilateral agreement was signed on the use of a new satellite Ishtar, the first one with a European country and focused the

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possibilities of sharing the secrets of the Echelon electronic system to fight ETA.\textsuperscript{75} Since the fall of Franco’s dictatorial regime in November 1975, terrorist violence has claimed approximately 1150 lives in Spain. This violence from transition to democracy in 1976 remained a consistent threat for over the last thirty years.\textsuperscript{76} This terrorist organisation was founded in 1959 and dedicated to promoting Basque independence. ETA targeted primarily Spanish security forces, military personnel, and Spanish Government officials and has carried out numerous bombings. Spain also had to contend with the First of October Antifascist resistance group, GRAPO, an urban terrorist group that looked to overthrow the Spanish government and establish a Marxist state. It opposed Spanish participation in NATO and a US presence in Spain and had a long history of assassinations, bombings, and kidnappings mostly against Spanish interests during the 1980s and 1990’s.\textsuperscript{77} Hence Aznar’s government continued to pursue Spain’s vigorous counterterrorist policy to stop violence, with the help of its US counterpart. In January 2002, Aznar has achieved the adoption of a mandate to negotiate a Treaty on Extradition and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal matters between the EU and the US in the fight against terrorism. Aznar took advantage of the Spanish Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2002 to lead the EU’s reaction against the attacks towards the US. He succeeded in including the fight against terrorism as a field

\textsuperscript{75} The Guardian, 18 June 2001; in Anjel Rekalde, Jabier Salutregi, Giovanni Giacopuzzi, Santiago Alba, Patrick Cassan (eds.), \textit{11 Mars-Le grand mensonge}, (Pay Basque: Gatuzain, 2004, 1\textsuperscript{st} ed.)

\textsuperscript{76} The Spanish terrorist threat, like for its American counterpart, emanated from two general sources: home-grown antigovernment terrorism and Islamist terrorism. “Home-grown” Spanish terrorism embraced the activities of both ideologues and separatists. Anarchist and fascist terrorists inflicted widespread casualties on the Spanish public during the late 1970s, 1980s, and into the 1990s as they sought to impose their respective visions of government on the Spanish people. Nonetheless, the lion’s share of Spanish terrorism since the transition to democracy is attributable to the Basque separatist group, ETA, which has advocated the formation of an independent Basque Country. In the second category of Spanish terrorism, Islamist terrorists have claimed at least 202 lives and injured more than 1400. These casualties were the result of the coordinated Madrid train bombings of 11 March 2004, which were orchestrated largely by the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group. The March bombings were ostensibly part of a global jihad and possibly directed at Spanish support for the war in Iraq, in Ari D. Mackinnon, “Counterterrorism and checks and balances: The Spanish and American Examples”, 27 May 2007, www.law.nyu.edu/idcplg?IdcService

of action in the framework of the second pillar of the Union. In this sense, at the Seville European Council, 21 and 22 June 2002, the Spanish Presidency adopted a declaration that established that both the ESDP and the CFSP were to play an important role to fight against “this menace for the Security of Europe.”  

Finally, the signing on 10 April 2002 of the Protocol of the Agreement on Defence Cooperation between the US and Spain and the Defence Declaration of Principles for Enhanced Cooperation on matters of Defence Equipment and Industry that was mentioned above, marked a new beginning in the US-Spanish relationship. US Secretary of State, Colin Powell and Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Pique, signed the Protocol of Amendment to Agreement US-Spanish Defence Cooperation of 1988. This document, devoted special attention to mutual technological and industrial cooperation and demonstrated the good relationship between the two countries and the firmness of their collaboration after the events of 11 September. As US Ambassador to Spain George Argylos has remarked, “this agreement, together with the Declaration of Principles, will lay out a road map for defence cooperation between our two countries for the next decade, and beyond [...] at the time when the threat of global terrorism seeks to destabilize peace and security of our nations, these agreements make sure our countries are prepared for the threats of the future.” The agreement thus underlined the continued importance of US military installations in Spain, later used for the US led war on terror. The US was eager to strengthen this bilateral relationship, and in terms of its standing in Europe, Spain wanted to increase its role. By November 2002 Spain had become the leader of the crucial transformation of NATO, approved at the Prague

78 Declaracion del Consejo Europe sobre la contribucion de la PESC, incluida la PESD, en la luch contra el terrorismo, Anexo V de las Conclusiones de la Presidencia, SN200/02, Sevilla, 21 y 22 de Junio de 2002.
Summit. Some aspects of that newly recast foundation of the Alliance - for example, the conception of terrorism “as the main threat and the need to adapt command structures and military capabilities to deal with effectiveness of way” - were the result of a thesis defended in a joint letter by the Spanish Prime Minister Aznar, and his British counterpart, Prime Minister Tony Blair, sent to the secretary general of NATO and the heads of state and government allies on 2 June 2002, some months before the Prague Summit.\(^\text{81}\)

5.8 Spain Commits to the War in Iraq

In the run up to the Iraq invasion of 2003, the relationship between Spanish and US leaders grew even closer. As Aznar later recalled in his memoirs: “In recent months, and particularly during 2003, we talk so often that we just installed a special phone in La Moncloa, just to talk to the White House. I remembered he (George W. Bush) was in command of the whole operation that had been decided and now preferred to have a chat with me [...] It was an intense and fruitful relationship. It has been a personal one too, but I am convinced that it was mainly beneficial for Spain. Spain never enjoyed so much prestige in the US and never had they listened to our voice with as much respect as in those years.”\(^\text{82}\)

As the GWOT progressed and the invasion of Iraq was imminent, President Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Jose Maria Aznar searched for a way to win UN backing for using force to disarm Iraq in the last resort. The arranged meeting on an Azores island in the eastern-Atlantic on 14 March 2003 was described by the White House spokesman Ari Fleischer as "an effort to pursue every last bit of diplomacy" in the face of fading hopes for approval of a UN war resolution and added that the US officials “still hope to pass a resolution demanding that Iraqi leader Saddam

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Hussein be disarmed.” The photo taken in Azores portrayed Aznar in the company of President Bush, Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Jose Manuel Barroso of Portugal. In practical terms, this meant breaking out of Spain’s traditional foreign policy trajectory, focused on European integration, operating as a middle-sized country in what was perceived by Aznar as an inferior relationship with the centre of gravity in the EU. More to the point, it meant aspiring to much closer cooperation with the US in international affairs (for example, in Latin America and the Maghreb, and on issues of international terrorism) where the Aznar government perceived Spanish national interests to be insufficiently addressed through the traditional channels of the EU.83

In the face of widespread hostility in the country, Aznar allied Spain with the US over the issue. In part, he justified his position by presenting the conflicts with Iraq and ETA as part of a common struggle against terrorism. Moreover, his personal affinity with Bush and Aznar’s desire for US and world recognition, pushed him to distinguish Spain from its European counterparts in expressing its support for the “total strategic security” and the highly controversial “missile defence system.”84 Local election results in May 2003, in which the Popular Party held its ground against the Socialist opposition, indicated that Aznar had weathered the controversy over Iraq.85 Nevertheless, he

85 The transcript of 22 February 2003 discussions between US President George W. Bush and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar - less than a month before the invasion- at Bush’s Crawford, Texas ranch were published by Spain’s El País, provided fresh documentary confirmation of what was already a widely known historical fact. That is: the discussion centered on the final pre-war diplomatic maneuvers aimed at ramming a resolution through the United Nations Security Council providing an authorization for the US plans to attack Iraq. The Bush Administration was determined to invade Iraq and was not about to allow international law or compromise settlements to interfere with its long-planned invasion. The contents of the conversation, transcribed by Spain’s Ambassador to Washington, Javier Ruperez, had been kept secret by Madrid—both under Aznar’s right-wing government and under that of his successor, Socialist Party (PSOE) Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero—before someone leaked them to El País. The White House failed to deny the authenticity of the document. White House spokesman Dana Perino described the conversation as a “private meeting” and dismissed questions about its exposure of the Bush Administration’s deception of the American people and the world during this period. “There are some
confirmed that he would not contest a third general election, and in August nominated his deputy, Mariano Rajoy, as his successor for the Popular Party leadership. The outgoing prime minister however, clearly voiced his intention of maintaining close ties with his US ally, “I am a friend of President Bush as president and I will remain. I am a friend of the United States and I will continue to be [...] bilateral relations have reached a level higher than ever”, Aznar said, adding, “I am very pleased with our special relationship with the US.” It has been argued by the Elcano Institute that Spain had much to gain economically – and relatively little to lose – by pursuing a full-blown renaissance in Spanish-US relations, in general, and an active deepening of the bilateral economic relationship, in particular. Indeed, key to the argument was the hypothesis that the former would facilitate the latter in concrete terms, with increased political cooperation working as a catalyst to unleash fresh economic potential.

Anti-American sentiment towards the Bush Administration was unavoidable as Aznar had taken the position of a strong ally in the GWOT, and had deployed Spanish troops to invade Iraq despite a 90 per cent public disapproval rating. Related to opposition to involvement in Iraq, there was a strong public backlash when one of the planes used to transport soldiers in the Afghan war, a Yak 42, crashed and killed over 60 soldiers as a consequence of the aircraft’s poor condition, an allegation that the PP denied and refused to investigate further. In all three of these “negative” events – the mishandling of the ecological and social disaster caused by the leaking oil tanker Prestige, participation in the Iraq war and (the lack of) investigation into the Yak 42 downing –

people who think we never should have gone into Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein,” she said. “And there is nothing we are going to be able to do that’s going to change their minds.” Karen DeYoung and Michael Abramowitz, “Report says Hussein say open to exile before 2003 Invasion”, The Washington Post, 27 September 2007.

86 Published by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI),www.wsws.org
both opposition parties and the public alike sensed complacency, arrogance and a lack of transparency in some of the PP’s decisions.\textsuperscript{89} Indeed, Aznar’s strong character and his team’s foreign policy approach that enhanced bilateral ties with the Bush Administration, led to open criticism by his opponents. He was accused of adopting an arrogant style and ignoring social diversity, in not seeking justice or truth, much less compromise and like Bush, he was only concerned about the victory of his camp.\textsuperscript{90}

5.9 Aznar’s Reaction to the Madrid Bombings on 11 March 2004

Spanish parliamentary elections on 14 March 2004 came only three days after a devastating terrorist attack on Madrid commuter rail lines that killed 202 and wounded over 1,400. Thanks to a large turnout by voters, PSOE won the election and its leader, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, took office on 17 April 2004.\textsuperscript{91} According to Phillip H. Gordon, a senior fellow at the time of Brookings institution, “if Americans could

\textsuperscript{89} Raj S. Chari, “The 2004 Spanish elections”, \textit{West European Politics}, Vol. 27, No. 5, November 2004, pp. 954-963, p. 955.; On the 19 November 2002 the petrol carrier boat \textit{Prestige} broke in two at 233 kilometres from the Cies islands, with more than 70.000 tonnes of fuel in its warehouses. On 23 November more than 400 kilometres of Spanish coast were affected by the oil because of the Prestige oil spill. By the 2 January 2003 the spillage of oil reached French coast; Aznar explained his absence from the scene of accident as having been preoccupied with sorting out the issue on the larger scale then choosing a photo opportunity for the local press. “The exchange highlights the truth that will blight the remainder of Mr Aznar’s final term as Prime Minister, and could seriously damage his party. Whatever measures he now adopts, no Galician will not forget the inexplicable three weeks in which he did nothing”, in Elizabeth Nash, “Aznar finally admits mishandling of tanker disaster”, 11 December 2002, www.independent.co.uk; When in May 2003, a plan carrying Spanish troops returning from Afghanistan crashed in Turkey killing 62 soldiers, the then Aznar government’s priority was to repatriate the bodies of the dead soldiers immediately and avoid a public backlash. The repatriation was carried out within hours at the order of the then Minister of Defence Federico Trillo, with the funeral held at six o’clock on the evening of 28 May 2003 – a mere 60 hours after the accident. A year later it was discovered that in the hasty process of repatriation the families of 32 of the 62 deceased soldiers had been handed over the wrong bodies, and one coffin was found to contain three different DNA samples, with Trillo accused of being politically responsible for the blunter. A court case begun on 24 March 2009 that was trying to answer failings in both the identification process and the way the repatriation was handled by Spanish authorities. From the investigation and the court proceedings it can be concluded that the Aznar government was in a hurry to carry out the funerals of the soldiers. Only domestic pressure over the significant loss of life can be speculated to explain process and focussed instead on repatriating the bodies and organising the state funeral. The accident reignited the controversial issue of the presence of troops in Iraq and Spain’s contribution to the ‘Coalition of the Willing’ since March 2003, a topic the government, opposed by the anti-war PSOE, was desperate to avoid, in Gloria Martinez, “The war dead in the era of liberal interventionism”, 14 December 2009, www.opendemocracy.net


credibly argue that Aznar’s party had been rejected on economic grounds or for some other domestic political reasons, the damage to Bush could be minimized and the case made that the result had nothing to do with the war in Iraq. But the fact that the outcome changed Spain’s role so dramatically after the attacks, and that many voters specifically attributed their turnaround to the desire to distance themselves from the Iraq war, led to the conclusion that the Spanish Conservatives paid the price for having supported the war and for their alliance with the US. The 2004 Spanish election pronounced evidence that a deadly terrorist attack, as a reaction to a policy pursued by the party in power, coupled with the perceived manipulation of the situation by the government, served as a catalyst to influence those who would have otherwise abstained, younger voters, as well as others who sought to vote strategically suggesting that, beyond the tragedy. The surprise rejection of the Conservative Spanish government was terrible news for the Bush Administration in every way. It replaced one of Bush’s key conservative allies in Europe with Socialists with whom he had little in common. It was in other words a decisive blow to the notion that America had broad coalition support in Iraq. Inaki Gabilondo, the doyen of Spanish political journalists gave a positive endearment of Aznar’s successor, Luis Rodriguez Zapatero: “He was more concerned with not defrauding his electorate than with upsetting the Pentagon.” When talking about the differences between Aznar and Zapatero, Gabilondo said that Zapatero was more idealistic than his predecessor: “I interviewed Aznar twenty three times, and his instincts were authoritarian, even though he liked to portray himself as an ordinary kind.” Gabilondo described Felipe Gonzalez, Spain’s Socialist Prime Minister between

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1982 and 1996, as the opposite of an ordinary kind: “He was a sun king. He was a charismatic leader, a living myth, and he knew it.”

Although (following the attacks of M-11), Spain’s Interior Minister Angel Acebes did say that an investigation was under way as to the possible involvement of Islamic terrorists, the PP’s firm line throughout both 11 and 12 May was to continue to blame ETA. This was evidenced in Prime Minister’s Aznar’s phone calls to every major Spanish newspaper, that ETA was responsible. Al-Qaeda’s involvement and responsibility for the atrocities were followed later by an M-11 trial, which did not condemn Aznar’s actions after the event. Throughout the trial he claimed that his “conscience was clear.” According to Aznar, the Socialists themselves believed it was ETA that was to blame for the bombings and even when it was confirmed that it was al-Qaeda behind the attacks, he still believed that it was not a reason to give up on Spain’s involvement in the GWOT and on the presence of Spanish troops in the US led coalition in Iraq. Later, in February 2005, following a lecture delivered by Aznar at Georgetown University, several members of the audience posed questions, ranging from terrorism to the upcoming Spanish vote on the European Union Constitution. Defending his government in the wake of the 11 March 2004 terrorist attacks on Madrid commuter trains, Aznar responded to criticism from an audience member: “What government has the ability to prevent everything? If you know a government with this capacity, I (would be) very happy to know it. Government is not perfect. The police, army, and intelligence

Service is not perfect,”98 he said. His stance throughout the M-11 trial was based on the same beliefs.

It would be difficult to deny that US-Spanish relations underwent a major change after the Spanish general elections in March 2004, at least at the level of political rhetoric.99 The first term of Prime Minister Zapatero’s government was marked by mutual recriminations and hostile rhetoric, both public and private, within the media and among the political classes and the broader public. On taking office in March 2004 the Socialists revised Spain’s political relationship with Washington. For them, the PP’s wholehearted support of the US and UK-led invasion of Iraq, particularly as it was not backed by the UN, broke the bipartisan consensus in foreign policy by unbalancing relations. As a result, Spain’s two main political parties were in disagreement over some key aspects of foreign policy. FAES, the PP’s think tank, was very active in denouncing the Socialists’ foreign policy and had good relations with Conservative think tanks in the US with whom it was working on highlighting the importance of the transatlantic relations.100 The Zapatero government supported coalition efforts in Afghanistan that included reconstruction efforts and cooperation on counter terrorism issues. Carrying out campaign promises, he immediately withdrew Spanish forces from Iraq but also continued to support Iraq’s reconstruction efforts. In an article in the Wall Street Journal Aznar said that the pull-out of troops “worsens our foreign relations. It alienates us from our partners and allies and does not contribute to the foreign policy consensus promised to us by the new government.”101 The PP’s position has essentially not changed and it never ceased to attack the Socialists over the troop withdrawal from

100 Ibid.
However, on the subject of Aznar’s continued involvement in world politics, Jose Pique said, “There are differences between the official position of the party and what Aznar said. We cannot make the same speech as when in a governing position.”

5.10 Aznar and Bush: Presidential Affinity Factor

Following Aznar’s departure from the leadership of Spain, cordial relations with the Bush Administration continued to have an impact on Spain’s international and domestic environment. This relationship was nurtured over eight years and culminated in the personal affinity that led the way for Aznar’s future political endeavours that placed the former Prime Minister in the spotlight of world politics. Aznar’s memoirs, published after the end of his second term in government, focused on his personal ties with Bush: “The living room where Bush was receiving his guests had a big fireplace and was decorated with pictures of their friends. I remarked that I did not appear, and he replied that there were only pictures of those who had passed through Camp David. Soon I had the occasion to see Blair and he said on behalf of Bush that "I was already on the wall of the hall at Camp David."

Arguably, thanks to this personal affiliation, Aznar, was the only Spanish head of government who had the honour of addressing the US Congress. In his speech he called for the transatlantic Alliance to continue its fight against global terrorism. "The man who confounded the French stance in the war in Iraq" as he was welcomed by Robert Dole, former Republican presidential candidate, who, like other congressmen and senators, interrupted his speech with 23 rounds of applause. Without entering the debate on the existence of non-conventional weapons in Iraq, Aznar warned

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102 For example when Parliament debated and unanimously approved the deployment of troops to Lebanon on 7 September 2006 (under a new law approved in 2005), Mariano Rajoy, the PP’s leader, said the Socialists’ policy was hypocritical as the deployment in Lebanon, like that in Iraq, was “a mission of war” and not simply a peacekeeping mission, in “50 troops arrive to Lebanon”, US Today, 15 June 2006.

103 “No podemos hacer el mismo discurso que cuando gobrabamos, dice Pique”, 7 July 2004, www.abc.es

his audience of the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. Conclusively, his relevance in Washington opened a road to new career opportunities and redefined Aznar’s role in world politics.

The possibility of Aznar’s participation in the Bush re-election campaign was announced in *El Mundo*, and added a new controversy over the loyalty or disloyalty of Aznar to Spain’s foreign policy. Moreover criticism was swift, following Bush's invitation to Aznar to visit him in the US. Socialist Deputy Alfonso Perales believed that Aznar's visit to the US would be "inappropriate" and "contrary to the interests of Spain”, because the former prime minister remained "permanently involved in the image and management of the Bush Administration." Coalition spokesman Izquierda Unida (IU, pro-Communist) Felipe Alcaraz, believed that the presence of Aznar at the Republican Convention that would confirm the George W. Bush-Dick Cheney 2004 Presidential ticket was "impertinent" and "a flagrant disloyalty to the Spanish foreign policy." Nevertheless, Aznar continued his personal diplomatic mission to give support to his US ally prior to the US presidential elections. “It is important to know that terrorists will do everything possible to be present at the US general elections”, he said in a campaign speech. The former Spanish prime minister made clear warnings about the possibility of attempts to influence US elections as, in his opinion, "they did in Spain." This meeting gave Aznar an opportunity to speak to an unfamiliar on his ideas on Spain and Europe: “I don’t like the fact that my country’s troops left Iraq for two reasons”, said Aznar in reference to Zapatero’s decision to withdraw Spanish troops. “Firstly, because we abandoned our allies! And secondly, because on March 11 Spain was attacked, and when Spain was attacked and when they attack you, you can do many

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things, but don’t abandon the fight.” Prior to meeting Bush in the US on a private visit, he declined to answer the press regarding the details of his visit. "It's about a friend who invited me," he said, before adding that, among other things, "I guess we'll talk about the fight against terrorism.” The *Wall Street Journal* on the 4 November 2004 published an article by the former prime minister following the US re-election of President Bush where he wrote: “Hope has triumphed, and with it the confidence of the American people in the values and principles upon which our shared civilization on both sides of the Atlantic is based.” In the interview given to Spain’s *ABC* he added that: “Following the atrocities of September 11, President Bush did not allow himself to be swept away by an understandable sense of rage. I know him well and I know what I am talking about - Afghanistan was a strategic objective in the war on terror, not an act of vengeance. Iraq has served the same purpose.” In both examples cited above Aznar’s support for his American ally, confirmed the strength of their partnership beyond Aznar’s premiership whereby Aznar saw himself as a PP ambassador of Spain to the US. This view was confirmed by the fact that following the US elections Aznar took an opportunity to visit President Bush prior to joining Georgetown University as a Distinguished Scholar in the Practice of Global Leadership where he was to lead seminars on contemporary European politics and trans-Atlantic relations. According to the PP, Aznar's trip to Washington was of value, and not just because it involved a personal meeting with Bush, but because of importance that this visit had on the Spanish public. Mariano Rajoy of PP, argued that the possibility of Aznar meeting with

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Bush should be welcomed, since "any help he can offer the government" in mending relations with US was welcome."\(^{109}\)

5.11 Aznar’s Work in the US Affects the Spanish Government

Aznar’s speech at Georgetown University in November 2004 was to play a key role in Popular Party’s attempts to revamp US-Spanish ties. In his speech, Aznar pointed to the existence of diverse and closely interlinked internal and external challenges that Europe faced and the need for transatlantic cooperation to promote peace and stability around the world. He referred to Robert Kagan’s international bestseller *Of Paradise and Power* where he argued “the essential difference between America and Europe lies in the fact that America is strong and powerful, while Europe is weak and it is precisely this power difference that leads the US to be more interventionist, whereas Europe cannot.”\(^{110}\) Aznar continued by quoting Kagan: “if a hunter has a rifle he will go out and shoot the bear that is stalking him; if, on the contrary he is armed only with a knife, he will be careful to avoid any confrontation [...] defending oneself obviously requires the means to do so. But, above all, it meant being prepared to recognize threats and having the will to oppose them,” and he also commented that: “Many Europeans do not wish to see any threat at all, even when it stands clearly before them. They are even less prepared to make the necessary effort to fight back.”\(^{111}\) Moreover he continued by referring to a situation that occurred during the Iraq crisis: “One European leader said to me: Jose Maria, there are two Europes: the Atlantic Europe that you form part of, and European Europe, the one I support, and I replied, you’re wrong, there is only one Europe: the Europe that has become strong and maintained peace thanks to its ties with America, and whose future is inextricably bound up with that of America.” Aznar,


\(^{111}\) Ibid. p. 2.
finished by arguably referring to Zapatero’s undoing of his diplomatic ties with the US, by stating that: “The political alliances are like Chinese vases. When they break, the pieces can be stuck back together, with a great deal of patience and a lot of effort. However, they no longer have the same value.”

Aznar also stressed the necessity of collaboration between Europe and the US in his published work: “We need to decide how to define Europe as a strong part of the Western world, but not as a counter-power of the US. It would be foolish to enter the world to play games to divide the Atlantic. One of the questions that we need to try to answer is Turkey with all its advantages and disadvantages. And more now that the European Union has just begun the negotiation process for Turkey's accession. We must forget the ambitions of those who want to create a Europe that is a counterweight to the US.” In the spring of 2005, Aznar attended a White House dinner. During the meal, Aznar and US Vice President Dick Cheney discussed international politics and the new prospects for peace in the Middle East after the death of Yasser Arafat, as well as the situation in Iraq after the elections. They discussed in part a recent trip by Bush to Europe, with official visits to Germany and France, and his attendance at the NATO summit held in Brussels. On returning from this US trip, Aznar had a telephone conversation with his successor in office, Zapatero, during which he repeated his impressions about the situation in Iraq, the transfer of power to the new Iraqi administration and a possible UN resolution. This conversation prompted another outbreak of criticism from the government in power, as Aznar’s continued involvement in transatlantic affairs was viewed as disrespectful and arrogant. Aznar’s criticism of

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112 Ibid. p. 4.
115 “La llamada de Aznar a Zapatero para informarle de su visita a E.E.U.U. provoca un Nuevo choque”, ABC, 21 April 2005
Zapatero’s policy towards Cuba and Venezuela increased this rift. While in Miami, Aznar had given as well an interview to the local newspaper that described Zapatero’s approach to Venezuela as “deeply irresponsible to flatter an authoritarian populist like Hugo Chavez and “blow up” the Atlantic relationship with the US.”

Aznar was also critical of Zapatero’s Alliance of Civilizations initiative, and his stance did not do favours for Zapatero’s foreign policy initiative in the Mediterranean and Middle East, while attempting to show himself capable to be a mediator and a helping hand for the US policy towards the region. These tensions exacerbated when, in 2006, Socialist Spokesman in Congress, Diego Lope Garrido, was forced to defend Socialist initiatives in the region which were openly criticized by Aznar on another visit to the US. After hearing the words of Aznar, who during a conference wondered why no Muslim had asked forgiveness for “conquering Spain and be there for eight centuries” and having called the Alliance of Civilizations “not clever”, what came to parliamentary spokesman mind, was a recent visit of former President Gonzalez to Iran, where “he tried to lobby for this country not to use nuclear energy for purposes other than peaceful.” Gonzalez’s work, according to Lopez Garrido, contrasted with the attitude of “warmongering, belligerent, confrontational and aggressive Aznar”, who added fuel to the fire. However according to Aznar, he could not understand how “it is possible to have an alliance that defends the right of men and women when the Muslim world defends the opposite?” he asked rhetorically. Aznar was rather convinced that the inclusion of Israel as a full member in NATO would strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation’s ability to combat Islamic fundamentalism and persuade Iran to back off from its nuclear pursuits. Indeed, according to Aznar it was not Alliance of

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Civilizations that the Zapatero government should concentrate on but rather to promote the new mission of NATO that should be to combat jihadism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In order to accomplish this new mission, said Aznar, NATO should invite Japan, Australia and Israel to become full members. “Treating Israel as if it were not an integral part of the Western world is a big mistake that would affect our ability to prevail in this long war against jihadism,” he added. Aznar believed that NATO’s “deterrent posture” would be strengthened if Iran “saw and felt that Israel was an integral part of the West.”

However on this particular issue of Israel’s inclusion into NATO structure, the US had remained silent, as it had to skilfully manage the intricacy of the relationship in the wider region to not upset the balance of countries vis a vis Turkey for example, which was against such initiative and favoured Zapatero’s Alliance of Civilizations proposal.

The Zapatero government’s criticism of Aznar’s behaviour did not however influence the former prime minister’s popularity in the US. The website The Washington Speakers’ description of the ex-Spanish leader exacerbated PSOE discontent of his active involvement in the US-Spanish bilateral relations: “The man who led Spain economically and culturally back to the forefront of Europe now enlightens audiences with his views on the global economy, terrorism and leadership”, a description that pointed to the American’s respect and recognition of Spain’s former leader. In the speech delivered at the American Institute on NATO, when Aznar reiterated his support

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119 “It could hardly be better for Spain’s former Prime Minster, J M Aznar: he travels the globe, sits on the board of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp, and lectures happily to Washington think-tanks”, in “Spain’s bickering opposition: Popular peevishness”, The Economist, 9 December 2006. “For the latter because, humiliating that is, the former President has an agenda of contracts outside Spain higher and better quality than the Prime Minister”, in “Política Exterior: Aznar”, Libertad Digital n 1003, 24 January 2007, www.gees.org
120 www.washingtonspeakers.com
of the US by saying: NATO should be “reinvented” so that it can address militant Islamism, the totalitarian movement that has been utilizing suicide terrorism as a weapon of war from New York to Madrid to London [...] to Bali and beyond.\textsuperscript{121} He was keen to promote US global interests by adding that “The battlefield is now global, multidimensional, and no nation, not even the US has all the elements to win this battle alone.”\textsuperscript{122} He believed that Israel had to enter accession talks with NATO to strengthen the fight against terror: “which is all the more reason for the US to promote a more serious diplomatic response”\textsuperscript{123} and he added “I have a concept of loyalty to allies [...] I don’t believe in appeasement against terrorism. I don’t believe in negotiation with terrorism. I believe in the necessity to fight against terrorists. It is a very serious mistake to negotiate with terrorism. Terrorists should be frightened and defeated, and this is possible. No other policy exists for me.”\textsuperscript{124} All the above leads to the conclusion that the Aznar-Bush era, saw the pinnacle of US-Spanish relations that were built in large on personal affinity of both leaders and subsequently placed Spain at the prestigious but consequently dangerous path for Spanish future during the Global War on Terror.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{121} Clifford D. May, “What Good is NATO? Use it against Militant Islamist – or lose it”, 17 November 2005, www.gees.org
Chapter 6

Elections, M-11 Bombings and US-Spanish Relations, 2004

6.1 Introduction

The massive terrorist attack in Madrid in March 2004 saw Islamic extremists target commuter trains, kill 202 people and wound hundreds of others. Jose Maria Aznar’s government was both active and effective in hunting down Islamist terror cells in Spanish territory following the attack, but his foreign policy was the central debating point of the elections and the widespread unpopularity of those policies, combined with Aznar’s behaviour in the aftermath of the Madrid bombings contributed to the downfall of the Popular Party (PP) in the March elections in 2004. The PP defeat demonstrated what many commentators thought, that “being too close an ally of President George W. Bush can be seriously prejudicial to one’s political lifespan.”\(^1\) Although voters punished the PP’s candidate for Spanish leader, Mariano Rajoy, the result was a protest vote against Aznar, who was to be remembered for his unconditional support for Bush in the US–led invasion of Iraq despite the mass protests held throughout Spain prior to, and during, the war. The Spanish election was thus also a protest against US foreign policy. The victorious Socialist party’s leader, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero’s realist approach, was the antithesis of the excessive ambition of the Popular Party and Prime Minister Aznar.

6.2 Terror on Spanish Soil: M-11

Nine hundred and eleven days separated the Madrid attack from 9/11. On the morning of 11 March 2004, terrorists detonated bombs on commuter trains, including five near

Atocha, the city’s biggest train station. Police later discovered that extremists associated with the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM), most of them North African residents of Spain, carried out the attacks. On 2 April 2004, authorities located an explosive device under the high-speed railway connecting Madrid and Seville that failed to detonate. Later, on 3 April 2004, suspects sought by police in connection with the March 11 bombings detonated explosives in an apartment in a Madrid suburb, in order to avoid arrest, while another four escaped. Seven suspects and one police officer, Francisco Javier Torronteas, were killed in the explosion. Authorities held approximately two dozen individuals in connection with the 11 March bombings. Twenty-one suspects charged in the case were found guilty by the Spanish judge Javier Gomez Bermudez on the 31 October 2007, after a five months trial, but seven were acquitted due to lack of evidence. Judge Bermudez also ruled out the participation of the Basque separatist group ETA in the bombings, therefore discrediting the PP claim, in the wake of the bombing, of ETA involvement. However, Scott Atran, a US academic who has investigated the Hamburg cell connected to the 11 September 2011 attacks in the US, as well as those behind the Bali bomb attacks of 2002, and who witnessed the trial, said: “There isn’t the slightest bit of evidence of any relationship with al-Qaeda. We’ve been looking at it closely for years and we’ve been briefed by everyone under the sun [...] and nothing connects them.” Contrary to Scott Atran’s view, following the Madrid bombings, Spain’s security services arrested and indicted scores of individuals with possible links to al-Qaeda. Precisely in November 2004, Spanish police arrested more than 30 suspected members of a radical Islamic organisation, disrupting apparent plans to bomb Spain’s High Court, Madrid’s largest...
soccer stadium, the headquarters of the Popular Party, an office building and other public landmarks showing that al-Qaeda had established a presence in Spain and a plan of attack, well before Aznar supported the Iraq invasion.\(^6\)

The vibrant Spanish Muslim community was fundamentally shaken by the events of 9/11 and M-11. For instance, following the M-11 attacks, President Mustafa Rabet of the Moroccan Labourers and Immigrants Association showed his concern about a tendency he had noticed in the press of identifying terror with Islam. He argued that this was wrong as “terrorist attacks are organized in other countries as well. When attacks are carried out by Irish terrorist organisations, for example, do you call the perpetrators Christian terrorists? Why do you identify these incidents only with Islam? Why do you people, who would not label someone a Christian terrorist, have no qualms about calling someone a Muslim terrorist?”\(^7\) However, incidents that pointed towards Muslim involvement, left little hope for the immigrant community to be cleared of guilt by association. On 3 April 2004, vandals broke into the tomb of Francisco Javier Torronteas, the police agent killed in the suicide blast by the Madrid train bombing suspects. They stabbed the body with a pick and a spade and then burned it. It was reported that investigators believed that the attack might have been in revenge for the deaths of the Madrid bombers.\(^8\) Thus the events of M-11 brought Spain to the novel realities of the new world order, adding the awareness of Islam related terrorism to the on-going struggle against ETA.

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\(^7\) “Spain’s Prime Minister provides security for Muslims”, 21 March 2004, www.turks.us

\(^8\) “Body in March 11 case is set afire”, \(IHT\), 20 April 2004.
The train bombings of M-11 in Spain marked a new dimension of terrorism that showed that the scourge was an issue for the whole of Europe, not only for the US. While Spanish newspapers were grappling with the shock of the crime and lack of clarity about the suspects, a columnist of Italy’s centrist Corriera della Sera concluded that “different enemies have come together in a single subversive operation.” Some right-leaning papers worried that “continental Europeans were not ready for this”; Europe can no longer see terror as an “Arab-American affair”, argued in Berlin’s Die Welt. Noting that the tragedy had “dispelled Europe’s illusions” about being immune, Russia’s reformist Izvestiya said: “Hopefully, it will become safer and less arrogant.” An Israeli editorial Ha’aretz more cynically stated: “Welcome to the Europe of the mega-terrorist attack.” Noting the need for a united response and calm determination, and pledging unequivocal solidarity for Spain, papers in Europe and Americas urged “the need for a common front against the bacillus of all terrorism”, reflecting that “none of us is safe” until the War on Terror is won. As this “concerns us all”, declared France’s right-of-centre Le Figaro, “more than ever the fight against terrorism needs to be everyone’s unrelenting objective.” Spain’s conservative ABC called for “security and calm”, while a German centre-left paper Sueddeutshche Zeitung warned against following a “blind campaign a la George W. Bush.” The attack “redoubles the challenge” among nations to act against terror, and Argentine and Brazilian daily newspapers urged the “international community to be united even more [...] in the fight against the inhumanity” of these terrorist movements. In attempting to discern who was behind the

11 Maksim Yusin, “Europe will never be the same”, Izvestiya, 12 March 2004.
12 Zee Schiff, the chief editor, said that the “irony is that the Spanish media has for the last several years shown ‘understanding’ for Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians in public places, on buses and in railway stations, and has even justified such attacks. But no police demand, however justified it might be, justifies such acts of mass murder...Thus anyone who objects to what the terrorists did Thursday in Madrid cannot at the same time justify or overlook similar acts of terror against other nations”, in Zeev Schiff, “Madrid Is Not The End of Terrorism’s Road”, Ha’aretz, 12 March 2004.
massacre, most analysts decided the “unequalled ruthlessness” of the “genocide” bore the trademark of al-Qaeda – “specialist in crime against civilians.” Many were not convinced that Aznar had provided evidence of ETA involvement. It was “virtually immediately clear” the attacks “did not bear ETA’s signature,” a conservative Belgium paper proclaimed: “They very clearly bear the mark of ruthless Muslim terror.”

Spain’s left-of-centre El País judged an attack by al-Qaeda a “very worrying consideration,” as the “price of the role J.M. Aznar and his government played in the decision to invade Iraq.” Finally some analysts did not rule out ETA involvement, entirely, saying that it was “no coincidence” that the disaster happened so close to Spain’s parliamentary elections at “a time when the future political course will be reset.” Spanish dailies vowed not to allow terror to “direct the political agenda.”

6.3 The Zenith of the Special Relationship

Prior to M-11, US-Spanish relations were at their zenith, with both leaders at the forefront of the War on Terror. During his eight years in office, Aznar was uncompromising in dismantling ETA’s terrorists and support structure. Aznar knew terrorism first-hand having barely survived an ETA car-bombing in 1995, but never persuaded more than a small minority of Spaniards that it was in the national interest of Spain to join US President Bush in his plan to invade Iraq as a part of the War on Terror. On the other hand, Aznar’s efforts in transcending internal ETA issues outside its borders was rewarded when, in 1997, the US State Department apologised to the Spanish government for describing ETA in its annual report on human rights as a

18 Irena Marr, this report was based on 77 reports from 24 countries, 11-12 March 2004, Editorial excerpted from each country were listed from the most recent date, 12 March 2004, www.globalsecurity.org
“separatist” rather than a “terrorist” group, and at the end of 1999 the US agreed to extradite to Spain, after a lengthy legal process, Ramon Aldasoro, an ETA activist and consequently added ETA to the international terrorist list.\textsuperscript{19} US Attorney General, John Ashcroft, visited Spain on 17 December 2003 to sign the bilateral protocols attached to the US-EU Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and Extradition Agreement, deepening bilateral judicial cooperation. Furthermore, in the same month Spain signed a memorandum of understanding with the US department of energy for the installation of nuclear material detectors in Spanish ports. Spain also cooperated with the Department of Homeland Security on the Container Security Initiative to scan containers bound from Algeria to the US for hazardous materials.\textsuperscript{20} Simultaneously Spain led the effort inside the EU to approve the EU-wide common arrest and detention order, which the EU approved in late 2001. Spain co-chaired, with the US, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Terrorism Finance Working Group and was keen to become a standing member of the G8’s Counter-terrorism Action Group due to its high level of technical assistance for third countries.\textsuperscript{21} Finally, Spanish troops stood steadfastly behind America following the attacks on the twin towers and Spain was a critical ally in Afghanistan to combat Talibán, following 9/11.

Aznar’s prominence prior to the US led attack on Iraq, however had cast him in a negative light, particularly when the global media spotlight fell on him, Bush and Blair at their joint “Coalition of the Willing” summit in the Azores just days before the

offensive was launched.\textsuperscript{22} “Spain can no longer be in the same corner as the countries which do not count, do not serve and do not decide,” said Aznar shortly before the invasion of Iraq. “In order to place our country among the most important ones in the world when the world is threatened, Spain must assume its responsibilities and do so with courage, determination and leadership.”\textsuperscript{23} Aznar’s top adviser and specialist in US Foreign Policy, Rafael Bardaji, was quick to point out this strategy for Spain, following the Bush Administration’s leaked Pentagon memorandum of late 2004 written by then Assistant Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, who wrote that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US must act to prevent the rise of peer competitors in Europe and Asia. But the 1990’s made this strategic aim moot. The US grew faster than the other major states during the decade, it reduced military spending more slowly, and it dominated investment in the technological advancements and military. Some thinkers have described this strategy as a “breakout,” in which the US moved so quickly to develop technological advantages, that no other state or coalition could ever challenge it as a global leader, protector, and enforcer.\textsuperscript{24} Hence Aznar’s government realized that a prerequisite for securing puts big power place as a big power in the world affairs was the alliance with the US. Thus the government of Aznar deployed 1,300 humanitarian aid troops to Iraq, slightly less than one per cent of the total number of foreign forces, but the third largest contingent from Western Europe, after Britain and Italy.\textsuperscript{25} Aznar, who was not himself running for re-election, was considered among Bush’s top foreign

\textsuperscript{22} In his book, Retratos y Perfiles, (Madrid: Planeta, 2005, pp. 265-274), Aznar said, “Spain was at the Azores because it could not participate in the Normandy landing, which is where we should have been”, Spain was officially neutral in the WWII, but Franco aided Hitler and Mussolini.


\textsuperscript{24} G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition”, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 81, No. 5, September/October 2002.

\textsuperscript{25} Aznar originally sent peacekeeping troops and not combat troops. A dissenting voice, though not in public, was Rodrigo Rato, the deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs. According to Federico Trillo, the Defence Minister at the time, Rato firmly expressed his opposition to Spain’s military involvement at a cabinet meeting shortly before the invasion of Iraq. In its place, he suggested humanitarian aid. See Federico Trillo, Memoria de entreguerras. Mis años en el Ministerio de Defensa, (Madrid: Planeta, 2005).
allies, indeed second only to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Australian Premier John Howard whose own political popularity plummeted in the wake of the Iraq war to by far its lowest level in his premiership, amid charges that he and Bush deliberately exaggerated the threat posed by Baghdad in the run-up to the war.\footnote{Jim Lobe, “Bush Terror War Suffers Body Blow in Spain”, \textit{Inter Press Service}, 15 March 2004, www.ipsnews.net} However, the M-11 bombings in Madrid, took the greatest toll on Spain’s Conservative Party, whose prospects of winning the March 2004 elections were directly impacted. This was due to the fact that public opinion polls showed that opposition to the war ran higher in Spain than in almost every other European country except Italy, at over 80 per cent.

The Conservative Popular Party, thought, it was unlikely to suffer much politically, because of the widespread belief that most Spanish voters were unlikely to vote based on foreign policy issues. This was probably also an explanation as to why Aznar gave his full backing to the US intervention in Iraq as the part of the global war on terror. Until the Madrid bombings, public-opinion polls appeared to bear out that belief. Furthermore, prior to the elections, Spain was hoping to benefit from its involvement in the war as in November 2003, President of the US Chamber of Commerce, Thomas Donohue, assured Spanish leaders they would get privileged treatment in bidding for reconstruction projects in Iraq. However with this bombing coming three days before a national election, in which his Popular Party’s candidate, Mariano Rajoy, was expected to win, Aznar’s policy of steadfast opposition to terrorists needed some backing up.\footnote{“Spain, a steady Anti terror ally”, 12 March 2004, www.csmonitor.com} Al-Qaeda claimed to have committed the atrocity against Spain for the sole reason that they were America’s ally and stood by the US during the wars in Iraq and
Accordingly, the anticipated “benefit” of Spain’s participation in the reconstruction of Iraq turned Spain into the terrorist target, placing the Aznar government’s credibility in question.

6.4 Threat Perception and the Realities of the New World Order

Interestingly, during the fierce debates leading up to the Iraq war, some political analysts saw a gap in “threat perception” as a major difference between Europeans and Americans and their attitude to the war.²⁹ The view was that the US, post 9/11, knew itself to be directly targeted, while Europe, basking in a feeling of post-Cold-War security, did not see itself as principle terrorism target. Moreover an additional view was expressed by an anonymous European official, remarked that “Madrid will certainly lead to a more dynamic view at counterterrorism operations and cooperation, but terrorism in Europe is not a new phenomenon, so this will not suddenly be seen as a war, this is not Europe’s 9/11.”³⁰ “There have always been different definitions of terrorism, in that we never call it a “war” on terrorism. We call it the fight or battle against terrorism, and we do think the distinction makes a difference”, said another European official in Washington.³¹ Since the Hispano-American War of 1898, Spain suffered from the internal threat of terrorism inflicted by ETA and the North Africa due to the geostrategic importance of its two enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla that were part of the long term conflict with Morocco.³² Nevertheless, the Spanish nation had never felt threatened by Iraq prior to the US invasion, and Islamic terrorism generally was seen as an issue related more to Spanish Sahara. Yet, this was a false perception of dangers that Spain faced: the fact that three out of nine chief suspects in the Madrid operation were

²⁹ Ibid.
Moroccans – many of whom were hostile to Spain over its colonial rule in Morocco - suggested that terrorists also continued to be inspired by traditional “Diaspora” concerns relating to their homelands. With potentially two sources of a grievance, European Muslims appeared especially susceptible to Osama bin Laden’s pan-Islamic agenda. The Islamic extremists, who supported al-Qaeda considered southern Spain to be occupied Muslim land that deserved to be liberated from the “crusades” that drove out Muslim rulers in 1492. Osama bin Laden’s chief lieutenant, Ayman al Zawahiri, referred to this loss of “Andalucia” in the first al-Qaeda videotape released after September 11, long before Spanish support for the war in Iraq was an issue. Mohammed Atta, the suspected ringleader of 9/11, planned part of that attack from the Spanish coastal city of Tarragona. Several Islamic fundamentalists were arrested and sentenced in Spain since the mid-1990s, notably by Judge Baltazar Garzon (the same judge who tried to prosecute Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet), but this did not lead many to believe that Islamic terrorism would target Spain directly.

Spaniards, unlike Americans, did not see Iraq as the central front in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). For them, as for most Europeans, the war in Iraq and the GWOT were completely separate. The Spanish public never thought it would be the target of a massive terrorist 9/11 type attack. “Whoever did it, the awareness of terrorism is going to grow in Europe,” Javier Solana, the top EU foreign policy official, said following the

33 Spanish authorities have arrested six Moroccans. One of the suspects, Jamal Zougam, had ties to al-Qaeda cell based in Spain that helped plan the September 11 attacks in the US. He also was a suspect in the May 16th, 2003, bombings in Casablanca, Morocco, that killed 33 people and 12 suicide bombers affiliated with al-Qaeda. A videotape communiqué from someone claiming to be “the military spokesman for al-Qaeda in Europe” proclaimed that the bombings were meant to punish Spain’s support for the US-led war in Iraq. See James A. Phillips, “Spain’s Retreat After The Madrid Bombings Rewards Terrorism”, 16 March 2004, www.heritage.org
attacks. Radek Sikorski, a former Polish defence minister said that he thought “people in Europe made a sharper distinction than Americans between the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq. Public opinion, even in countries whose governments supported the US (such as) Britain, Spain, Italy, Poland – were against involvement in Iraq. And in a democracy, when you take your country against the grain of public opinion, you get punished. It’s almost a surprise that it’s taken so long.” However, Sikorski stressed that while terrorists strike targeted in Europe, “You can’t deal with it by putting tanks in the street. You have to find them and arrest them all or liquidate them. And that’s a job for interior ministers.” This view was in large shared by President Bush and Prime Minister Aznar, but this did not placate the Spanish nation that fall victim to its government’s strong backing in the GWOT. The political consequences of the terrorist attacks in Spain thus sent shockwaves through the international community.

6.5 Responsibility and Perceptions in the Immediate Aftermath of the Attack

Spanish Ministers were swift to blame ETA, playing down the possibility that militants connected with al-Qaeda might have punished Spain for its unpopular role in supporting the war in Iraq. Indeed, Osama Bin Laden, the al-Qaeda leader, warned in October

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39 Aznar government appeared to have concluded that an ETA attack would be politically helpful by highlighting its tough approach to Basque terrorism, whereas an al-Qaeda attack might hurt the government by underlining its unpopular role in Iraq and its relationship with the US. Thus within hours of the attacks, Interior Minister Angel Acebes had declared that “the government has no doubt that ETA was responsible for the attacks.” Later that afternoon, Foreign Minister Ana Palacio sent a telegram to Spanish ambassadors confirming this statement and encouraging them to “use every occasion to confirm the authorship of ETA” and Spain began lobbying the UN Security Council for a resolution explicitly blaming ETA for the attacks. That evening Aznar twice called major Spanish newspapers to insist that ETA was responsible for the attacks and was even denouncing speculation that al-Qaeda might be involved as “an attempt by malicious people to distort information.” In the first hours after the attack it was perhaps reasonable to suspect ETA, given knowledge of that group’s previous plans to place bombs on Spanish trains. But the attempts to rule out other options—even though the attacks bore many hallmarks of an al-Qaeda operation and even after a van was found with a tape recording of verses from the Koran in Arabic and bomb-making materials - was seen as an attempt to deceive Spanish voters for political reasons. Philip H. Gordon, “Madrid Bombings and US Policy”, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 31 March 2004.
2003 that Spain would be targeted for backing the war. A senior al-Qaeda official wrote on a website: “We must make maximum use of the proximity to the elections in Spain […] Spain can stand a maximum of two or three attacks before they will withdraw from Iraq.”

International experts were initially dismissive of an email sent to the al-Qaeda affiliate claiming credit for the “trains of death”, as it called the Madrid attacks. It said that the operation was to punish Spain for its support of the US in the occupation of Iraq: “We have managed to infiltrate ourselves into the heart of Europe of the crusades and strive at the base of the alliance of the crusades […] this is part of a settling of old accounts with crusader Spain, the ally of the US in its war against Islam.” The message was signed by the Abu Hafs al Masri Brigade, which previously claimed credit for terror attacks from Turkey to Baghdad. However, following the M-11 attacks, Angel Acebes, Spain’s Interior Minister, announced that an Arab man with a Moroccan accent, who named himself the military spokesman of al-Qaeda in Europe, said that “we accept responsibility for what happened in Madrid exactly two and a half years after the attacks on New York and Washington. It is a response to your collaboration with the criminals Bush and his allies.”

According to Dr Rohan Gunarat, Head of Terrorism research at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies in Singapore: “Spain remained a hub of al-Qaeda transit and base activity, provided a rich recruitment base and a poorly regulated financial centre, as well as become a place for rest, recuperation and housing.” This new found reality that culminated in the atrocities of Madrid bombings, cast a negative light on Spain’s proximity to the US and Aznar’s alignment with the Bush Administration in the War on Terror. It also led to a higher death toll in Spain (202 dead and wounded hundreds of others) as the result of the attacks, then the


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number of Spanish casualties in the war in Iraq itself (12 fatalities). While US officials were expressing total support for Spain, and support for the Madrid bombing’s victims from the US, France observed three minutes silence on 15 March 2004 in memory of the victims of M-11 bombings in Madrid. Interestingly, during these minutes of silence, the flags in the French capital stood at half mast, while the stars and stripes above the US Embassy in central Paris remained at full mast: “We didn’t get the kind of guidance,” said the spokeswoman, Jeanine Johnson Maia. Unfair perhaps, but Spanish anti-Americanism and mistrust only grew deeper after reports.

The immediate US response to the Madrid bombings was that of hope that the upcoming elections would not alter the course of US-Spanish bilateral relations. In this regard Colin Powell, US Secretary of State, was quick to support Aznar’s government claim of ETA being the one to blame for M-11 events: “The US stands resolutely with Spain in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and against the particular threat that Spain faces from the evil of ETA terrorism,” Powell said. Nevertheless, his other comment pointed towards the US government’s concern of al-Qaeda involvement in the attack on Spanish nation: “I hope this will not change Spanish attitudes toward the war on terror or toward their efforts in Iraq. I hope this will cause Europeans to rededicate themselves to going after terrorist organizations.” This view expressed by Powell, pointed towards US government’s tendency to publically support Aznar’s foreign policy over Spain’s public opinion. Moreover, contrary to Powell’s and US government’s expectations, the deadly bombings of commuter trains in Madrid instigated a debate at the top UN human rights group over how far governments can go in the name of combating terrorism. The 53-nation UN Human Rights Commission, which opened its

six-week annual session on the 15 March 2004, faced heavy opposition from Spain, the US and their allies over moves by Mexico to appoint a UN expert to look into whether anti-terrorism measures breached international human rights standards.47 “The way the US administration has carried out its war – especially its attack on Iraq – may have sown dragon’s teeth”, said one government official who asked not to be identified. “The fact that we and the Europeans had no clue this was coming, shows how little we know about the ‘next wave’ of terrorism.” Moreover, Hans Blix, the former chief UN weapons inspector, also suggested that Bush’s decision to take the war on terrorism to Iraq – despite the lack of any documents showing operational links between Baghdad and al-Qaeda or other Sunni extremist groups – might have made things worse. In an interview with an Italian newspaper La Stampa, Blix said the war had “not put an end to terrorism in the world [...] on the contrary, the result of this iron-fisted approach has been to give it a boost.”48

Ahead of Spain’s Presidential elections, supporters of the PP tried to persuade Spaniards to look at the achievements in their eight years in government and to consider them as vital to Spain’s future. PP supporters claimed that the PSOE position was flawed, whereas the PSOE believed that being close to the US was bad for Spain’s interests and that the only sensible relationship with Washington was one based on parity and strategic equality. According to PP supporters, the PSOE stance failed to take into account the ways in which Spain profited from its relationship with the US. By 2004 Spain was able to find an alternative to the French-German axis over its interests inside the EU, as Spain united with the UK, and others, for the development of the Lisbon agenda and direct access to Washington on issues concerning Venezuela, Morocco and

47 “UN group to weight security vs. rights”, IHT, 15 March 2004.
Spain was considered a nation that had its own criteria and defended its interests in defence matters. PSOE argued the second premise was flawed as it was not possible to equalize with the US over military capabilities as Europe’s expenditure was far behind that of the US. According to the right wing GEES think tank, Aznar’s policies balanced two related phenomena: its alignment with US foreign policy gave it the dynamic opportunities that their EU neighbours could only dream of, whilst thrusting Spain into the international arena. The two phenomena permitted Spain to move in the globalised world: “Spain not only enlarged its shirt but also has to wear bigger clothes of better quality. Because we belong to another club, to another level and this seems to frighten the PSOE government. Zapatero wanted to live in a wonderland, just like Alice, but the reality is that Spain lives in a world that resembled more of a jungle. The bad thing is that his proposals were to eat Spain first.”

Moreover, from the perspective of PP supporters, Spain’s elections and the promises made by Zapatero were devastating news for the GWOT. It suggested that terrorism, at the very least, could decide a democratic vote. The Popular Party had a solid record of accomplishments. It transformed what used to be a large backwater in Europe into the world’s eighth largest economy and one of the fastest growing economies in an otherwise stagnant Europe. Spain came to be highly respected in Latin America and in the EU’s councils; and it had dealt resoundingly with the Basque terrorists of ETA. Its standing in the world

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49 Rodrigo Rato, the Economy Minister, said in a lecture on 12 January 2004, that Spain should abandon – and had already started to abandon – the long-standing practice of servile imitation of France and Germany. Spain’s economic success during Aznar period – zero budget deficit, tax reductions, 4 million new jobs and euro membership - made it possible to have a more independent voice. Rato went on to become managing director of the International Monetary Fund. See: William Chislett, “Spain and the US: The Quest for Mutual Rediscovery”, Elcano paper - 2005, www.realinstitutoelcano.org, p. 36.

50 “No coalition of great powers without the US will be allowed to achieve hegemony. Bush made this point the centrepiece of American security policy in his West Point commencement address in June 2002: “America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenges – thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other areas pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace”, G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition”, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 81, No. 5, September/October 2003.

community involved close ties to the US that gave Spain the opportunity to wear “the larger shirt.”

6.6 An Election turned Referendum

The dramatic and exceptional happenings of M-11 turned the elections in Spain on 14 March 2004 into a referendum on the war in Iraq. Prior to the elections, some experts argued that Spanish foreign and EU policy under the PP government, although not the main issues, had certain relevance in the campaign.52 The day before the elections, Saturday 13 March 2004, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets with angry messages such as “Your War, Our Dead.”53 On the morning of the elections, the citizens of Spain had mixed feelings about the results of Aznar’s foreign policy, and about the future of the country, that had become a direct target of international terrorism along with the threat posed by ETA. Bartolomeo Castillo, a Spanish citizen said that he would normally vote for PP, “but now I don’t know what to do. At first I didn’t think it was so bad for Spain to support Bush in Iraq, but as more about the motives for the war have come out, I have had more doubts. A lot of people will be thinking very hard whom to vote for today.”54 The voices of PP supporters were not heard as the PP lost its eight-year hold on power to the Spanish Socialist Workers party (PSOE), which took 43 per cent of the vote. Voter turnout was the highest in 29 years.55 The result of Spain’s ninth general election since the fall of Franco dictatorship was thus determined in a dramatic and unforeseen fashion. The result was that from being 5 per cent ahead in polls on Wednesday, by Sunday the PP lost the election, polling only

36 per cent compared to the opposition’s 43 per cent. Its support dropped by 12 per cent, which represented a large number of voters and raised questions about Spain’s direction and the attitudes of the Spanish electorate. The interesting fact of the votes cast in Madrid was that support for Aznar’s party decreased by a small margin of only 700,000 votes, but total participation increased by 8.5 per cent, giving Zapatero the highest support in the history of Spanish democracy – around 11 million votes. This can only be explained by the bombings and their aftermath, which mobilised the “stay at home” voters, who came out in great numbers for Zapatero, as a protest to Aznar and his stance in the war in Iraq. For Tony Blair, the mass murder in Madrid was immediately condemned as part of “this new war.” But Aznar, in a crude electoral miscalculation, preferred the bombings to be part of the “old war” against ETA. In American politics, it’s called the October Surprise: a dramatic, last minute event that swings the election into the hands of the incumbent president. In Spain, that surprise came seven months early, a terrorist attack that turned a near-certain win for a pro-US government into a stunning defeat with potentially ominous repercussions. In fact, Spanish tabloids implicated the PP were quick to point out that investigators wasted four precious days, which could have been used to gather evidence about members of the extremist Islamic group and to involve other EU countries in the process. According to Philip Gordon of the Brookings Institution, Aznar’s government’s handling of the atrocities only aggravated their position. The premature, categorical conclusion that Basque separatists were behind the attacks, and the stubborn refusal to

56 “Listen to the wisdom of the people on the streets”, The Independent on Sunday, 14 March 2004.
back away from that conclusion even though they bore all the hallmarks of al-Qaeda, left the government looking disingenuous in the eyes of Spanish voters.\footnote{Philip H. Gordon, “Spanish Lessons for the US”, 23 March 2004, www.brookings.edu}

### 6.7 Aznar’s Defeat and the Spanish Psyche

The twin events of M-11 and the national elections in Spain had diverse commentaries and assessment in Europe and in the United States. While one section of public opinion and political leadership (mostly in the US) rushed to label the Spanish electoral decision as appeasement of terrorists, other commentators (a majority in Europe) distinguished other causes for the defeat of the PP.\footnote{Joaquin Roy, “Spain’s Return to ‘Old Europe’. Background and Consequences of the March 11 and 14, 2004 Terrorist Attacks and Elections”, The Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series, Vol. 5 No. 5, March 2005.} They especially targeted the handling of the crisis as the cause for the defeat, insisting on attributing the attack to the Basque terrorist organization, ETA. Accepting Islamic radicalism as the source of the bombings meant that Spain was finally the target of a reprisal for Aznar’s siding with President Bush in the war in Iraq, a move that was opposed by 90% of the Spanish citizens.\footnote{“An upset in Spain”, IHT, 16 March 2004.} Nor was Aznar prepared to explain his view of the fact that no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq after all. While government leaders the world over were united in condemning such acts of terror, the outrage laid bare the stark differences of opinion on how the war on terror should be conducted. Indeed, there were basic differences about what the “war” actually was. For the US, after the invasion, a key task in Iraq was to withstand the daily attacks on its forces by hostile Iraqi and foreign elements and help the Iraqi people build on their new found freedom.

“All withdrawal now would be abandoning the Iraqi people”, said Bush “it’s essential

\footnote{Ibid. According to the report of the IISS of 2004, The result of the elections, at least in part, a collective judgement that outgoing Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar’s government was in a rash to support the US in Iraq because the intervention needlessly antagonised Islamist terrorists and made Spain a more inviting target, and derogated the democratic process by ignoring the 90% majority of the Spanish people who opposed Spain’s participation in the intervention. See “Al-Qaeda targets Europe: The Madrid bombing and transatlantic relations”, IISS, Vol. 10, Issue 2, 2004.}
that we remain side by side with the Iraqi people as they begin the process of self-government.”  

The week of 22 March 2004, marked the first anniversary of the war in Iraq. President Bush’s remarks included eloquent restatements of the justice of the war, assertions of progress made over the last year, and a reiteration of the US commitment to see Iraq through to peaceful self-rule. Zapatero, however, claimed the occupation of Iraq was a “fiasco” and said he looked forward to a “profound debate” with the Bush Administration on how to fight terrorism: “Fighting terrorism with bombs, with Tomahawk missiles, isn’t the way to beat terrorism, but the way to generate more radicalism.” Furthermore, Zapatero told Bush and Blair: “You can’t organise a war with lies.” Meanwhile, former President of the European Commission, and Italy’s Prime Minister Romano Prodi suggested “the American approach” to the War on Terror, reliant in part on the use of force and on regime change, had been discredited and that the war in Iraq was motivated by “vengeance,” making Americans somehow “prisoners of terror and of terrorists.”

Zapatero’s comments were not only echoed by Prodi, but Dominique de Villepin, former Interior and Foreign Minister of France, argued that the world had become “more dangerous and unstable because of the foolish war in Iraq. Terrorism didn’t exist in Iraq before. Today, it is one of the world’s principle sources of world terrorism.” Zapatero regarded France as a “very important ally” and stressed that “we want to make sure that the Franco-German axis works again.” He stressed that a unilateral move by Spain to pull out its forces, would be a symbolic blow to the coalition, and might prompt other European nations, such as Italy and Denmark, who had small

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63 Ibid.
contingents in Iraq, to consider doing the same, adding that “it could also deter wavering allies from committing new troops on the ground.” Emphasising his opinion further, Zapatero stated on radio: “The war in Iraq was a disaster, the occupation of Iraq is a disaster” and suggested that Bush and Blair “engage in some self-criticism” over their decision to invade Iraq. “Wars such as those, which have occurred in Iraq, only allow hatred, violence and terror to proliferate.”

Following the elections, the US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld criticized the new Spanish government: “It’s like feeding an alligator, hoping it eats you last. And it’s not a terribly proud posture, in my view.” Democrat US Senator, Joe Lieberman, said any troop withdrawal following the elections in Spain would “amount to appeasement. “Anyone who thinks that if [...] a nation’s troops stay out of a particular military conflict that they’ll be somehow protected from the fanatical Islamic terrorists is just wrong,” Lieberman said. According to Jim Lobe, that’s the same kind of logic that British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain used in Munich to try to pacify Adolf Hitler in the late 1930s, and obviously that didn’t work. The US reaction was natural counting the fact that the Spanish departure from Iraq not only encouraged others allies to follow suit, but also increased the military burdens on the US and undermined the mission’s legitimacy.

The outcome of the elections in Spain was not merely a vote against the war and against close ties with the US but also a vote against the way in which those events were presented by the government after M-11. One should not forget that prior to the Madrid bombings, ten members of Spain’s security forces and two Spanish journalists had been

killed in Iraq and the majority of Spanish citizens opposed the war. President Bush said on Spanish television that outgoing Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar “is a man that understands the war on terror, who clearly knows the stakes and knows that we must never give an inch to the terrorists.” However, Aznar was never able to communicate his motivations and understanding to the Spanish public. Aznar was incapable of conveying to his fellow Spaniards that the approach he applied in the Basque country was the same as that employed in Iraq, a policy based on an active defence of national security when threatened by rogue individuals, organisations or states. For two decades Spain enjoyed full membership in the EU, and its troops had contributed to dozens of peace-keeping operations, while its political transition to democracy was a model studied in text books in numerous universities and think-tanks around the world. Thus Spaniards did not share Aznar’s view that Spain was still in the shadow of other European nations and needed US support, which required Spain’s participation in the invasion of Iraq. Aznar was unable to make a dent in this type of thinking. His main argument for the Iraq war was: “trust me.” This implied a sense of personal conviction - similar to that shown by Bush and Blair. However, by this time the Spanish public had grown sceptical of Aznar. They did not understand the rationale for his policies and he underestimated the importance of this. His fellow citizens never believed he was acting in the defence of Spain’s security. Instead, they accused him of being an egomaniac, obsessed with his legacy.

Zapatero portrayed Aznar as an autocrat – a word that when spoken in the context of Spain has connotations of Franco and his regime.\textsuperscript{72} Zapatero accused Aznar of provoking the schism in European foreign policy on Iraq, saying: “The division of Europe was possible because Spain was absolutely subservient to the thesis of George Bush, and this, in turn, changed the balance of forces in Europe.”\textsuperscript{73} Aznar in his turn, accused Zapatero of “throwing in the towel” to terrorism by announcing the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq. Aznar insisted that Zapatero’s electoral pledge to pull out Spanish troops was “a very serious mistake […] the message that the terrorists could take from this is a message, which absolutely does not benefit us at all, neither our security nor our international responsibility.”\textsuperscript{74} Yet, Zapatero did not accept this view: “This “former” government,” he told journalists, “doesn’t serve Spaniards anymore; it only serves the interests of Bush.” “The war in Iraq was a huge mistake”, he said. “There was no motive. It was done without international consensus and the management of the occupation has been a disaster.”\textsuperscript{75} But he also made clear that Spain’s goal was to forge a common European foreign policy to deal with the US, a policy that was certain to be challenged in Washington, that would insist on dealing bilaterally with individual countries. Yet, Spain’s Foreign Minister, Miguel Angel Moratinos, expressed the desire “to work with the same intensity and good relations Bush had with Zapatero’s predecessor and that for Spain, the US was a key strategic ally.”\textsuperscript{76} “I reassured (Bush) that our intention is to maintain the best relationship and to even reinforce the relationship,” Moratinos added. “Of course we have certain differences on Iraq, but we also have the common objective of the war on terrorism and we’re not going to spare

\textsuperscript{72} “An upset in Spain”, \textit{IHT}, 16 March 2004; During his testimony at the M-11 trial on the 29 November 2004, Aznar said “I was the one who was the President”, indicating that no one could of decided better in his place or had the right to criticize his actions following the Madrid bombings, See: Pablos Planas, “\textit{Yo solo era el presidente}”, 30 November 2004, www.abc.es

\textsuperscript{73} Leslie Crawford, “Zapatero will recall troops unless UN acts”, \textit{The Financial Times}, 16 March 2004.

\textsuperscript{74} David Sharrock, “Aznar fires parting shot, Blair joins Madrid tribune”, \textit{The Times}, 23 March 2004.


\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
any effort to make it a success.” Zapatero added that aid would be sent to Iraq but Spanish troops would stay out. In order to strengthen relations between the two countries, Moratinos reiterated that Powell had invited him to visit Washington as soon as the new government was in place.

Spain’s elections thus brought to a head the large rift among those Spaniards speculating on the role of Spain in the War on Terror. This did not mean that Spain was dropping out of the war against terrorism. According to Patrick Cronin, of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS): “there is no doubt that the terrorist attacks were in the end the reason for the electoral swing, but the reason for this swing was not, a Spanish fear in terms of terrorism, it was to do much more with the sense of arrogance that this particular government demonstrated in its turn very quickly towards the ETA as the perpetrators of the attack and in a sense, in essence built on perhaps three to four years of impression, of some manipulation by the Spanish government of their information to do with the reasons for going into war in Iraq.” When asked about the possibility of Spain withdrawing from the alliance following the elections, President Bush used the term “cowardice” in his answer – although he did not directly accuse Spain of this – and said he would continue to fight terror with friends. President Bush noted that the US would never “cower” in the face of terrorism. He did not mention Spain’s new prime minister by name, but in his comments during a visit to the White House by Jan Peter Balkende, the Dutch Prime Minister, Bush implied that

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77 Ibid.
78 J. L. R. Zapatero: “We’ll send aid to Iraq but troops stay out”, TAC0418822, 3 May 2004, www.bbc.co.uk
80 “Spain accused of easing up on the War on Terror”, 17 March 2004, www.euroresidents.com
Zapatero “failed to understand what was at stake in Iraq.”\textsuperscript{81} Diplomats in Washington claimed that the electoral promise by the opposition Socialist party to withdraw Spain’s 1,300 troops from Iraq was not a serious problem in itself for the US. Nonetheless, the Madrid bombings of 11 March 2004 brought to light a number of issues that unavoidably complicated the US Administration’s will to keep its privileged relationship with Spain going forward. It is possible that, in the interest of safeguarding this strategic alliance and bilateral cooperation, Aznar was reluctant to name al-Qaeda as the force behind the bombings, naming ETA as the primary suspect instead. However, even US intelligence officials and journalists promptly pointed out that a series of numerous large-scale explosions in rapid sequence “fit with al-Qaeda style.”\textsuperscript{82} While wiretaps bolstered the theory that blasts were “timed to hurt chances of the leader who backed the Iraq War.”\textsuperscript{83} In this regard, James Dobbin, a senior fellow at the RAND Corporation pointed out that M-11 “exacerbated transatlantic differences over Iraq and the war on terror” and pointed out that “some Europeans may now believe that the intervention in Iraq has also increased the likelihood of terrorist attacks in European states that supported that action.”\textsuperscript{84} This caused an internal rift in Spain between present and former prime ministers, leading to a wider gap between the ruling PSOE and opposition PP parties. Some US figures, including Richard Myers, the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, accused the Spanish people of appeasing terrorists on the grounds that they had given into them by throwing out a party whose leader who stood shoulder to shoulder with the Bush Administration in its fight against global terrorism. This was

\textsuperscript{82} Diana Cariboni, “\textit{Spain: terrorism, lies and elections}”, www.ipsnews.net,, 15 March 2004, p. 2; importantly, later in 2007, during the M-11 trial where a Court in Spain was trying 29 suspects, Iraq was declared to be the motive for the 2004 train bombings. Islamist radicals decided to blow up commuter trains in Madrid in 2004 because Spain was the easiest target of the three main countries involved in the invasion of Iraq. See for example: International Briefs: “Bomb was not a threat, suspect reportedly says”, \textit{IHT}, 5 March 2007.
\textsuperscript{83} Keith B. Richburg, “\textit{Madrid Attacks May Have Targeted Election}”, 17 October 2004, www.washingtonpost.com
\textsuperscript{84} Testimony of James Dobbins, senior fellow of RAND Corporation, presented to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs, 31 March 2004, www.rand.org
a very simplistic interpretation of what happened in Spain between the M-11 bombings and the elections and deeply offended many Spaniards who were no strangers to terrorism. Consequently such criticism from the US increased the feeling of anti-Americanism among Spanish public.\textsuperscript{85}

6.8 The New Government Sticks to its Word

Zapatero’s decision to fulfil his electoral pledge to withdraw from Iraq precipitously, without consulting with its allies, immediately changed the tone of diplomatic talks between the US and Spanish government officials.\textsuperscript{86} President Bush scolded Prime Minister Zapatero for the abrupt withdrawal, telling him in a telephone conversation to avoid actions that give “false comfort to terrorists or enemies of freedom in Iraq.” Bush urged that the Spanish withdrawal take place in a coordinated manner that did not “put at risk other coalition forces in Iraq,” explained White House press Secretary Scott McClellan.\textsuperscript{87} Condoleezza Rice was concerned that the terrorists could draw “wrong lessons from Spain” and attempt other attacks aimed at dividing the allies. Spain’s Defence Minister, Jose Bono, already knew that his call for placing the occupation forces under UN command would never be accepted by the US government. This was confirmed to him by US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, on 5 April 2004 during his visit to Washington.\textsuperscript{88} When Bono called Rumsfeld to confirm the Spanish troop pull-out, the US Defence Secretary was harshly critical. He accused the new Spanish

\textsuperscript{85} See the much more balanced testimony of Robin Niblett, executive vice-president and senior fellow, European Programme, Centre for Strategic & International Studies, before the Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on European Affairs, on March 31, 2004 http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2004/NiblettTestimony040331.pdf
\textsuperscript{86} A former US ambassador to Spain advised a Socialist minister to be, shortly after the election result, against withdrawing the troops too hastily as it would infuriate President Bush. He was told that the decision to pull out as quickly as possible had already been taken, William Chislett, “Spain and the US: The Quest for Mutual Rediscovery”, Elcano working papers - 2005, www.realinstitutoelcano.org, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{87} “Spain leads troop withdrawal from Iraq”, 19 April 2004, www.usatoday.com
\textsuperscript{88} Rumsfeld said to Bono that “there was no chance that US soldiers would serve under UN command” in Celestino del Arenal, “La politica exterior del gobierno socialista”, Política Exterior, 100, July/August 2004, p 111.
government of being “a bunch of cowards” while Bono replied that it took “cojones” to
do what Zapatero had done.\textsuperscript{89} Finally, it was only on 18 April 2004 when Bono and
Spain’s Foreign Minister, Miguel Angel Moratinos, following a phone conversation
with Powell and Rumsfeld made the decision public in Spain, thus overturning the
previous government’s carefully nurtured relationship with the US and producing a
major rift with Washington. Nonetheless, Sean McCormack, the spokesman for the
National Security Council acknowledged: “We are grateful to the other coalition
partners for their recent expressions of solidarity.”\textsuperscript{90} Italian Prime Minister Silvio
Berlusconi said to Aznar’s sorrow, that with Spain’s withdrawal “we can take advantage
of the fact that we are now considered the closest ally in continental Europe to the US,
which is the only world superpower.” However, European Commission President
Romano Prodi, Berlusconi’s predecessor as Italy’s leader, praised Spain’s decision,
saying the move could help mend the rift in Europe over the war as well as increase
pressure to resolve the Iraqi crisis: “Spain with this decision has come back to our line”,
said Prodi. Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, said he spoke with Spain’s
ambassador to express his disappointment and worried that if other countries followed
Madrid’s example, “then Iraq would be left without security and would become a haven
for terrorists.” Slovakia’s president to be, Ivan Gasparovic, who once opposed
deployment of his country’s troops to Iraq, explained that the threat of worldwide
terrorism now justified their presence.\textsuperscript{91} However, just days earlier Iraqi insurgents
killed one of four Italian security guards who had been travelling with an American

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. p 118.
\textsuperscript{90} Marlisa Simons, “Spanish Premier orders soldiers home from Iraq”, \textit{The New York Times}, 19 April
2004.
\textsuperscript{91} “Spain leads troop withdrawal from Iraq”, 19 April 2004, www.usatoday.com
supply convoy. They threatened to kill the others unless Italy withdrew its troops from Iraq.\textsuperscript{92}

According to Charles Powell, a specialist in Spain’s modern history and politics, the Zapatero government decided to withdraw prior to the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1546 on 8 June 2004, so as to avoid a situation where this resolution was “to provide the invading troops with a modicum of legal cover.”\textsuperscript{93} The decision was also highly divisive, however. Although it met the approval of 91 per cent of PSOE voters, it only had the backing of 26 per cent of PP ones.\textsuperscript{94} Importantly, a Spanish majority (74\%) supported deploying the troops in Iraq if the UN approved a multinational force to assist with security and reconstruction. Support, however, fell if such a multinational force was to be under US command.\textsuperscript{95} Zapatero invariably linked effective multilateralism with the UN system and a vigorous endorsement of the principles of international law, both out of genuine conviction and as a way of distancing himself from (and implicitly condemning) his predecessor’s behaviour during the Iraq crisis. In doing so, however, one can argue that even the most enthusiastic defenders of international law were often highly critical of the workings of the UN system, while the dynamic of the Security Council in particular had frequently produced results that were contrary to the values (democracy, solidarity, human rights) that he so strongly identified with.\textsuperscript{96} Zapatero announced in an interview on \textit{Onda Cero Radio} that “he will take the steps to improve national security”, and he said that he “would seek national and international consensus

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{El Mundo}, 26 April 2004.
in the fight on terrorism." PSOE followers thus argued that although Zapatero won the election on a platform of withdrawing Spanish troops from Iraq until the establishment of a clear UN mandate, neither he nor his party should be viewed as anti-American or anti-NATO, any more than the domestic US critics of the Bush Administration, who called for a more multilateral American approach to Iraq. In terms of the US-Spanish relationship, the Socialist government argued that PSOE was the one that established the transatlantic agenda back in 1995 and that there had been a long tradition in Spain of reaching out to the US. Zapatero, however, underlined that “We need to engage with the American Administration and President Bush in a positive manner but on an equal footing”, thus signalling that his country would no longer march in lockstep with Washington. While Spain was to continue to be an important partner of the US, it was no longer viewed as a close ally.

6.9 Troop Withdrawal and a New Stage in Relations

The withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq underlined the Socialist will to readdress the balance, as they believed the previous government had an unbalanced relationship in favour of the US, to the detriment of the EU. Aznar took a diametrically opposed view that he expressed in a Wall Street Journal article (“Appeasement Never Works”, 26 April 2004), that said the pull-out of troops “worsens our foreign relations. It alienates us from our partners and allies and does not contribute to the foreign policy consensus promised to us by the new government.” Indeed, according to a White House spokesman, George Bush "regret[ted]" the "sudden" announcement of the departure of Spanish troops from Iraq, while Zapatero expressed his readiness to continue

98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
cooperation with the US to combat terrorism within the rules of international law and the UN: “My position regarding the presence of Spanish troops in Iraq is well known, as well as its aspects and reasons and cannot be misunderstood. So we will not allow you to question our commitment to international security and combating terrorism. Therefore, I make it clear that Spain will assume the international obligations in defence of peace and security. It will, always, with one requirement: the prior decision of the UN or any other multinational organization that character requires us to do so.”

Zapatero’s position remained firm: “I don’t want Spanish military presence in this Arabic country”, explaining that the safety of troops was the main reason that led him to bring them home, and he promised to send to Congress a draft on modifying the law on basic criteria of defence, thus providing for Parliament’s "participation" in government decision to send the armed forces into operations abroad. The view that “Courts should be consulted before committing the government's will” was Zapatero’s position even back in December 2001, prior to Iraq crisis.

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103 J. L. R. Zapatero, “España y Europa ante la crisis”, Politica Exterior, 84, November/December 2001 (pp 27-40) p. 39 For information on whether the government's position of Spain and the subsequent crisis and Iraq War has helped the general interests of the nation and the European Union, basic objectives of foreign policy was expressed in Congress by Aznar on the occasion of the debate in May 1996 and again in April 2000 (daily sessions of Congress, 2-3May1996 and 25-26April2000). But, also, that careful timing how to proceed against the constitutional order of states participating in some external action by the United States, including that of Spain, as in the case of Yugoslavia and in Iraq has acted without the approval of Parliament, as required under Article 63 of the Constitution Asylum. See: Remiro Antonio Brotons, “From humanitarian assistance to the aggression: NATO versus Security Council”, but also in saving the incurred contradictions, Javier Fernandez Garcia, “The political control of the missions abroad: international and internal law”, Newsletter, No.10,October2003,pp.2-4. The decision responds to the initial position held by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party in the Spanish military participation in the occupation of Iraq. See: "The government wants Iraq to the Civil Guard and the Legion PSOE requires the endorsement of the UN", The World, 22 April 2003, which was exposed by Miguel Angel Moratinos at the Real Instituto Elcano on 10 March 2004 and "A new foreign policy for Spain", lecture given at the series of meetings with various representatives of political parties race to the general elections on 14 March 2004 to submit their proposals on foreign policy in Analysis of the Real Instituto Elcano, no 37, 2004, www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisisis/434.asp. Pull out of Spanish troops in the first interview after R. Zapatero's electoral victory in the Cadena SER, see: "Zapatero defeated Rajoy in an electoral poll," El Pais, 15 March 2004 and confirmed in the inaugural speech at the Congress of Deputies on 15 April 2004, www.moncloa.es
White House was not so much the pull-out of troops that had no significant military impact, but the sudden unilateral way in which it was done without a gradual withdrawal. From the US point of view, the symbolic message of such a move sent to al-Qaeda could have been disastrous.\textsuperscript{104} Zapatero also angered the US Administration by urging other countries to withdraw their troops. Thus the small Nicaraguan, Dominican, Honduran and Salvadoran contingents serving under Spanish orders had to withdraw as well, while Zapatero publically encouraged other European leaders to follow his example during a visit to Tunisia in September 2004.\textsuperscript{105} The withdrawal started with Honduras President, Ricardo Maduro, announcing that the pull-out of troops would occur “in the shortest time possible.”\textsuperscript{106} Immediately, Salvadoran authorities followed, not for political reasons, but because of the heavy military dependence on the Spanish command.\textsuperscript{107} This was followed by an announcement by the Dominican Republic’s Defence Minister, Jose Manuel Soto Jimenez, that 300 of its troops would leave in “order to avoid unnecessary risks.”\textsuperscript{108}

Although the Bush Administration claimed to respect Zapatero’s decision, it effectively ceased to regard the Spanish government as a reliable partner. Spain slipped from 8th to 9th position in 2004 in the Harris Poll of the United States’ 25 closest allies (12th in 2002). The sharp rise in 2003 was due to the previous government’s support for the invasion of Iraq. This relatively small fall in the chart by one place can be explained by Spain’s continued provision of its military bases for US on-going operations and the

\textsuperscript{106} “Spain leads troop withdrawal from Iraq”, 19 April 2004, www.usatoday.com
presence of a Spanish contingent in Afghanistan. This view was further confirmed by US Ambassador to Spain, Andrian Basora, who said that the withdrawal “dealt a severe blow to the Bush Administration’s “Coalition of the Willing” as Zapatero became the only major European leader not invited for an individual visit to the “Bush 43” White House, and Spain’s reputation as a reliable ally was damaged at least in more hawkish US political circles.109

6.10 Zapatero and Spain Setting the Agenda

With the new government in place in Spain, the orientation of US-Spanish bilateral relations was rapidly taking a new turn, where the long wished equality of their relationship was to be finally reached in the eyes of the Spanish public. Zapatero and his supporters thus argued that instead of defeating terrorism and violence, Bush’s war in Iraq had encouraged more violence and terrorism. The real war on terrorism remained on hold. Osama Bin Laden, continued to operate in the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Yet Bush committed hundreds of thousands of American soldiers to Iraq, a country, which had no definite links to the terrorism.110 Although Spain withdrew troops, other allies of the US, both inside and outside Europe, said they would be staying in Iraq. Officials of Britain, Australia, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy, Ukraine, Denmark, Norway, the Czech Republic, and Japan said they had no plans to prematurely withdraw their forces from Iraq in the wake of the Spanish pronouncements.111 From the evidence mentioned above, it was obvious that Spain’s newly elected Socialist Prime Minister was embarking on a two-track approach toward the US, portraying himself as a reliable ally even as he railed against the Bush

111 Elaine Sciolino, “Socialist victor in Spain criticizes Bush and Blair”, IHT, 16 March 2004
Administration for waging war and occupying Iraq. Indeed, Zapatero’s government regarded the war in Iraq as counterproductive in the fight against terrorism, but on the other hand, his government had no qualms about being actively involved in Afghanistan because it was a training base for terrorist networks, and there was a wide consensus in the international community, unlike Iraq, on the need for firm action.112 Moreover the Socialists did not abandon Iraq as Spain was one of the main donors for the January 2005 Iraqi elections, whose results it welcomed, and the government was prepared to help train Iraqi judges and police officers in Spain. The US continued to use Spanish military bases for a number of operations and generally speaking bilateral cooperation continued on the ministerial level as was the case under the previous government. The Socialists were seeking the kind of flexible relationship with Washington that Felipe Gonzalez, the former prime minister, had between 1983 and 1996. When he came to power, Gonzalez also had to overcome an initial period of friction with Reagan Administration as he fulfilled his campaign pledge of putting Spain’s continued membership of NATO to a referendum. The “yes” vote won the day, and Gonzalez then went on to enjoy a good relations with Reagan, Bush (Sr.) and Clinton administrations and was able to disagree without falling out, for example, over US policy towards Central America.113

Following M-11, US-Spanish ties were undeniably weakened as a result of the Zapatero’s government’s decision to withdraw its troops from Iraq so rapidly.114 As Moratinos pointed out: “The Spaniards, who have been familiar with terrorism for the

past three decades, gave the terrorists a lesson in democracy."  

However, Zapatero’s decision to double the Spanish contingent in Afghanistan was convincing of the fact that appeasement was not Spain’s natural inclination. Understanding these factors did not change the fact that the terrorist attacks in Madrid and the outcome of the Spanish elections were setbacks for the US, particularly its desire to sustain international support in Iraq. Accordingly, the personal relationship between Zapatero and Bush suffered, and the devastating events of M-11 placed the US-Spanish relationship in a new situation, where Spanish public opinion was to be followed by PSOE and foreign policy towards the US would be reconsidered accordingly.

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115 Interview with the Socialist’s foreign policy expert, Miguel Angel Moratinos, discusses Madrid’s new anti-terrorism and European policy”, “Against blind conformity”, Der Spiegel, 14 March 2004.


117 While the new policy towards the US was politically popular in Spain, the opposition and the former Prime Minister believed that Spain was not likely to buy a separate peace in the war against terrorism, any more than opposition to the war against Iraq bought Turkey protection from the al-Qaeda affiliates who killed 52 people in a series of bombings in Istanbul in November 2003. See James A. Phillips, “Spain’s retreat after the Madrid Bombings Rewards Terrorism”, 14 April 2004, www.heritage.org
Chapter 7

Succession Politics from Aznar to Zapatero in the Context of US-Spanish Relations

7.1 Introduction

The M-11 Madrid bombings had a direct impact on the outcome of the Spain’s general elections of March 2004. The defeat of the Conservative government and the arrival in power of the Socialist Party heralded a new phase in the United States-Spanish bilateral relations. The elected Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero’s vision of Spanish foreign policy resulted in the country having a far more nuanced affiliation with the US, which led to the diminishing of Spain’s role internationally. In the words of Spain’s Minister of Defence, Jose Bono, the new US-Spanish bilateral relationship was: “friends yes, allies yes, but we have ceased to be subjects.”\(^1\) Zapatero shifted Spain’s foreign policy from the strong pro-US focus of the Aznar government to favouring ties with European Union’s (EU) partners France and Germany. Zapatero also placed more emphasis on strengthening the EU’s foreign policy role than his predecessor.\(^2\) In view of this, Jose Maria Aznar’s Conservative Popular Party’s attempt to build a “Special Relationship” with the US seemingly had an abrupt ending. According to the US Ambassador to Spain, Adrian Basora, the US-Spanish relations “had suddenly reached a low point after decades of progress.”\(^3\) This observation was expressed by Ambassador Basora in November 2009, the year US President George W. Bush was succeeded by Barack Obama, thus indicating that in the eyes of the US government, the bilateral

relations in the five years of Zapatero’s leadership never reached the special level it enjoyed during Aznar years.

In relation to the US, Zapatero attacked the policies it attributed to the Aznar government, the harmful influence of “neoconservative centres of power”, and its determination to combat the negatives of unilateralism, preventive war, and regime change imposed from abroad. Back in 2003, when still in opposition, Zapatero indicated his position in regards to his predecessor: “The prime minister had offered no consensus, but to support the views of the US president” and said the same after their fourth meeting that took place following the outcome of the elections.\(^4\) Beyond the headlines and below presidential level, however, major aspects of the bilateral relationship were in fact preserved as cooperation between US departments and the corresponding Spanish ministries continued. For instance in March 2005, the two countries set up a group of experts and prosecutors to improve legal and police cooperation on terrorism. Senior US and Spanish officials also met to try to improve the flow of anti-terrorism intelligence between the two countries.\(^5\) Importantly, the continued presence of the US military at Spanish bases was not put into question by Zapatero government, and thus provided the stability and longevity of bilateral military diplomacy.\(^6\) For instance, the Moron and Rota military bases in Southern Spain near the Straits of Gibraltar, where the US maintained over 2000 US personnel, became the main transit points serving as major logistical hubs for the flow of troops and material

\(^4\) "Aznar se reune con Zapatero en el Palacio de la Moncloa", 25 March 2004, www.abs.es; Zapatero believed that the culprit of all the issues raised in Spain regarding Iraq was José María Aznar who had dragged the country into a war of lies. See: “Las mentiras socialistas”, 22 November 2005, www.gees.org/articulo/1883; According to PP, the problem, however, had little to do with what was argued from the PSOE, in Rafael L. Bardaji, “Zapatero no paga a traidores,” 25 April 2005, www.gees.org/articulo/1322


\(^6\) According to the terms of an Agreement on Defence Cooperation, the United States has retained access to several Spanish military bases, including a naval base at Rota and an airbase in Moron, which was a key transportation link between the United States and the US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.
between the US and Iraq and Afghanistan. Thousands of tons of war supplies, tanker planes and squadrons of fighters were passing through Moron. Indeed, the bases were highly valued by the US, but were not very popular with some Spaniards who articulated their discontent in response to Spain’s changing security environment. As a result, the increased activity by US forces sparked protests. The American response was however tempered by the need to share intelligence. Importantly, Zapatero, having made opposition to the war in Iraq a cornerstone of his foreign policy from day one of his government gave no indication of wanting to close the bases. And despite local protest and the far left’s campaign to close them, most Spaniards seemed resigned to their presence.

The reason behind this continuity of the previous government’s policies will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Overall, the newly elected Socialist party and its leader continued the, by then, traditional priorities of Spanish foreign policy: strong support for the process of European integration; respect for international law as embodied in the United Nations (UN) system; a clear endorsement of the Ibero-American Community of Nations; a strong presence in the Mediterranean region, partly with a view to contributing to a just and peaceful solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict; a recognition of the importance of a “robust and balanced” transatlantic relationship, to be conducted multilaterally, at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and European Union (EU) level, and bilateral ties between Spain and the US; and a commitment to the global struggle against terrorism and organised crime. If anything, the most innovative aspects of the electoral programme were its commitment to a very

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significant increase in development aid, and to a greater Spanish role in sub-Saharan Africa.\textsuperscript{10}

### 7.2 The Beginning of Change

In April 2004 Spain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miguel Angel Moratinos, flew to Washington to try to smooth out the broken relationship over Iraq. He offered non-military co-operation in the country, and help with reconstruction.\textsuperscript{11} In relation to the economic reconstruction of Iraq, Moratinos recalled that at the Donor’s conference, Spain promised to donate a total of US$ 300 million between 2003 and 2007, in support of World Bank projects.\textsuperscript{12} Moratinos later articulated his diplomatic approach: "We want to develop a new more balanced transatlantic relationship with the US: it is building a relationship of friendly countries and partners in the loyalty and mutual respect. The outline of this relationship defined in the Cooperation Agreement of 1988 and renewed in 2001 was based on the principle of sovereign.\textsuperscript{13} For his part, Bono affirmed the decision of Zapatero to withdraw troops from Iraq as "the result of a commitment made with the Spaniards and for peace."\textsuperscript{14} Upon the return home of Spanish troops, during an interview a year later, Bono added that the withdrawal “will never be interpreted as an action against friendly countries, and in this regard” he added that “today the relations with Washington are good.” In theory the Zapatero government continued to proclaim that “the relationship with the US remains a key foreign policy of Spain, given the condition of allies, the community of shared values and the importance

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\textsuperscript{11} “Spain’s new government: Waking up to reality”, \textit{The Economist}, 24 April 2004, p. 39.
\end{footnotesize}
of the interests of all involved in this relationship.”

According to Celestino del Arenal, the Head of the International Relations department of Madrid’s Complutense University, the approach of Zapatero, unlike Aznar, to Spain’s foreign policy towards the US was to show that “while defending multilateralism and international law, the affirmation of the autonomy of foreign policy interests with respect to others, the priority to build on the European dimension, to seek consensus”, signified a recovery of Spain’s diplomatic identity that was lost throughout Aznar’s years in governance.

Two months after taking over the leadership of Spain, Zapatero opened a debate on the subject of the legality of the Iraq invasion, at a time, when Washington had hoped for support for the coalition. However, the prime minister got a lot of backing among the general public for his firm stance. Like many other citizens around the world, Spaniards thought it was time to analyse the work of intelligence services in combating terrorism. However as the result of such open debate, the rhetoric between the two sides of the Atlantic was initially hostile and severely hampered the previous government’s efforts to pursue an effective foreign policy towards the US in framing common defence policy in the GWOT. As a result of such rhetoric, the relationship between the US embassy in Madrid and the Zapatero Administration suffered a degree of disparagement. This was apparent from the situation that took place on the 12 October 2004 when the Spanish government snubbed the US by cancelling an annual invitation to US troops to join the celebrations of Spain's national holiday parade and instead invited French soldiers to Madrid. The Spanish defence minister, Jose Bono, told the COPE radio station there would be “no Americans in this year's fiesta nacional” which commemorates the day on which Christopher Columbus sighted the New World. The national day "is not the

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16 Ibid.
national holiday of the United States, and no one is under any obligation to see the flag of another country in the parade, though it is a friend and an ally for sure," said Bono. "This is in no way an insult nor a sign of contempt towards the United States." However, the minister then added that Spain was "no longer subordinated" and "kneeling" before Washington. "With Bush, peace and liberty have not exactly triumphed," he said. Then in reference to the former Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, who pledged his full support to President Bush, Bono said the new Socialist administration wanted to "show its sovereignty."\textsuperscript{17} This stance towards the US was also visible earlier in the year during one of the Zapatero’s official trips to France prior to the French presidential elections, when his speech was clear: “We must not allow one country to decide the future of our planet”, Zapatero said to wild applause in reference to the US.\textsuperscript{18}

The importance, however, that the Socialists attached to patching up relations with Washington and forging a new model of bilateral relations was highlighted by sending Carlos Westendorp, a former foreign minister and the mastermind of the European Union’s Transatlantic Agenda in 1995, as Ambassador to the United States in 2004. Moreover, Rodrigo Rato, the Minister of Economy in the Aznar era, had moved to Washington as the managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a job which traditionally went to a European but which, nevertheless, needed the support of the US. For example in 2000, the US vetoed Europe's nomination of German deputy Finance Minister Caio Koch-Weser for the IMF's top job.\textsuperscript{19} Rato’s appointment was very much seen as recognition of the sound economic management under Aznar, and a

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“prize” similar to that of the Socialist Javier Solana winning US support in 1995 to become NATO’s secretary general. Javier Rupérez, Aznar’s last ambassador to Washington, stayed in the United States as the first executive director of the newly created UN Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED). Simultaneously, the Socialists unwisely made no secret of their hope for a victory by John Kerry in the November 2004 US Presidential elections, although Kerry had also criticised the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. It was by no means certain that his foreign policy would have been much more in accordance with Spain’s foreign policy objectives towards the US. While still not knowing the winner of the US presidential elections, Zapatero was cautious to maintain a neutral position towards the US government’s representation in Spain. This was obvious from the fact that Bono was the only minister Zapatero allowed to attend the event organized by US Ambassador to Spain, George Argylos, on US election night. In late 2004 he did so, accompanied by a senior aide of his ministry, General Sanz, who was part of the same group that just a few days previously had questioned the usefulness of Spain maintaining bilateral relation with the US military.

Sending Spain’s defence minister to the event was Zapatero’s way at showing to the US government that he was keen to maintain bilateral military relations, putting differences aside. The meeting between the head of US base installations, Navy Captain John H. Orem and Zapatero during an official visit to the air base of Rota (Cadiz) in November 2004, where they were welcomed by Bono, further pointed to the importance the

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20 Ibid.
21 General Sanz was quoted saying that Spain “gives a lot to the United States and gets little in return, this relationship must become balanced.” According to Florentino Portero, a member of a leading political think tank, the right wing Strategic Studies Group GEES in Madrid, this view confused the relationship with the military diplomacy as Spain provided what it could, for example bases, and the US compensated Spain in other ways: “relationship with Morocco for example, making it easier for our technical information and intelligence service, support and resolution of commercial or industrial agreements, facilitating certain diplomatic manoeuvres.” The relations between states he believed were global. See Florentino Portero, “Unos desafortunados comentarios”, GEES, 1 November 2004, www.gees.org
Spanish government attached to a continuation of military relations between the two states.

In November 2004, President George W. Bush won a second term, however, and the Socialists began to mend fences. A Washington insider believed President Bush, who attached importance to establishing a rapport with other world leaders, had developed a personal dislike for Zapatero “that was hard to repair.” However as mentioned earlier, the US-Spanish differences on presidential level represented solely a surface crack in the relationship, but not a fissure. Nevertheless, even the intervention of Spain’s King Juan Carlos failed to improve matters of the crack. At lunch at Crawford with George and Laura Bush in late November 2004, Juan Carlos is said to have argued that US-Spanish relations were too important to be put in jeopardy by continued differences, but he got nowhere. In his annual address to the diplomatic corps in Madrid, the King sent another signal to the White House when he said Spain’s relations with the US “are a fundamental point of reference in our foreign relations.” Yet, Zapatero renounced the foreign policy of his predecessor and pledged to put Spain back in the heart of Europe, making King Juan Carlos attempts to bring back the US-Spanish ties to its “Special Relationship” a difficult task. In fact it was due to externally linked internal threats of terrorism that pushed Zapatero’s government to seek more balanced multi-dimensional relationship with the US, which was key to having continued public support during a

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23 A Washington insider argued that the absence of personal bond between the presidents by the end of 2004 was obvious as albeit Defence Minister Bono’s attempt to ask Bush Sr. to persuade newly re-elected George W. Bush to agree to speak to Zapatero following the elections, at least on the phone, failed. Bush Sr. told Bono, the president was not interested in personal contact with Zapatero at that time. “Bush not Interested in Relationship with Spanish PM Zapatero”, 15 January 2005, www.washtimes.com
24 Ibid.; Ambassador Aguirre in his letter to Condoleezza Rice in May 2007 confirmed the view that even though King Juan Carlos was prohibited by law from playing a direct role in foreign policy, he helped behind the scene to smooth relations with the US after tensions following the 2004 Spanish elections. See “Cable de E.E.U.U. que prepapa la visita de Condoleezza Rice a Madrid”, 25 May 2007, Embassy of the US in Madrid, published by El País in July 2008.
difficult post electoral period of time for the newly elected Spanish government. Yet, the US Administration stressed that they did not want their bilateral relations to become “a casualty of the political crossfire.” US ambassador Aguirre underlined this point in his letter to Condoleezza Rice in May 2007 by saying that: “We understand electoral politics, but not at our expense.” The US Administration felt that Zapatero played to a largely leftist, pacifist support base, and used foreign policy to win domestic political support rather than giving attention to core foreign policy priorities or embracing broader strategic goals.  

7.3 Zapatero’s Multilateralism and Popular Support

In his electoral campaign Zapatero spoke of "a foreign policy marked by a vision of Europe and Europeanization" as one of the main thrusts of his government programme.  

Whereas, the opposition leader, Mariano Rajoy of PP, believed that the EU had common values with the US (such as democracy and respect for human rights), common issues (such as threats to international security and stability, terrorism and its financing, or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction) and common interests (such as promise of global free trade, fighting poverty and its effects, or the international financial stability). According to Rajoy the US was “an indispensable element” in ensuring European security, and ultimately an international order that represented common interests and values that “defined us.”

Zapatero’s decision to distance himself from Washington and embrace Europe, however, fell into a different category. Europe had been the sheet anchor of Spanish foreign policy during the 1980s

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and 1990s with cross party consensus. Encouraged by Blair, Aznar broke with this consensus and took an Atlanticist turn in support of Washington during 2003. Zapatero quickly reverted to the former policy, which he believed presented new opportunities for Spain but also new challenges in fighting terrorism and narcotics, non-proliferation and military cooperation. In his first major speech to the Spanish parliament, after his election, Zapatero stated bluntly: “what is good for Europe is good for Spain.” This new government thinking was confirmed by early visits to Paris and Berlin ahead of London. A significant rapprochement with France and Germany thus ended former government efforts to develop cordial relations with the UK and the US, as counterweight “to the members of the old Europe.”

Two weeks after being sworn in as the leader of Spain, Zapatero announced that Spain would be willing to reconsider the terms of the Nice Treaty. This move unblocked months of deadlocked negotiations to agree on the European Constitution – a high priority for the new premier who describes it in Jeffersonian terms as “a milestone in the pursuit of peace, liberty, progress and well-being.” El Pais commented approvingly, “No less drastic (than troop withdrawal) is the fulfilment of the other half of his

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28 Gonzalez had fewer opportunities than Aznar to manoeuvre internationally and promote Spanish interests abroad solely because he ruled during Spain’s early years as an EC member state and therefore had little clout in EC affairs. Cara Skola, “Spanish Foreign Policy and the Impact of Ideological Change”, December 2005, www.lehigh.edu
30 As part of the “new Europe”, both the UK, led by Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Spain, led by Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar were firmly with the Bush Administration on the perceived danger represented by Iraq, owing to the brutally repressive nature of its regime, its expansionist ambitions and its desire to build Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). When the “fiesta” began to swing at the party’s headquarters in the centre of Madrid, Tony Blair’s advisers in London scrambled desperately to find a direct line number for the new President-elect Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. (The President of the Government of Spain Presidente del Gobierno is the head of government in Spain since Spain is a constitutional monarchy, this post is usually referred to in English as Prime Minister. In Spain, the person in this post is often called Presidente and Spaniards often translate his title in English as President). It was not a number which came easily to hand because it was not one which they were expecting to use. The immediate logistical problem, however, betrayed a far more serious political problem. The election of Zapatero, pro-Europe anti-Bush, presaged a radical change in Spanish foreign policy which would enhance the perception of British isolation in Europe. Ibid. p. 1.
promises [...] that Europe should replace the US in the list of Spanish priorities and return Spain to the heart of the process of EU construction. A country cannot change in two weeks – but its international position can.”³¹ In fact, as the war in Iraq divided Europe on foreign policy at a time when the EU was in a state of virtual paralysis following the rejection of its constitution, Zapatero’s move to resume talks within the EU opened a new opportunity for Spain to assume a significant position within the European club. According to the Parliamentary spokesman on European affairs, Rafael Estrella, the outcome of Aznar’s Atlanticist approach was that “Spain ended up with nothing as we never had any influence over US policy – it was simply a case of following without questions. We also lost all influence with our European partners. It has been a disaster.” Contrary to this view, the Head of European Security Policy at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Julian Lindley, argued that this alliance with the US allowed Spain to demonstrate its close friendship with the world’s only superpower and thus emerge as a co-leader in European affairs.³² In addition, Aznar and the PP publicly framed Spain’s alliance with the United States as both privileged and necessary for Europe as it brought continued cohesion of international affairs. In 2003, Spain’s foreign minister during Aznar’s rule, Ana Palacio, expressed the party’s perceived necessity of this link as it related to international security and defence. She said: “From the beginning, the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has been based on two very clear principles: it should complement NATO, and it must preserve and reinforce the transatlantic link. Spain remains fully committed to cooperation between NATO and the European Union that avoids undesirable competition and unnecessary duplication of efforts. We believe that this partnership is of key importance for the continuing effectiveness of both organizations in crisis

³¹ Ibid. pp. 11-12
management.” The director of Madrid-based foreign affairs think tank FRIDE, Jose Luis Herrero, took a slightly more sympathetic view of Aznar’s motives – if not the outcome: “In some ways Aznar’s approach could be seen as a maturing of Spanish foreign policy. In the 1980s and 1990s there was a bi-partisan consensus that Spain should simply immerse itself in Europe […] with a stable democracy and entrenched institutions Aznar wanted to move on. Unfortunately he chose to do so by tying himself to one of the most right wing administrations in American history engaged in an action which has turned out to be about as popular as Vietnam. Aznar’s motives may have been laudable but he chose the wrong time and the wrong issue to pursue his aim.”

Convincingly, Zapatero’s government was on a mission to redefine Spain’s role within Europe without jeopardizing the existing military balance with the US, while attempting to review the US-Spanish relationship on more favourable terms in the eye of Socialist government in Spain that craved popular support. This policy was set in Spain’s National Report of 2004: “Spain is a strong ally and clearly committed to the Atlantic Alliance, which also maintains a close and consolidated relationship with the US, a relationship that needs to be articulated on loyalty, dialogue, trust and mutual respect.”

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34 Ibid. p. 12-13. Also worth considering the opinion of the new leadership in the PSOE relation to the proposal by the United States intention to place a missile system in Poland and the Czech Republic. This idea has caused "serious doubts" in Government of Spain, because it might affect the case of countries European Union with Russia and Arab countries. Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos, in particular, noted that he "will insist on a detailed discussion of this issue within the EU and NATO to develop a common solutions. The deployment of U.S. missiles in some Eastern European countries can strengthen the arms race and to have negative consequences for international relations, especially with Russia. "The Spanish Government has established a special commission under the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs to study the possible effects of the American initiativity. Characteristically, Russian concerns about U.S. plans to deploy missile defence elements in Poland and Czech Republic fully shared the former prime minister of Spain F. Gonzalez. See “Missile Defense Malfunction: Why the Proposed U.S. Missile Defenses in Europe Will Not Work”, *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol. 22.1, spring 2008.

35 In Spain’s National Report of 2004 Prime Minister Zapatero was also keen to underline to the US the fact that Spain privileges and balances a strong relationship with the United States, based on the Convention for Cooperation on Defence and guided by the objectives and purposes of the Joint Statement of 11 January 2001, with supplements, including political cooperation, scientific, industrial and technology. The Socialist government was thus seeking a more – balanced multi-dimensional relationship
When US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice visited eight European countries at the beginning of February 2005, Spain was not on the list. Rice ignored and snubbed Madrid during her tour of Europe, saying there was no point stopping over in Madrid, as she would not have heard anything that she could not hear in Paris, playing into the long-going French-Spanish rivalry.\(^{36}\) According to Ignacio Cosido, a member of a leading political think tank, the right-wing Strategic Studies Group GEES in Spain, Rice knew that “to agree on something you must do so with France before Spain, while on the contrary, agreement with Madrid means nothing to Paris.”\(^{37}\) It is also worth noting that GEES was of opinion that by 2005 Spain was no longer a country of relevance to the United States.\(^{38}\) The absence of Spain from Rice’s list of European countries visited somehow confirmed Aznar’s view that Spain’s withdrawal from Iraq “led Spain to less prominence in international arena.”\(^{39}\) Evidence to this was Moratinos’ separate trip to Washington in April 2005, aimed at mending bridges between the two countries, that brought about no positive changes in policy or relationship. A minimum number of lawmakers attended the meeting and after three quarters of an hour meeting with Rice, there was not even the release of press statement or an agreement to appear before journalists, which would have been a sign of reconciliation.\(^{40}\) Thus the gesture of Zapatero’s government to send humanitarian aid after Hurricane Katrina to the US in 2005 was not met with much enthusiasm as this sign of Spain’s willingness for

\(^{36}\) “Fragile opportunities are there: Condoleezza Rice has given hope that rifts might be healed ”, 11 February 2005, www.guardian.co.uk


\(^{38}\) “En el tunel del tiempo”, 6 April 2005, www.gees.org/articulo/1266


\(^{40}\) “Zapatero’s Two Faces”, 10 May 2005, www.gees.org/articulo/444

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continued, but balanced, diplomatic co-operation, was not enough to appease its American partner.\textsuperscript{41}

Gerhard Schroeder and Jacques Chirac were undoubtedly relieved by the departure of “the Abominable Doctor No”, as the Financial Times famously dubbed Aznar\textsuperscript{42} and both went out of their way to establish friendly relations with the new Spanish prime minister, who lost no time in visiting Paris and Berlin in April 2004. The three leaders met again in Madrid in September, providing their host with an opportunity to snub US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld by proclaiming that “old Europe is as good as new.” More tellingly, perhaps, Schroeder and Chirac invited Zapatero to join a summit with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin in Paris, in March 2005, as a way of rewarding his determination to place Spain back at the “heart of Europe”, or perhaps to accept Franco-German leadership unquestioningly, depending on one’s interpretation. In the meantime Bush was cordial with Javier Solana, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU. There were rumours in Spain that while Bush was “sipping champagne” with Jacques Chirac and Javier Solana, it would be a long time before he would be “drinking wine” with Zapatero. Yet, the Spanish prime minister defined the status of relations between Washington and Madrid as “normalidad politica.”\textsuperscript{43} Still the question remained as to why Spain did not command more respect on the global stage? Though other factors there were also at play, some left-wing observers said Zapatero led Spain into the geopolitical wilderness largely because of his pathological dislike of American-style capitalism.\textsuperscript{44} Zapatero believed that if he cut

\textsuperscript{41}“What would Zapatero die for?”, 13 September 2005, www.gees.org/articulo/538
\textsuperscript{42}Financial Times, 15 June 2004.
\textsuperscript{44}The confirmation of such view was visible as in 2006 he rejected the idea that Spain should join the G-8 because of his ideological opposition to neo-liberalism, in “Zapatero en 2006 ‘No pediremos entrar en el G-8. Hay que mirar mas alla”, Libertad Digital Economica, 21 October 2008, www.libertaddigital.com; Furthermore even in 2008, Zapatero proclaimed that the world crisis...
Spain’s ties with America, Schroeder and Chirac would embrace Spain as an equal member of an anti-American axis. That did not happen as both Chirac and Schroeder were replaced by pro-Americans, and Zapatero, who in 2004 promised to bring Spain “back to Europe”, was left arguably the most isolated leader in Europe. Moreover, he was the only leader in Europe who was not on speaking terms with the US. Indeed the partnership with Schroeder and Chirac was short-lived as Angela Merkel’s victory in the September 2005 elections and that of Nicholas Sarkozy in May 2007 deprived Zapatero of his closest allies in Europe, and his public support for Schroeder and Segolene Royal did not immediately endear him to their successors. These changes within government in Europe had an impact on the Spanish international, regional and domestic environment, but most importantly it had an impact on US-Spanish relations: Zapatero pushed away an important non – EU friend, the United States, whose political support might have given Spain future leverage it might have needed to protect and even to enhance its power within the EU in situations which required standing up to “Old Europe.” Instead, according to the PP, Zapatero had “alienated the US, one of Spain’s leading economic trading partners”, and had started down the path of “decreasing his country’s influence in the European Union.” In essence, the departure

demonstrated that “neo-liberal” ideology does not serve “either economically or socially.” In his speech he has assured Spanish voters that he will be going to Washington to enact “changes in the order of global priorities”, to eradicate “poverty and hunger”, so that “ peace and security, the fight against the violent” are the “fruit of a large multilateral concert in which the UN will have a central role.” Its “time to change, to take sides with the planet”, and “respect nature”, he said. See Alberto Mendoza, “Zapatero denounces the effects of capitalism without borders from the US”, 26 June 2008, www.elconfidential.com


of Schroeder and Chirac pointed to the failure of Zapatero’s government hope that their union would provide Spain with the stability and longevity it required to re-establish its position within Europe, in consequence showing it strategic importance to the US as the respected member of the “Old Europe.”

7.4 An Attempt to Maintain Better Relations

With the rise of new German and French political leaders with Conservative beliefs in those two influential European countries, criticism of American Iraq policy began to weaken. With that there arose the possibility of greater cooperation and harmony between the US and EU on the occupation of Iraq, and thus a place for Spain to show its commitment to the US in supporting the establishment of a democratic, unified and peaceful Iraq. Hence, during a cordial meeting between US and Spanish ministers of defence in February 2005, and shortly before the start of the informal gathering of ministers in Nice, Donald Rumsfeld and Jose Bono discussed Iraq, Afghanistan, NATO's future and their joint efforts against terrorism. Both parties also agreed to strengthen bilateral relations within the framework of the Bilateral High Level Defence meetings. This announcement of Bono’s invitation to Washington revived the work of this committee, established in 2000, chaired by chiefs of staff of the two countries, but which until then, and had never met at this highest level. The objective of this committee was to encourage political consultations in the defence field and encourage was dominated by a very strong direct investment presence from the US, although two-way trade remained a relatively minor percentage of each country exports and imports in the period 2004-2009. The American Chamber of Commerce estimated that about 5 percent of Spain’s annual GDP came from the US investment, in “Cable de E.E.U.U. que prepapa la visita de Condoleezza Rice a Madrid”, 25 May 2007, Embassy of the US in Madrid, published by El Pais in July 2008.

48 According to Aznar’s personal adviser, Rafael Bardaji and for Florentino Portero, “For Zapatero, pulling Spain out of its former alliances was not compensated by its entry into any other alliance, either new or old. The Europe to which he so fervently wished to return soon left him in the lurch. For this reason, and because of his childish left-wing tendencies, Zapatero’s policy led Spain to seek alliances with any anti-American leader who crossed his path.” See Rafael L. Bardaji and Florentino Portero, “Zapatero’s Foreign Policy in the Year 2006: Annus Ridiculibilis”, 26 December 2006, www.gees.org
the development of discussing issues set out in bilateral agreements.\textsuperscript{49} “We have set the foundation for relations in defence equipment that are unbeatable,” Bono stressed after meeting with Rumsfeld. US defence secretary also welcomed the fact that Spain offered to train Iraqi military personnel in the Academy of Engineers in Hoyo de Manzanares (Madrid) and contribute to a NATO trust fund to support Iraqi security forces.\textsuperscript{50} Notably, when asked about the difference between the two countries over the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq in April 2004, Secretary Rumsfeld said, "We obviously feel bad, but go ahead and take it", implying that the US Administration had not forgiven Zapatero for not acting as a responsible NATO ally. Yet, this issue, Bono said on his part, was not even addressed in the fifty-minute reunion that the two ministerial delegations had, or in subsequent conversations.\textsuperscript{51} Bono’s view that the Iraq withdrawal did not damage cordial military cooperation between the two countries was confirmed in May 2005 with the participation of Spanish target frigate in training with the US army in Norfolk, USA.\textsuperscript{52}

By the end of 2006 within the Bush Administration itself, the role of neo-conservative ideas had begun to diminish and non-military cooperation for Spain in Iraq seemed more plausible. The architect of “new” and “old” Europe, Donald Rumsfeld was succeeded by Robert Gates as defence secretary in December 2006. The same month a bi-partisan Congressional Iraq Study Group presented a comprehensive report, which included several recommendations for the Bush Administration to change its policy on Iraq, such as making US support to the Iraqi government conditional upon its ability to

\textsuperscript{49} Rosa Luiz, “Nuevo Impulso para la OTAN”, \textit{Revista Española de Defensa}, a 18 n 204, February 2005, pp. 48-51.
fight sectarianism, improve security, governance and unify Iraq; outlining a phased withdrawal of US troops from Iraq from early 2008; initiating a broad, intense and vigorous regional dialogue, especially reaching out to Syria and Iran; and linking peace and reforms in the Middle East with a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict rather than with “victory” in Iraq. Even though the Bush Administration opted for a different course, that of greater military involvement, which eventually succeeded in considerably reducing the insurgency in Iraq, the US and the EU had begun to cooperate more actively over Iraq. Accordingly a Spanish gesture of humanitarian aid to Iraq was much welcomed by the Bush Administration as Spain contributed US$22 million to the Basra Children’s hospital and offered a further US$28 million in new money during Iraq Compact meeting in spring 2007.

7.5 Greater Mediterranean and Middle East Initiative

While Spanish influence in Washington was diminished as a result of troop withdrawal, there was a corresponding improvement in the perception of Spain in many parts of the Arab world. Under the leadership of Zapatero, Spain was among the major driving forces of the EU’s return to old-fashioned, realist security approaches and the proliferation of narrowly defensive and exclusionary policies in the Mediterranean. This was underlined in Spain’s National report of 2004 were Zapatero formulated his governments’ priorities: “The Mediterranean is of particular interest to Spain. In defence and safety matters, the initiative of dialogue and advancement of bilateral

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cooperation with countries of the region are indispensable. Multilaterally we also support the initiatives of the European Union, the Atlantic Alliance and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to the Mediterranean. The security of Spain is also linked to the security of the Mediterranean area, and for this reason it is crucial to have the Mediterranean become an area of peace, stability and shared prosperity.”

Spain depended more heavily than other EU member states on Algerian (and to a lesser degree, Libyan) gas imports. Roughly one-third of Spanish energy supplies came from the Middle East and North Africa. It traditionally enjoyed warm relations with key sections of the Arab world. The Socialist administration under Felipe González was able to introduce a number of key initiatives during the late 1980’s and early 1990s (the Barcelona Process, the Madrid peace conference and the 5+5 dialogue) and Zapatero was keen to follow the path of such initiatives. By hosting the 1991 peace conference in Madrid, Spain showed its readiness to contribute to the peaceful resolution of a conflict that had always threatened to turn into a destabilising factor in the wider region. During eight years of PP Conservative government, Aznar’s team tried to build a more impartial image in the eyes of Israelis, in order to increase Spain’s chances as a possible mediator and, eventually, as a suitable host for a second peace conference involving the whole region. Despite its best efforts, the policy followed by PP towards the Arab-Israeli conflict backlashed towards the end of Aznar’s second government due to its clear-cut support of the US offensive against Iraq. This decision, according to the PSOE, was detrimental to Spain’s image in the region. The Socialist

57 Relations with Algeria were dominated by economic concerns, notably energy, and experienced a number of tensions due to Madrid’s position of so-called ‘active neutrality’ in the Western Sahara conflict, in Kristine Krausch, “Spain’s Diminished Policy In the Mediterranean”, FRIDE, 17 January 2010 p. 1-2.
58 Ibid.
59 The Madrid conference of 1991-co-sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union - was a success in opening the path toward the Oslo Accords (in which the PLO would acknowledge the state of Israel and pledge to reject violence, and Israel would recognize the (unelected) PLO as the official Palestinian authority, allowing Yasser Arafat to return to the West Bank). But without Israeli goodwill or pressure from Washington, the same impact seemed unlikely during Zapatero’s era.
Party’s electoral programme thus placed great emphasis on overcoming the negative effects of the Iraq war. The PP was accused by PSOE of having ruined Spain’s credibility in the region. The Socialists were therefore committed to supporting the Road Map for Middle East Peace adopted by the Quartet, asking for greater EU engagement in the resolution of the conflict and encouraging initiatives such as the Geneva accords.60 Zapatero felt strongly that the time had come for the EU to take the initiative in search for a solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The appointment of the former EU Special Envoy to the Middle East, Miguel Angel Moratinos, as foreign minister was a clear sign of the centrality afforded to the Arab-Israeli conflict by the Socialist government.61

Indeed, from day one Zapatero and Moratinos showed great interest in acting as a bridge for dialogue between the parties in the Arab-Israeli conflict, while attempting to become a bridge to the US in its efforts to lead way to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Against this background, Foreign Minister Moratinos travelled to the Middle East in April 2006 as part of the European initiative with the goal of reaching an agreement on new economic channels for the Palestinian presidency that could exclude Hamas. This dramatic situation was compounded by the repercussions of the bombardments in Lebanon and Hamas’ incapacity to meet the conditions set out by the international community, that included its renunciation of the use of violence, the recognition of the Israeli State and the acceptance of previously reached agreements

61 Ibid.
between Palestinians and Israelis.\(^{62}\) As a result the European and Spanish diplomatic offensives moved to an emphasis on the need to create a national unity government in the Palestinian Territories.\(^{63}\) These demands, with the support of Saudi Arabia, came to fruition, and in doing so, to a certain extent, reinforced Mahmoud Abbas’ position. Most European governments believed that the US was too close to Israel, to the detriment of any effort to end the conflict. The EU believed that the US had lost its influence in the region due to the war in Iraq and its support for Israel, which had complicated Washington’s capacity to serve as an interlocutor with Arab governments.\(^{64}\) Divisions between the European allies and the US emerged when President Chirac and other European leaders who repeatedly said that “there is no military solution” to problem on Israel’s borders, while the Bush Administration has endorsed military action until there was a “sustainable” political agreement.\(^{65}\) Together with France and Italy, Spain was at the forefront of those countries arguing in favour of an ample international deployment to reinforce the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on the ground and to support the Lebanese government.\(^{66}\) Moratinos was able to use his political experience in the region to develop his preferred option of dialogue with all actors,

\(^{62}\) Jeremy M. Sharp, “Lebanon; The Israel-Hamas-Hezbollah Conflict”, CRC Report for Congress, 14 August 2006, http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/71845.pdf; Alvarez-Ossorio Alvareno, Ignacio, “España ante el gobierno de Hamas” in Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacional, no. 79-80, 2007, pp. 188-206.; Zapatero’s government increasingly became more committed to Spain’s participation in that mission, as illustrated by the presence of up to 1,100 soldiers on the ground. This deployment of Spanish troops created a controversy within Spain between the government and the opposition, particularly following the death of six Spanish soldiers in June 2007. The PP used this incident to compare Spain’s role in Lebanon with the Iraq war. These tensions proved once more the existence of a split in the domestic consensus on issues of defence policy, in Maria A. Sabiote and Eduard Soler i Lecha, “Spain and the Arab-Israeli conflict: a demand for a greater European role”, Monograph of the Observatory of European Foreign Policy, no. 15, 2008 Bellaterra (Barcelona): Institute Universitari d’estudis Europeus, www.iuee.eeu

\(^{63}\) “Comparecencia del Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores para Informar sobre la Posición Española en Relación con la Crisis del Proceso de Paz en Oriente Medio. A Petición Propia”, Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados, 8th Term, no. 634, 19 June 2006, p. 4.


including Hezbollah, an approach for which he was in constant disagreement with the PP and the US.

Like other European nations, Zapatero publically claimed that unlike Aznar, he believed that military action was wrong, especially when undertaken by Israel or the US, without the UN backing, which is why the Socialist government helped organise protests throughout Spain during the second Lebanon War of summer 2006.\(^67\) The strategy followed by Zapatero towards this was “a policy of public positioning.”\(^68\) That policy consisted of the condemnation of Hezbollah’s actions and attacks, while protests “seeking peace in the Middle East”, were meant to pressure Israel to end its “un-proportional” military operations. According to the protest organisers, “acts of war that deny the legitimate aspirations and rights of the populations that aspire to live in peace and with dignity cannot be tolerated.”\(^69\) In the eyes of Bush Administration, the view expressed by Zapatero’s supporters was contradictory to Spain’s desire to serve as a mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict and became a source of discontent between the two governments. This transatlantic rift between the Bush and Zapatero governments in relation to Israel was exacerbated further by the interlocking nature of the domestic political battle between the PP and the PSOE. According to Aznar’s personal adviser Rafael Bardaji and analyst Florentino Portero, of GEES in Madrid, in the Middle East crisis the Zapatero government adopted an exceptionally heterodox position compared to the standard European stance, it was playing a double game where Spanish government chose to use the framework of the EU to face international challenges,


while also leveraging itself as a self-styled mediator between the US and the Middle East. In the meantime it was not willing to recognise American supremacy and its role in resolving the conflict. Bardaji and Florentino believed that behind the attempt to portray itself as a loyal ally of the US, Zapatero supported full recognition of Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as acceptance of the Iranian nuclear programme, all evidenced by Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos’s efforts at the beginning of 2006 to remove Hamas from the EU’s terrorist list. The Zapatero government’s defence of Hezbollah during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in summer 2006 ended any chance for a cordial Spanish relationship with the Israeli government. In fact Zapatero’s diplomatic misconduct in the Middle East Peace process, created a diplomatic incident when he was photographed wearing a Palestinian headscarf during student socialist meeting in Alicante in mid July 2006. The picture of Zapatero wearing kefiya, put on him by a student, was much attacked by the opposition Conservative Popular Party. However senior Socialist party figures dismissed this criticism, saying it was a gesture of friendship towards the students at the meeting. In his comments during the meeting, Zapatero condemned the “abuse of force” in Lebanon, making an implicit attack on Israel. And, in an illusion to the US, Zapatero criticised Washington’s tacit approval of Israel’s war against Lebanon, saying “the silences of today could become the regrets of tomorrow.” As a result, Zapatero was heavily criticised by the

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70 Efraim Halevy, “How the European Union’s Attitude Toward Israel Evolved”, Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, May 2007, www.jcpa.org; Bardaji argued that leftist bias of anti-Israelism was derived in Spain form their anti-Americanism as they saw Israel as “an extension of the United States” and presented both as “monsters.” Bardaji further observed that a strange paradox has developed in Spain with the arrival of Zapatero, “the Socialist circles deny the existence of a global jihadist movement.” Although the perpetrators of 9/11 and M-11 were living in Spain, they had links to Syrians, Iraqis and others. The records of their phone calls in the hours before the attacks indicated they were calling imams and other Muslims in London, Casablanca, and Paris. See Interview with Rafael Bardaji by Manfred Gerstenfelf, “European –Israeli Relations Between Confusion and Change?,” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, September 2006, www.jcpa.org
Israeli Ambassador to Spain, Victor Harel, who stressed that relations between both countries “were not at their best moment” owing to the prime minister’s “tough and unjust” attack on his country. Consequently, those comments backfired on Spain’s desire to show itself as a potential mediator.

In addition, without coordination with the US, Zapatero’s government sent numerous technical, commercial and political visitors to deepen bilateral relations with Syria. The possible Syrian involvement in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Al-Hariri in February 2005 had strained relations between Washington and the Syrian regime. Thus, even though Spain had 1110 troops deployed along the Lebanon-Syria-Israel border as part of the UNIFIL, the US called for Spain’s official visits to be discouraged. This was also due to Moratinos’s discrete but official visit to Damascus, the capital were allegedly the orders to kill the Lebanon’s Prime Minister Hariri came from. In fact, the stopover in Damascus by Moratinos on 7 March 2006, where he met with Syrian Foreign Minister, Walid Muallem, provoked anger in the US. Following this diplomatic incident, Moratinos offered his good offices to Washington to convey any message to the Syrian government, but US authorities flatly rejected any attempt at

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75 The then Foreign Minister Moratinos had said on 2 March 2006 at the US Embassy of his intention to travel to Syria to get “Syria to Iran’s orbit”, but in any case would make the trip before April 2006. Moratinos wished to have the approval of his trip by the US, but had not received approval by the scheduled day of travel, when his plane made a stopover in Damascus back from a trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan, causing a diplomatic incident with the US. The incident also involved France, because Moratinos had assured the US embassy that he had informed the French about the idea of travelling to Damascus and they had expressed no objections. However, the US tried to verify this though its embassy in Paris, and from the French government denied Moratinos. As a result of diplomatic row, the French embassy in Madrid sent a message of reproach to the Foreign Ministry of Spain. A few days later, on 31 March 2006, the US Embassy in Madrid reported in a telegram that Moratinos suspended his trip to Syria for April as a “goodwill gesture” after the incident on March 7. Ambassador Aguirre chided Moratinos on technical scale noting that under circumstances that “could lead Spain again to the point of departure two years ago”, referring to the most tense bilateral relations, following the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq. Juan Carlos Blanco, “Moratinos interview with his Syrian counterpart in Damascus angers the US”, El País, 2 February 2011.
diplomatic mediation by Spain. Finally, while the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad promised to obliterate Israel and promote a world without the US, Moratinos and Kofi Annan announced the details of their forthcoming visit to Tehran. Indeed, the US discontent with the Zapatero government’s policy towards the region was underlined in the letter from the US Ambassador to Spain, Eduarde Aguirre, addressed to Condoleezza Rice, ahead of her visit to Spain in May 2007: “The Zapatero government has not hesitated on occasion to pursue an agenda counter to our own when deemed in the Socialist party, domestic political interest.” Ambassador Aguerre also stressed that his team’s challenge has been to channel the efforts of “an unpredictable” Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos “who portrays himself as a self-styled bridge between the US and difficult world players such as – Syria, Cuba, Iran and some Palestinian elements” and this had “lent an erratic zigzag quality to the bilateral relationship.”

7.6 The Drive for Regional Leadership

Considering the Bush Administration’s general discontent with Moratinos’s initiatives in the Middle East, Zapatero’s announcement of his five-point plan during a summit meeting with French President Jacques Chirac in mid-November 2006 surprised almost everyone. According to his proposals, Israelis and Palestinians would agree to a ceasefire, followed by an exchange of prisoners-including an Israeli soldier captured in Gaza during summer 2005, Gilad Shalit, and the Palestinian parliamentarians that were

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76 Ibid.
79 Franco-Italian-Spanish Middle East Peace Plan announced on 16 November 2006, proposed by Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero during talks with French President Jacques Chirac. Later on, the plan was introduced to Romano Prodi, Italy’s Prime Minister who gave full support to the plan. This peace move came after Israel involved the Gaza strip in Operation Autumn Clouds.

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held by Israel. Palestinians would create a national unity government, international peacekeepers would be deployed to oversee the ceasefire, and Spain would host an international peace conference in Madrid to define a way forward for the Middle East. Yet the Spanish prime minister’s set of proposals to break the seemingly interminable impasse in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems doomed to failure. First, it appeared to be a difficult moment for any real progress to be made, with Israel Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s government relatively weak at home. The second problem, however, was one of Madrid’s own making, namely the botched manner in which the peace plan was sprung upon a divided international community. The proposals came with the backing of France and Italy - the latter repositioned itself as a member of "old Europe" under the leadership of its Socialist Prime Minister, Romano Prodi. However neither Israelis nor Palestinians, or Washington, were consulted before the five-point plan was made public. This naturally displeased Prime Minister Olmert, who showed his discontent to Spain's Foreign Minister Moratinos saying that “he obviously knew less about the region than he might like to think.” The Bush Administration felt that Zapatero’s Middle-East plan would fail without the US influence and Israel’s good will. The days following the announcement of five point-plan Moratinos was thus preoccupied with mending fences with the US: "I knew at the beginning there would be a negative reaction," he said. Indeed, the Bush Administration was hardly inclined to boost the international prestige of Zapatero since his withdrawal of the Spanish troops from Iraq (and his advice for other nations to follow suit), and showed itself extremely cool over the Spanish proposals. The United Kingdom did not give the plan full backing, and Germany could not be relied upon to offer support. The pro-Zapatero El Pais newspaper argued that the time had come for the EU "to take the initiative" in the search for a solution to the

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conflict. However, this was not brought any closer by the Spanish leader's announcement of his five-point plan. Indeed, Washington's response highlighted the fact that it hadn't yet seen a new Middle East peace proposal from the EU.\textsuperscript{82}

The fact that neither the EU nor Spain lifted its sanctions against the Palestinian government, contributed months after, to the intra-Palestinian struggles of spring 2007 and the collapse of the government of national unity. Unintentionally they became accomplices in the fragmentation of the Palestinian Territories into two distinct political entities, Gaza under Hamas control and the West Bank under Fatah control.\textsuperscript{83} In the end it was the US, and not the EU, that organised that new peace conference. It took place in Annapolis in November 2007 and was an attempt by the Bush Administration to achieve some positive results for its Middle East policy that had up until then produced relatively little. Annapolis represented, on the one hand, the re-establishment of direct dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, and on the other, the involvement of Arab countries, including Syria. The success of the Annapolis conference in attaining its goals remains questionable. It marginalised two principal actors, Hamas and Iran, in the negotiation of a durable peace in the region. Moreover, the dominant role of the US was, from the Spanish perspective, a setback in the commitment to make the EU a more relevant political actor in the region. Although the EU was invited to participate, with the presence of the European Commission, the Presidency and the CFSP High Representative, their political role in the conference was secondary to that of the US. As with some other European countries, Spain was directly invited to attend by the US, which was of great significance given the deterioration in relations between Madrid and

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Maria A. Sabiote and Eduard Soler i Lecha, “Spain and the Arab-Israeli conflict: a demand for a greater European role”, Monograph of the Observatory of European Foreign Policy, no. 15, 2008, Bellaterra (Barcelona): Institute Universitari d’estudis Europeus, www.iuee.eeu
Washington.\textsuperscript{84} Precisely in that framework, and through bilateral contacts at various levels, Spain tried to ensure the participation of Syria in this conference, as another attempt to suggest itself to the US in a mediator’s role.\textsuperscript{85} As a preliminary step, in October 2006 Spain hosted the Mediterranean Forum (Foromed) that culminated in a declaration that, among other things, requested the organisation of an international peace conference.

7. 7 Alliance of Civilizations Initiative

Aside from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the argument that Aznar’s relationship with the Bush Administration had jeopardised Spain’s standing in regions of the world where it had hitherto enjoyed a degree of influence and autonomy was used to considerable political effect by his Socialist critics while in opposition. The natural corollary to this was that once this unseemly alliance was terminated there would soon be ample evidence of the benefits of having reversed this misguided policy. With the personal relationship between Bush and Zapatero continued to be strained, the Spanish prime minister believed that cooperation with the Arab and Muslim World represented Spain


\textsuperscript{85} Maria A. Sabiote and Eduard Soler i Lecha,” \textit{Spain and the Arab-Israeli conflict: a demand for a greater European role"}, Monograph of the Observatory of European Foreign Policy, no. 15, 2008 Bellaterra (Barcelona): Institute Universitari d’estudis Europeaus, www.iuee.eeu, p. 4-5. In regards to its Mediterranean policy, Spain had tendency to brand initiatives with a Spanish label. In countless Spanish policy documents and top diplomat’s statements, the emphasis on Spanish protagonism in the Mediterranean often appeared to prevail over serious reflections on finding sustainable solutions to the region’s problems. Some ascribed the Spanish urge to position itself thus to an abiding inferiority complex relative to France. Others ascribed it to the Zapatero government’s need to produce a meaningful foreign policy legacy by the end of its second term. See: Kristine Krausch, “\textit{Spain’s Diminished Policy In the Mediterranean}”, FRIDE, 17 January 2010 p. 1.

By summer 2008 the Middle East Peace process initiatives of Spain and the US were going in parallel with a common aim to achieve a resolution to the ongoing conflict in Lebanon. For example see: “\textit{Zapatero in Beirut, Bush set for Mideast Tour}”, 18 July 2008, www.shiaebooks.com However, Moratinos attempts to play a mediator role to the US in the Middle East were rejected: for instance on 23 October 2008. Moratinos insisted on another meeting at the US Embassy in Madrid in the defence of its policy toward Syria despite US misgivings: “I risk with Syria, but I know their leaders and the country’s problems. Syria wants to be part of the West than being aligned with Iran”, argued Moratinos, in Juan Carlos Blanco, “\textit{Moratinos interview with his Syrian counterpart in Damascus angers the US}”, \textit{El Pais}, 2 February 2011.
with the most viable opportunity to realize its objective of improving its position abroad. Back in 2001 Zapatero strongly believed that as the antidote to the US hegemony, Spain possessed “a unique opportunity to strengthen the UN and European integration.” Ultimately, this was probably the reasoning that best explained Zapatero’s decision to commit himself personally to the launching of an “Alliance of Civilizations” in a speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2004. The fundamental divide between Madrid and Washington was thus laid bare following this major international policy initiative that was co-sponsored by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and commissioned by outgoing UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The document was a reply to the notion of a "clash of civilizations" between the Christian West and the Islamic world. It offered a series of measures in the cultural, educational and media-related fields to foster greater intercultural understanding between the West and the Arab world. The Spanish prime minister called on EU leaders to support his initiative: “Spanish diplomacy has advanced over recent months with countries of the Mediterranean and the Arabic States. However, as acknowledged by Paris, the power of mediation to the Arabic world by Spain may have deteriorated over the past eight years. Much has been lost and Spain can restore at recoverable costs, but not with the same efficiency as ten years ago.” According to Charles Powell, “against all odds, Zapatero, was probably Spain’s most parochial prime minister since Adolfo Suarez, who had succeeded in launching a major international initiative, whose future success or failure would largely depend on others.” Undeniably, Zapatero’s

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89 “El mundo segun”, Cambio 16, 4 October 2004, N. 1.713, pp. 32-24, p. 34.
Alliance of Civilisations (AoC) initiative was supported by a wide range of governments, but remained low profile with few clear results.

The US remained in doubt regarding the extent the AoC’s aim of using intercultural dialogue to prevent terrorism could be achieved through an initiative that mainly reinforced ties between authoritarian governments whose very actions were among the main causes of radicalisation. Thus what appeared to have been one of the Alliance’s implicit purposes – positioning Zapatero on the international map, largely remained unfulfilled, while it exacerbated tensions with Washington.\(^1\) The plan was interpreted by the US as a denunciation of the way it waged its "War on Terror." Without naming names, it pointed to a "growing perception that universal principle of human rights and democratic governance were only vigorously defended in those cases where they are viewed by some states to be in their own interests." The document went on to argue that the impression of American double standards and the failure to link Iraq to terrorism had led to "a perception among Muslim societies of unjust aggression stemming from the West."\(^2\) The report, released in Istanbul in November 2006, led to the appointment of former Portuguese president Jorge Sampaio as the UN Secretary General’s High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, and to the celebration of its first forum in Madrid in January 2008. Foreign Minister Moratinos argued that the endorsement of the AoC by many governments was in itself an indicator of its success. However, Defence Minister Bono provided a reminder of the tensions that were likely to get in the way of Zapatero’s initiative without approval from the US. This was highlighted by the fact that only five heads of state showed up to participate in the First Alliance of

Civilization Forum of January 2008. Thereafter, the Alliance (which by that stage enjoyed the support of more than 80 states and international organisations, and a budget of €350 million) was seeking to develop specific programmes in four areas, namely education, youth, migration and the media, but without clear US support, Zapatero’s project was always in doubt.

7.8 A Hiatus in Democratization?

It is worth mentioning that in Spain’s foreign policy (and in that of many other European states who supported AoC initiative), the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was a source of contradiction between the ethical-value factor and the defence of Spain’s national interests. One example of this was the sale of military and police equipment to Israel during the first quarter of 2008 (six months before what was called the “Gaza War”), to the value of €1,551,933, 94% of which was destined for Israeli military forces. And this was not long after Zapatero claimed that Israeli action in the Middle East was “not going to bring anything more than an intensification of the conflict.” This was confirmed by Rafael Bardaji’s observation that the Socialist Party’s positions on Israel “were very heterogeneous; it would be mistaken to claim that the party had a clear position on the Middle East conflict.” Crucially, Spanish policy in the region suggested that the Spanish government lacked a coherent, sustainable long-term vision for the Mediterranean. Due to closer political and economic ties and differing foreign policy traditions, the southern European EU member states pursued a more

unadulterated interest-based policy in the Mediterranean than northern EU member states. In regards to its policy towards the Mediterranean and Middle East, the Europeans were seeking to serve as a balancing factor between the Arabs and Israel, in part due to significant Muslim populations in many European states. Europe, given its geographical proximity to North Africa and the Middle East, has always been more interested in preserving regional stability and preventing, among other things, large inflows of migrants or involvement in civil wars and interstate conflict. According to Wittes and Youngs, “the EU and its member states have been more prepared to seek multilateral and comprehensive arrangements with all or almost all regional players, and they have been prepared to offer more financial support than the US for the purpose of economic and political transformation in the region.”

This was the reason behind Spain’s increased subsidies to the region, and to the Western Sahara in particular, where, according to Ruiz Miguel, Spain was still under an obligation to observe, respect and promote the right to self-determination of the people of the territory and to maintain the separate and distinct character of the latter with a view to avoiding any obstacle to its future self-determination. In this regard, Spain was pleased with the cooperation with the US by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) resolution calling for direct talks between Morocco and the Polisario. As Spain’s changing population and proximity to North Africa made it a prime target of Islamic extremism regardless of its relationship with the US, Zapatero who had

difficulty balancing the privileged relations with Morocco and Algeria, recognised the need for US support as a mediator in the on-going search for conflict resolution among all parties involved. Thus Spain’s double standard position in regards to Israel, where it wanted to balance its security and economic needs, while promoting democracy in the Middle East, created a situation where the US Administration had sought to find ways to keep the Spanish government and Foreign Minister Moratinos, in particular, in contact with senior US government officials on a range of issues as a means to help channel his efforts in the Middle East towards common policy orientation with the US.\textsuperscript{100}

The US and the EU perceived democratization in the Middle East as crucial for the West’s security against terrorism. Yet, some European governments believed that the US approach to terrorism has become too ideological and impractical to yield a solution. These Europeans, including Zapatero’s Administration, condemned Hezbollah and Hamas as “extremists”, but they separated such regional groups as al-Qaeda, which in contrast, in their view, was not interested in a political settlement of issues. According to the CRC Report prepared for the US Congress on the conflict in Lebanon in 2006, those Europeans believed that the Bush Administration’s proclaimed “War on Terror” put all three groups into the same box, and saw their military defeat or annihilation as a prerequisite for Israeli security.\textsuperscript{101} Yet, broadly speaking, the US and European visions for political reform in the Middle East were similar, reflecting the post 9/11 desire of the West to democratize the region so as to stop the authoritarianism that they perceived as a major issue of religious-inspired militancy.


The Bush Administration believed that the EU, while adhering to its formal commitment to promote democracy, had begun to show caution where European pressure had been exerted on Arab governments, but not directly with regard to democracy. Punitive measures against Libya, Iran and Syria, for example were applied only in relation to terrorism and WMD development. In this regard, Spanish cooperation with Iran was an example of such policy orientation, which angered the US, who strongly believed that sanctions could halt Iran’s domestic nuclear programme. As a part of the EU, Spain supported all the UN sanctions on Iran’s nuclear programme, but was less willing to impose further sanctions by the EU. Instead, Zapatero’s government supported more diplomatic engagement with the Islamic Republic and publicly supported Iran’s right to a peaceful nuclear programme under the protection of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. When in 2008 Britain and France joined the US in demanding immediate results and suggesting that the matters be sent to the UN Security Council, the Spanish government instead supported diplomatic negotiations through the IAEA. Hence, when Iran’s Ambassador to Madrid, Davoud

102 Tamara Wittes & Richard Youngs, “The European Union, the Unites States and Middle Eastern Democracy”, paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention San Francisco, California, March 2008, www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/5/2/2/5/pages25223/p252253-1.php. Unlike most of his European homologues, Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos attended Colonel Gaddafi’s 2009 military parade in Libya to celebrate the dictator’s 40 years in power. The declared objective in Spain’s General Human Rights Plan was that ‘The promotion of human rights across the world is a priority objective of the Government that transcends all governmental actions’. According to Kristine Krausch, it remained an empty rhetoric in the Mediterranean as this was one of the main sources of criticism from other EU member states against the Zapatero government, and a major dent in its international “progressive” reputation. Nevertheless it served well Spain’s economic reality needs and its cordial relations with Libya were not directed against the US policy in the region. See Kristine Krausch, “Spain’s Diminished Policy In the Mediterranean”, FRIDE, 17 January 2010 p. 1-2.


104 Becky Halloran, “Transatlantic Perspectives :Zapatero’s Alliance of Civilizations’ includes Iran: Spain will Continue to Support Diplomacy”, autumn 2006, www.unc.edu/dept/tam/journal06/fall06halloran.htm; On 20 September 2007, an Iranian member of Parliament, Hossein Afarideh, told IRNA that Spanish companies were ready to cooperate with Iran to develop its civilian nuclear program and energy generation within the framework of International Atomic Energy Agency, regulations; such cooperation would entail technical support and personnel training for a peaceful nuclear program. In January 2008, Figa Lopez, Spain’s Deputy Foreign Minister, referred to
Salehi, in September 2008, presented an outline of Iran’s package of proposals to Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos, the former confirmed that the “Iran-Spain relations are at their best level ever.” “We have no problems with the country,” Moratinos said, adding that Madrid’s stance on Iran, and specifically on its nuclear programme, “have generally been acceptable.”

This was due to the fact that oil and gas trade accounted for much of the economic cooperation between Spain and Iran, while Spain remained among the main buyers of Iranian crude oil. Yet US concerns over the Iranian nuclear programme forced a number of Spanish companies to withdraw from its contracts with Iranian companies. In May 2008 Royal Dutch Shell and Spain’s Repsol YPF SA, pulled out of one of Iran’s biggest gas projects (US$10 billion natural gas project) amid geopolitical uncertainty, pressure from the US and rising costs. Conclusively, although Spanish diplomacy had “Europeanised” significantly in both structure and state of mind during the Aznar era, out-dated concepts such as the narrow-minded focus on Spanish national interests suggested that Spanish foreign policy under Zapatero was still not perceived as fully “European” by its partners. For instance, Spain under the leadership of Zapatero had become one of the most ardent defenders of Turkey's accession to the EU in Europe. This set Madrid in collision course with Sarkozy and Merkel. There was a large potential for contradiction between Spain's support for Turkish membership and the strategic partnership between Zapatero-Erdogan on the Alliance of Civilizations, which highlighted Turkey's differences with Europe rather

Tehran-Madrid cooperation as “positive”, especially in economic relations. She also said that Spain’s private sector hoped to make further investment in Iran. See “Iran. Spain Discuss Mutual Cooperation, Ties”, IRNA, 23 January 2008; Nuclear power plants accounted for 20 percent of Spain’s electrical needs, in “Iran, Spain To Expand Cooperation On Energy Sector”, IRNA, 20 September 2008.


Iran’s Oil Minister Seeks Spanish Investment in Energy Sector”, Asia Pulse, 7 July 2008.

“Shell, Repsol seek way out of Iran gas deal; report”, Agence France Presse, 3 May 2008; In December 2010 El Pais newspaper revealed that major Spanish banks and businesses were forced to leave Iran by the former Bush Administration officials, in “US forces Spanish companies cancel contracts with Iran: wikileaks documents reveal”, 13 December 2010, www.hamsayeh.net

than its Europeanism. Yet this Spanish position was not contested by the US Administration as confirmed by Ambassador Aguirre’s correspondence to Condoleezza Rice in May 2007.

In his letter to Condoleezza Rice in May 2007, ahead of her visit to Spain, Ambassador Aguirre underlined the US position towards the Zapatero’s government that was looking for an improvement in the relationship, and stressed that the US would not keep silent when the Zapatero government’s policies ran counter to the commonly shared values between the allies: “After his first volatile year in office, Zapatero has sought to improve the tenor and substance of US-Spanish relations while still maintaining the politically acceptable policy of offering criticism of US policies as part of the role of what he calls a ‘loyal ally’. The Bush Administration believed that Spain needed to act in concert with the EU, NATO and the US on key issues while pointing that there was “too much at stake for Spanish freelancing” as in the Middle East. “The price of leadership and respect, which Zapatero’s Spain seems to desire, is the willingness to devote the resources, assume responsibility, share burdens and act jointly with other powers”, said Ambassador Aguerre. This letter gave a clear view that Bush Administration had a strategically complex ally in the face of Zapatero’s government to work with in comparacnet to pro-Atlantic premiership of Jose Maria Aznar.

112 Ibid.
Chapter 8


8.1 Introduction

Spain’s Socialist Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero might not have been as prominent a leader in world politics as his predecessor, Conservative Popular Party’s Jose Maria Aznar, but he recognised the need for balanced bilateral relations with the US Administration. While the invasion of Iraq was disapproved of by Zapatero and his government, the UN sanctioned war on the Taliban in Afghanistan was more agreeable to the Spanish prime minister.¹ Seen in this light, his policy towards the US may certainly be seen as a continuation of that of Felipe Gonzalez, and it is interesting to note that he never objected to the bilateral Agreement on Defence Cooperation, last updated in 2002 by Aznar, which enabled US forces to make ample use of Spanish military bases throughout the Iraq War and beyond, and which was pointedly described in the 2004 electoral programme as being fully compatible with Spain’s security commitments to both NATO and the EU.² Some critics, however, have claimed that Zapatero’s attitude towards the US was always fundamentally different from that of his Socialist predecessor, in the sense that he was far more hostile to the notion of American leadership per se, and tended to empathise almost instinctively with Washington’s traditional antagonists, most notably in Latin America and the Arab world. As a result, he regarded the “special relationship” avidly sought by Aznar, as a deviation from norms, which had greatly reduced Spain’s autonomy and influence in

² Ibid.
these regions and in Europe as well. By all accounts, Gonzalez probably shared a rather similar worldview in the 1970s, but gradually modified his stance once he came to office, even though it was not always in his best electoral interest to do so. However, it could also be argued that the key variable was that the two Socialist leaders operated in very different international contexts: while the power and influence of the US was almost undisputed in the late Cold War and post-Cold War period most familiar to Gonzalez, his successor came to office in a markedly different, post-9/11, environment, in which doubts concerning the US’s international standing were already commonplace. Like Aznar, who had assumed power, as Spain gained credibility in international affairs, Zapatero assumed power in the wake of a second shift in Spain’s role abroad, which has been marked by the country’s close relationship with the US. Similarly, Zapatero’s election win, like Aznar’s, had coincided with changing Spanish attitudes toward Europe, the US, and Spain’s relationship to both. Despite these similarities, Zapatero’s new policy plan contrasted with Aznar’s and instead corresponded to party lines as defined by Gonzalez’s Socialist rule. Zapatero had the ability to rekindle Socialist ideals while at the same time maintain effective authority abroad — authority that was previously unknown to Gonzalez. In other words, Zapatero was in a position to reprioritize relations with Europe as was characteristic of the PSOE, yet also continue to assert Spanish authority abroad. This ability was most apparent in Spain’s potential to play a major role in international affairs with regard to the future of EU security and defence. Moreover, there was little doubt, for example, that Zapatero succeeded in reversing his predecessor’s infatuation with the Bush Administration, though his later efforts in 2009 to forge a special relationship with that of Barack

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4 Ibid.
Obama, on the strength of personal chemistry and ideological affinity, rather than more permanent shared interests and values, was once again reminiscent of Aznar.6

8.2 Latin America Socialist Policy

Zapatero wanted to play a mediator’s role in US–Latin American relations: “forming a triangle with an enormous force for the future.”7 However, in practice Zapatero’s foreign policy approach towards Latin America conflicted with US interests, causing a rift in bilateral relations.8 Prime Minister Zapatero’s efforts in Latin America made it clear that he was attempting to give Spain a new and more prominent role on the world stage by becoming the only extra-hemispheric leader willing to engage, with Latin America in respect and in its defence on a variety of issues. While Washington’s stance towards the region was generally firm, Madrid under Zapatero, took a much more fraternal approach. Hence, Zapatero’s national interest policy was being slowly replaced by an idealistic concept of “global solidarity” seeing itself as an “equal partner.”9 Through his efforts, Zapatero believed that he created for Spain a diplomatic liaison role of the highest importance in dealing with some of the more troubled countries of the region, while at the same time creating new investment opportunities for countries looking to expand in the globalized economy.10 The ideological component of this social orientation policy towards the region included rapprochement with Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia, whose democratic quality appeared more and more questionable and

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criticized by the international community, and the US in particular. Moreover, in its new policy orientation towards the region over the course of 1990s, Zapatero visibly moved away from a position with majority appeal in the EU. As, Spain devoted almost 44 per cent of its global aid budget to Latin America and the Caribbean, the highest percentage among all EU donors, it occasionally jeopardized Spain’s role as a European point of reference for Latin America. Yet, the US was concerned about Spanish actions that negatively affected US interest, such as Zapatero’s policy of engagement with Venezuela and Cuba. As such, at summit in Venezuela in April 2005 Zapatero confirmed the Spanish desire for alliances with the autocratic leaders of Latin America, notwithstanding US discontent of Spain’s disregard to world’s sole superpower efforts to promote human right, peace and stability in the region. “Europe is the major ally of Latin America, Spain as well as every country, regardless of the circumstances, Zapatero stressed during the summit.”

The formation of the Ibero-American Secretariat General in Madrid in 2005 by Zapatero’s Administration pointed to institutionalization of Ibero-American policy. In the meantime, US policy towards the region continued to act as a conditioning factor that reduced the limits of independent

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11 Spanish Left desire for a more balanced economic and political course of the PSOE government towards the community of the Ibero-American nations in general, and towards autocratic regimes of Hugo Chavez, Fidel Castro and Evo Morales in particular, angered Bush Administration, and consequently strained Spain’s relationship with the US.

12 27 April 2005 Embassy Madrid confidential cable in El Pais: Scene setter for Secretary Rumsfeld’s meeting with Defence Minister Bono, El Pais, 8 December 2010.

13 In just under a year, Zapatero has made four official trips to Latin America between spring 2004 and 2005, and had woven a close relationship with Chavez, Lula and Kitchener, in “Zapatero malabarismos diplomaticos”, Cambio 16, no 1740, 11 April 2005. According to Celestino del Arenal, Aznar’s government previous alignment with the US in Latin America contributed to diminishing the Latin American perception of the sense and usefulness of the Ibero-American summits. Spain’s image and interest in the summits became more identified with those of the US than with those of Spain and Europe. This reduced the value of the multilateral Ibero-American mechanism to which Spain and Portugal had until then contributed their own distinctive features, which had given sense to the Ibero-American summits. See Celestino del Arenal, “La political Española hacia America Latina en 2002”, Anuario Elcano, 2003.

14 The initiative was proposed by Aznar Administration and implemented in 2005 by Zapatero government.
action towards the region for Spain. Zapatero felt Spain was in the position to be a mediator for the EU and the US in policy formation towards the region.15

8.3 Venezuela: The Chavez Arms Deal – a Step too Far?

Diplomatic relations between the US, Spain and Venezuela saw a dramatic change with the arrival of Zapatero and the departure of Aznar from Spain’s leadership. Two thousand and four marked a turning point in this intricate diplomatic triangle. In fact, with Zapatero, the Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez had sought to inaugurate a new era in bilateral relations that had been battered under Aznar: “We feel at home with a friendly government who will have joint work with us”, explained Chavez during his visit to Madrid in November 2004.16 Simultaneously, the US government’s fears for a negative outcome of Chavez’s dictatorial approach in domestic and foreign relations were confirmed when 75 per cent of Venezuelan electoral did not vote because of an opposition boycott, while Chavez's forces won total control of the Parliament in Caracas. The legislature's president then said Chavez would soon amend the Constitution so as to be able to rule until 2030.17 The actual culmination of Zapatero’s rapprochement with Chavez took place, when an arms deal overseen by Spain’s Defence Minister Jose Bono, was sealed in March 2005. This situation was illustrative of the mixed signals Spain now sent to the US in its policy objectives towards the region. Under the accord, which was signed later in November 2005, Spain agreed to sell Venezuela military patrol boats and transport planes worth € 1.7 billion (US$2 billion). President Chavez said at the time that the high speed vessels would be used to step up Venezuelan coastal patrols against the drugs trade, while the 12 EADS CASA

15Kurt Volker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State or European and Eurasian Affairs, Remarks at the CSIS/Real Instituto Elcano Conference on US-Spain Bilateral Relations, Washington D.C., 3 April 2006, www.scoop.co.nz
C-295 tactical military transport aircraft and 2 CASA CN-235 medium range aircraft would be used mainly for humanitarian missions inside and outside the country. US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, however, voiced his concern regarding the sale, “I personally think that Spain is making a mistake, but that’s my personal opinion. And I guess time will tell” he said, and added: “The problem is that if one waits until time tells it can be an unhappy story.” Yet, when Spain’s Foreign Minister Moratinos and the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discussed dialogue between Spain and Venezuela, following the criticism by Rumsfeld, the Secretary of State said that “it is normal to have differences between the two countries.” Accordingly, after completing a trip to Washington DC, Moratinos said that “there was no misunderstanding between the governments of Spain and the US.” Bono was then invited, through a letter signed by his Venezuelan counterpart, to go to Caracas on 27 November 2005 in order to formalize the sales contract for the systems described as “pacifist weapons” by Spanish Prime Minster. Chavez, for his part, described the deal as exemplifying Europe's "dignified attitude" in confronting "the hegemonic and imperialistic ambitions" of the US.

However, on 12 January 2006, when US State department officials informed the Spanish government that it would not give the licenses to the EADS-CASA consortium needed to allow the sale, Spain vowed to press ahead with the deal regardless. The US embassy in Madrid went beyond announcing the veto and roundly rejected the Spanish

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Foreign Ministry’s attempt to argue it was a business decision to protect an American supplier. According to the US Ambassador to Spain, George Argylos, “the veto was political, not commercial.” Instead, the US decision to veto the authorization of the transfer of US-made components as part of the defence items was due to the fact that the sale would help the increasingly "antidemocratic" government of Chavez and would destabilize the region, the American embassy announced shortly after the veto. The US government was suspicions of Venezuelan aid to Marxist guerrillas in Colombia, and the prospect of Chavez giving financial support for elections in Nicaragua and Bolivia in 2005. Consequently this produced anger within the Bush Administration over Spain, who was unilaterally deciding to give Venezuela new military capabilities, support and respectability from a NATO partner. “Despite being democratically elected, the government of President Chávez systematically undermined democratic institutions, pressured and harassed the independent media and the political opposition, and had grown progressively more autocratic and anti-democratic,” the US embassy in Madrid said in a statement. In this instance, the US government felt betrayed by Spain, who was supposed to share its goal of bringing Venezuela to democracy, and it is for that reason that Spain’s decision to sell military ships and aircraft to Venezuela, was so troubling. In Caracas, Bono quietly criticized the US as he stood with Chavez, who

25 Ibid.
27 In the Miami Herald Review, Secretary Rumsfeld would not say whether the US planned to sell matching weapons to Colombia. US officials have accused Venezuela of supporting Marxist Colombian rebels, a charge Venezuela’s leftist President Hugo Chavez denied. Venezuela also said there was nothing to fear from its planned military purchases, which it said were merely designed to replace old equipment. Al Pessin, “Rumsfeld Criticizes Spain Over Venezuela Military Sales”, Miami Herald Review, 6 April 2005; 27 April 2005 Embassy Madrid confidential cable in El Pais: Scene setter for Secretary Rumsfeld’s meeting with Defence Minister Bono.
30 Kurt Volker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State or European and Eurasian Affairs, Remarks at the CSIS/Real Instituto Elcano Conference on US-Spain Bilateral Relations, Washington D.C., 3 April 2006, www.scoop.co.nz

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praised Spain for “confronting the hegemonic and imperialistic ambitions of the elite that now governs the US (and is) massacring the people of Iraq.”  

Without specifically mentioning Washington, Bono criticized the US refusal as hypocritical, arguing that “there are countries that get alarmed when Spain sells certain products, not for moral reasons, but because they wanted to sell them themselves.” Moreover Bono had told the US that the reason Spain was selling the ships to Venezuela was to save the ailing state-owned shipyard Izar (ref tel). The sale was to provide Izar with 600 jobs over the 4-5 year period.

On his part, Chavez denounced the US license veto as evidence of Washington’s “horrific imperialism.” He denounced President George Bush as “Mr. Anger” and said he would “crash up against the force of the truth.” Spanish officials, who after the Iraq withdrawal were mending fences with the US, said they respected the US position, but disputed the assertion that the sale would destabilize the region. Ambassador Argylos stressed that the US embassy told Spanish officials that given that Spain-US relations were slowly improving, “now was not the time to make a major military sale to Venezuela.” This incident was especially disappointing since it gave Chavez an opportunity to exploit a perceived difference between US and Spanish views of his increasingly anti-democratic regime. Moreover, this incident pointed to the limits of

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33 27 April 2005 Embassy Madrid confidential cable in El Pais: Scene setter for Secretary Rumsfeld’s meeting with Defence Minister Bono, El Pais, 8 December 2010.
36 27 April 2005 Embassy Madrid confidential cable in El Pais: Scene setter for Secretary Rumsfeld’s meeting with Defence Minister Bono.
37 Kurt Volker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State or European and Eurasian Affairs, Remarks at the CSIS/Real Instituto Elcano Conference on US-Spain Bilateral Relations, Washington DC, 3 April 2006, www.scoop.co.nz
Spanish policy towards the region when it ran counter to US foreign policy objectives. The fact that Spain, being one of the NATO allies, attempted to ignore US security concerns and sell military equipment to Venezuela – while competing to sell the same equipment to the US Coast Guard and Pentagon, did not help the fragile state of US-Spanish relations. Accordingly, the failed attempt of Spain’s Socialist government to show its independent will, led to further critiques and debate over Spain’s policy orientation. Yet, US criticism of the deal looked hollow when Jose Bono, revealed to the Spanish Parliament that the previous government had sold guns, grenades and anti-riot gear to Chávez between 2000 and 2003 and Washington raised no concerns. The reason given by Aznar’s government was that the weapons were for fighting drug trafficking. Interestingly, the same line of argument was used to explain Zapatero’s sale of arms to Venezuela, but the absence of closeness between respective presidents of Spain and the US, was not helpful to Spain’s ambitions to sell arms to the region.

8.4 Cuba policy: US-Spanish Differences

The Socialist government’s view on Cuba also aggravated US policy makers and caused tensions between the Bush and Zapatero governments. Spain’s relations with Cuba have

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39 “Zapatero malabarismos diplomaticos”, Cambio 16, no 1740, 11 April 2005. “Diplomacy without arms” said Frederick the Great, “is like music without instruments.” A former Tory Defence Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, quoted him in defending the sale of arms to countries thought likely to use them responsibly, in “Military exports: No farewell to arms”, The Economist, 12 September 2009. Moreover, unlike Spain’s Zapatero, who was heavily criticized for its attempted arms deal with Venezuela, French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s move to negotiate for Brazil to buy 36 Rafale fighter jets for US$2.2billion from France in fall 2009 was a strict matter of bilateral relations of the countries involved. Notably, Brazil agreed to buy five submarines and 50 helicopters from France, which would share the technology involved. See: “Politics this week”, The Economist, 12 September 2009. At the end of Zapatero’s first term apart from its soft politics around the world and limited foreign policy activity, Spain’s bilateral relations with the US remained cool. Whilst in his second term, Zapatero gradually learned the art of diplomacy and adapted to situations where the political interests of Spain could only be recognized by a more friendly approach towards him by the Barack Obama Administration. Yet the US Administration became alerted when by fall 2009 Chavez announced to Spain’s leaders that Repsol, a Spanish company, announced the discovery of a big natural gas field in Venezuelan waters. See: “Dreams of a different world”, The Economist, 19 September 2009.
long been a sore point with US Administrations. Even the staunchly anti-Communist General Franco maintained full diplomatic relations with the country and traded with it. For instance, the Lyndon Johnson Administration (1963-69) was particularly critical of Spain’s purchases of Cuban sugar. In May 2005, Castro’s brother Raúl, the regime’s “number two”, was warmly received in Galicia, where his parents were born, by Manuel Fraga, at that time the region’s premier and a former information and tourism minister under Franco. Yet, Cuba had been at odds with the US since Fidel Castro assumed power in 1959. Successive US Administrations implemented a range of tough measures, including prolonged economic sanctions and the designation of Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. None of the sanctions substantially weakened Castro’s rule, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1990’s, it replaced its Soviet economic support with support from Venezuela. Fidel Castro has been an inspiration for Latin America leftist, such as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Bolivian President Evo Morales, who challenged US policy in the region. Thus, Zapatero’s new policy approach to re-engage Castro’s regime in bilateral talks with Spain alarmed the US Administration whose reaction was sharp: “Our respect for Spain’s exemplary democratic transition makes it all the more perplexing and disconcerting that Spain has embarked upon a policy of outreach to the Raul Castro regime, validating his succession with no clear message about the need for democratic transition.” From the US perspective, the issues preventing normalization of US-Cuba relations included human rights violations, Cuban officials discontent with the treatment of detainees in Guantanamo Bay 9/11 prisoners, who were detained without recourse to trial, and the Cuban exile community’s influence over US-Cuba policy. In this regard, Zapatero

40 Ibid.  
43 Ibid.
strongly believed that relaxed sanctions could be an incentive for the Castro government to improve its human rights record. To this end, the Socialists successfully structured efforts for the EU to restore normal diplomatic relations with Cuba in January 2005, ratified in June despite lack of progress in human rights, a policy that resulted in the release of 14 dissidents, including the writer Raul Rivero, in November 2005. Thus since Spain renewed discussion of the Cuban question within the EU, Havana resumed contract with all of the EU countries maintaining embassies in Cuba and had released some of its imprisoned dissidents, although EU sanctions remained in place. The difference with Aznar’s view on the issue of engagement with Castro’s Cuba was that Zapatero was to blame for making a mistake for communicating with Castro. “Lowering the pressure elements was a huge mistake on behalf of EU member state”, Aznar stressed in a 2005 interview. Yet, contrary to the EU directive and the PP view, Foreign Minister Moratinos travelled to Cuba in April 2007 without including the democratic opposition in his visiting schedule. Moreover, he arranged a bilateral dialogue on human rights with the Castro dictatorship without any prior international consultation, and he did not protest when Cuba’s Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque denied in his presence that people were imprisoned in Cuba because of their political views. Furthermore, Moratinos’ decision not to meet with Cuban dissidents during a visit to the US in April 2007 irked officials in Washington, and prompted Thomas Shannon, US assistant secretary of state for Western hemisphere affairs, to question the Spanish foreign minister’s wisdom.

46 Helena Polo y Rui Ferreira, Aznar acusa Zapatero de su politica”, The Miami Herald, 17 March 2005, p. 3
47 “Government plans to renew cooperation with Cuba”, 6 April 2007, www.neurope.eu
According to Zapatero’s spokeswoman, Spain and the US shared the same goal for Cuba, and only disagreed on how to get there: “On what is essential for Cuba we agree - to achieve democracy – but we differ on strategies.” However, when the US Secretary of State Conoleezza Rice paid a courtesy visit to Madrid in 2007, policy differences on Cuba were a bone of contention. When at the press conference Moratinos defended the Spanish approach of engagement with the Cuban government and suggested that eventually Rice would see the merit of that method, Rice replied: “Don’t hold your breath.” The US Administration was concerned that Spain wanted to engage the Communist dictatorship in a dialogue, and thus it was not surprising that Rice expressed her discontent to Moratinos, over Spain not doing enough to support human rights on the island. Moreover, Rice brought up the subject of Moratinos choice not to meet with Cuban dissidents during his visit to the US after Cuba in April 2007. Moratinos defended his decision, believing it better to engage with the Cuban regime than to isolate it. “The US established its embargo,” he said. “We don’t agree with it but we respect it. What we hope is that they respect our policy," Moratinos added. "What Spain is not prepared to do is be absent from Cuba. And what the US has to understand is that, given that they have no relations with Cuba, they should trust in a faithful, solid ally like Spain.” Against the wishes of the US Administration, a bilateral cooperation treaty was signed in September 2007, and Cuba even regained its status as an official partner of Spain’s development cooperation after a lapse of four years. By September 2007 Spain restored the flow of aid that had been interrupted in 2003 by the Aznar Administration and launched a renewed bilateral dialogue that included human rights

49 "Ahead or rare talks, Rice slams Spain over Cuba", 6 January 2007, www.usatoday.com
51 Spain’s media focused on the brevity of Rice’s visit, noting that the fact she did not stay overnight suggested Spain still had not been forgiven by the Bush Administration. “Spain’s Zapatero favors low profile in foreign policy”, 11 March 2008, www.dw-world.de
53 Secretary of State Conoleezza Rice visit to Spain, 21 May 2007, http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/85805.htm
issues, which prompted the release of a further seven dissidents. In spite of this progress, however, doubts remained as to whether the new policy was having a significant impact on the regime’s evolution overall.\textsuperscript{54} Conclusively, a clear asymmetry continued to exist between the role that Spain wished to play as a medium-sized power for the US, and the instruments and resources it had available. Spain’s actual national interests were a decisive point, as demonstrated by the country’s good relations with Chavez’s Venezuela and Cuba.\textsuperscript{55} The Spanish critics of this policy had taken advantage of this fact, asserting that Castro and Chavez were the main allies of Spain in the region in an attempt to accuse the PSOE government as radicalism and anti-Americanism.\textsuperscript{56} The result of all this was that Spain’s Latin American policy was marked by deep contradictions between Ibero-Americanism and Europeanism on one hand, and between Ibero-Americanism and the trans-Atlantic alliance on the other.\textsuperscript{57}

8.5 The Lessons of the First Term

Close to the end of Zapatero’s first term as prime minister of Spain, the US-Spanish relationship saw a gradual re-gaining of the status of “Special Partnership.” Since the elections following M-11, this transformation was marked by the first visit of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Madrid at the end of May 2007. According to Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos, this visit had a political message that relations between the Spanish government and the Bush Administration had been normalized. To


\textsuperscript{55} These also included the good relations with the regimes of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya and Ben Ali in Tunisia and the trips made by Moratinos to Equatorial Guinea, which included a meeting with Teodoro Obiang. In all these cases, the defence of Spain’s economic interest took precedence over the promotion of human rights and democracy, in Jan Techau & Alexander Skiba, “Transatlantic Relations 2009, European Expectations for the Post-Bush Era”, Working paper no. 20 November 2008, \textit{European Policy Institute Network}, www.epin.org p. 10.


\textsuperscript{57} Celestino del Arenal, “La politica exterior del gobierno socialista”, \textit{Politica Exterior}, No. 100, July/August 2004, p. 5.
underline this vastly important point in the evolution of US-Spanish relations, Moratinos said Spain was a “faithful and constructive friend” of the United States”, yet insisted that relations between the two countries had remained positive throughout.58 A similar view was expressed by Rice who stressed that: "There is no secret that we have had differences with Spain on a number of issues, but we have also had very good cooperation with Spain on a number of issues.”59 Indeed as argued by David Garcia Cantalapiedra, of the Royal Elcano Institute, a Madrid think-tank, Rice’s trip was the biggest signal yet that relations had improved, as: “The Spanish government has had to rebuild the relationship basically from zero.”60 The Zapatero Administration aspired to rebalance ties that it believed were asymmetrical. It viewed the benefits produced at the politico-military level during the Aznar era as insufficient. In fact the Spanish government preferred a multilateral approach, especially through the European Union.61 Nevertheless, despite the differences in the approach, the fundamentals of the relationship between Spain and the US were solid. Military-to-military relations between Spain and the US remained strong despite the change in government, as did bilateral cooperation against terrorism. Spain continued to provide US forces full access to its naval base in Rota and its air base in Moron.62 Cooley and Hopkin have argued that the party political approach explains important variations in the basing issues over different periods of domestic transition and consolidation and were the reasons behind continuity in this policy by Zapatero government.63 Their argument was that the early

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
63 Analytically, according to Cooley and Hopkin, the above puzzle suggests that the politics surrounding the control and operation over foreign military bases is neither reducible to purely strategic factors, such as security agreements and threat considerations, nor to domestic pressures such as public opinion. They argued that the key to explaining this disjuncture between security policy and public opinion, on the one
phases of democratization are particularly vulnerable to the partisan exploitation of the basing issue for electoral gain and to meet the expectations of party activists, as political leaders are concerned to consolidate their parties’ place in the party system, even at the expense of taking on high-risk political commitments. But when Democratic Party politics becomes more solidly established, the incentives to mobilize around the basing issue declines rapidly. In this post-transitional phase, populist and demagogical campaigns against bases are unlikely to be embraced by parties with aspirations to take on governing responsibilities, because of the acute difficulties they face in living up to expectations when they win power (with the main governing parties seeking to avoid divisive public discussion of security arrangements involving the ceding of military bases to a foreign power.) This even holds in periods when major foreign policy issues are the subject of bitter political contests, such as in Spain immediately before and after the 11 March 2004 bombings. In spite of this basic continuity, Zapatero sought to

hand, and the political status of bases, on the other, lies in the evolution of Spanish party politics after Franco’s death. More generally, they argued that the political salience of the foreign military presence in a host country or “base issue” tends to be elevated to national prominence and political debate during the period of democratic transition and the initial phase of party consolidation. During this period issues of sovereignty, legislative transparency, party accountability and external support for a previous anti-democratic regime all become inextricably tied to the issue of the foreign military basing presence, as party elites engage in aggressive mobilization strategies. Conversely, during periods of consolidated democracy, the foreign military presence is depoliticized or taken off the political agenda, as party politicians treat the issue as a non-revocable contractual obligation and, instead, emphasize issues of competence in governance and foreign policy in an effort to appeal to moderate voters. As a result, the importance of foreign military bases to domestic politics will vary depending on domestic political developments and consolidation, rather than simply security considerations or public opinion. They suggest that party system dynamics in stable democracies may actually constrain host countries on bilateral agreements and security issues to a greater extent than is the case for democratizing polities. For instance, the PSOE’s silence on the US basing issue in 2004 stood in stark contrast to its more confrontational stance during the earlier period of democratic consolidation. The Socialists’ reluctance to raise the basing issue made sense from the point of view of party strategy. Opposing OIF in Afghanistan and removing Spanish troops from Iraq would damage US-Spanish relations, but Zapatero and his advisors reasonably hoped that such damage could be repaired in time, allowing the Spanish government to revert to its previous - quietly Atlanticist - position. Bringing the bases into the equation, however, would have implied drastic structural adjustments to the relationship, bringing a long-term shift in Spanish security policy, as well as probably causing some economic damage to the localities concerned. The policy the Zapatero government actually followed made the most sense both for the government’s room for manoeuvre on policy, and for the party’s long-term electoral interests. See: Alexander Cooley and Jonathan Hopkin “Party Politics and Base Politics: The Rise and Decline of the US Military Bases Issue in Spain, 1975-2005”, International Political Science Review, 2009, p. 2.
distance himself from his predecessor by passing a new national defence law in November 2005, which required parliamentary approval to send troops abroad. The PP opposed the law on the grounds that, by demanding that future missions enjoy the prior backing of the UN Security Council, the EU or NATO, governments might be prevented from acting expeditiously. The defence law also limited the maximum number of troops deployable abroad to 3,000, a somewhat arbitrary figure that was later abandoned as impractical. Aside from this law, the flow of exchanges between intelligence services and law enforcement agencies remained strong as a result of both countries suffering major terrorist attacks. New extradition and justice cooperation agreements were signed during 2005. Hence, in March 2005, the two countries set up a group of experts and prosecutors to improve legal and police cooperation on terrorism as senior US and Spanish officials also met to try to improve the flow of anti-terrorism intelligence between the two countries.

According to US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, from November 2004, Spanish officials at all levels made clear their desire to restore strong bilateral ties with the Foreign Ministry’s Director General for Foreign Policy, telling the US openly: “We want back in.” To this end the Spanish government launched a comprehensive plan with a budget of almost US$100 million over the next three years. According to Moratinons, this was done as “the Spanish government seek to improve the image and presence of Spain in the United States.” Moreover, the Zapatero government believed

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67 27 April 2005 Embassy Madrid confidential cable in El Pais: Scene setter for Secretary Rumsfeld’s meeting with Defence Minister Bono.
that it had taken significant steps to put relations with the US back on track, such as agreeing to lead both a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PTR) and a Forward Support Base (FSB) in western Afghanistan. The US government welcomed the steps, but also wanted Spain to lift its caveats on the deployment of Spanish NATO officers in NATO missions, and lift the caveats on military’s role in Afghanistan. In November 2005, Spanish press sources claimed that CIA planes, perhaps carrying terror suspects, made at least 10 secret stopovers at Spanish airports in Majorca and the Canary Islands between January 2004 and 2005. According to reports, the CIA’s controversial “extraordinary rendition” programme involved removing suspects without court approval to third-party countries for interrogation. The flight destinations from Majorca allegedly included Libya, Algeria, Romania, Macedonia, Sweden, and Spain.\(^{69}\)

Accordingly, Spain’s Interior Minister Jose Antonio Alonso announced an investigation and said that if proven, such activities could damage relations between the Spanish and US governments. The suspect flights - 10 in total – came to light in a report submitted by Spain’s Civil Guard to the prosecutor’s office of the Balearics Supreme Court in June 2005, *El Pais* reported. Yet, Spain’s Defence Minister Jose Bono reacted cautiously to the Majorca allegations, saying “we do not have any evidence, we do not have any proof. There was no evidence or indication that the US has committed illegal activities”\(^{70}\)

For his part, Moratinos said the Spanish government was convinced that all the US stopovers took place “within the framework of the law.”\(^{71}\) As Rice stated later during her trip to Europe in December 2005, “the US does not engage in torture”, but she was unable to deny categorically that US clandestine operations took place in


\(^{71}\) “Bono y la CIA”, 17 November 2005, www.gees.org On 9 February 2007, the Spanish government agreed to release to a Spanish High Court judge documents providing details on the secret flights. The judge investigated whether terror suspects were held illegally or tortured in Spain. The government said that it had no evidence that such crimes took place on Spanish soil, but had conceded that the flights could have conveyed detainees to other countries where crimes were committed, in Steven Woehrel, “Spain: Current Issues and US Policy”, CRC Report for Congress, March 2007.
Europe, with the cooperation of European governments. Spain’s exceptionally explicit statement stressing the legality of CIA flights to and from Spain, including a stopover of a plane en route from Guantanamo to Bucharest pointed to Zapatero’s desire to preserve the cooperation on terrorism between the two countries. This was important, as Spanish police was concerned about possible “sleeping cells” that continued to operate in the country. They were particularly concerned about terrorists who left Spain to fight in Iraq and then returned to Spain to launch new attacks. In January 2006, Spanish police arrested a militant and 20 associates involved in recruiting Muslims from Spain to fight in Iraq. Spanish officials were worried about terrorist recruiting efforts in Ceuta and Melilla, two Spanish enclaves on Morocco’s coast. By then more than 300 men had been imprisoned in Spain for offenses related to Islamic terrorism. France, Britain, Italy, and Spain reportedly developed a list of about 200 suspected Islamist terrorists at liberty on European soil, 20 of whom were living in Spain. Thus, at the beginning of January 2008, prior to the outcome of Spain’s presidential elections, in a briefing for US Senator Joe Lieberman, the US embassy in Madrid noted that “The real bilateral story was found in novel initiatives such as the HSPD-6 agreement we signed in September 2007, to facilitate the sharing of information between our national counter-terrorism authorities as Spain remains a target of Islamic extremists. Al-Qaeda had called for attacks to recapture the medieval Al Andalus [...] neither has the threat of ETA terror

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72 Interestingly, by the beginning of 2011, Spanish Minister of Defence Carme Chacon announced that Madrid and Washington had revised several aspects of their defence cooperation, setting tougher conditions for US military flights making stopovers or passing over Spanish territory and giving details of flights in question; the revised agreement also prohibited US military planes from refuelling above Spain, making an important security adjustment following the Palomares 1966 accident. Yet, Chacon insisted the changes were not related to allegations that US planes transported prisoners to and from the Guantanamo detention facility while making stopovers in Spain. See: “Spain sets new rules for US military flights”, 26 January 2011, www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article_1614737.php


gone away.”  This statement was a confirmation of continued bilateral cooperation between the Bush and Zapatero Administrations during the age of global terror.

Yet, there remained a perception that Spain under Zapatero had withdrawn from the international stage. If forces serving overseas were the measure, then this was not entirely true. Iraq notwithstanding, there was thus considerable continuity between the Zapatero and Aznar governments in terms of their willingness to take part in international peace-keeping missions. Spain had peacekeeping troops in, for example, the Balkans (EUFOR-Althea; KFOR-Kosovo Force), Afghanistan, the Congo and Lebanon (FINUL-UN Interim Force in Lebanon) and the number of troops serving overseas were virtually identical to that when the PP was in power. Moreover, in March 2007, the UN acknowledged Spain’s long-standing commitment to its peace-keeping operations by asking it to house its communications and data centre for all peace missions in Europe. Nevertheless, PP argued that that foreign policy was Zapatero’s weakest point. The privileged relationship of the opposition’s PP party with the US officials put Zapatero’s government in an uncomfortable position. On one occasion, after a meeting attended by fourteen other International Democratic Union (IDU) representatives, Mariano Rajoy, the leader of Spain’s centre-right opposition Popular Party, said that he and President Bush had not discussed bilateral relations between Spain and the US. However, he offered to help the Socialist Administration to “improve foreign policy,” and called the PSOE’s claims that he was running a

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76 Spanish Peacekeeping Troops Abroad (Number Starting /year of mission: Lebanon 1,100 from 2006; Afghanistan 778 from 2002; Kosovo 623 from 1999; Waters of Somalia 395 from 2009; Bosnia and Herzegovina 341 from 2004; Chad 84 from 2008; Democratic Republic of Congo 3 from 2001- Total 3,324. Source: Spain’s Defence Ministry, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/materiales/insidepain/Chislett042109Newsletter.pdf
“government in exile” “ridiculous.”78 There were various reasons for this. First, the experience of Iraq has been seared into the psyche of the Spanish political class. Aznar clearly enjoyed his moment at the forefront of the international stage but he was severely burned by the experience and it contributed greatly to his political defeat. Since then, Zapatero had watched British Prime Minister Tony Blair, among others, suffered not in all cases electorally, but for their foreign policy agenda. Zapatero had reasonably decided that the side-line was a politically prudent, if not necessary laudable, place to be. The day in November 2007 that Tony Blair, George Bush’s closest ally, announced the departure of some British troops from Iraq, Italy’s Prime Minister Romano Prodi was humiliating in a crucial parliamentary vote, centering on Italy’s involvement in Afghanistan.79 The parliamentary tornado that ripped through Roman Prodi’s centre-left government on 21 February 2007, prompting its leader to resign showed how dangerous it could be for a European government to be seen to be backing the Bush Administration. It was for the same reason that Spain withdrew 200 troops from the UN peacekeeping force in Haiti earlier in March 2006, complaining that other donor countries did not pay their share of the cost. Washington and the UN often pressed Spain to reconsider its decision, but Bono said he had warned them that the Spanish contingent, who had been in Haiti since November 2004, would be withdrawn if foreign commitments did not increase.80 Finally, back in 2005, US Embassy in Madrid directed Rumsfeld to send a clear message to Spain that the US government “will not re-

78 “Rajoy meets with Bush doesn’t discuss bilateral relations”, 29 January 2006, www.spainherald.com
79 Italy had contributed to Afghanistan’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which was seen by many as being the deciding factor in Prodi’s defeat. Far left senators and other radicals were equally exercised by the government’s readiness to agree to the expansion of an American military base at Vicenza in northern Italy. On 17 February 2007, some 70,000 people – including leading figures in the governing coalition – marched in protest of this plan. Prodi swiftly declared that he did not intend on changing a 50 year-old defence policy, based on the three pillars of the European Union, the UN and NATO. Italian anti-Americanism cost Romano Prodi his job. Prodi actually won the vote in Italy’s Senate by 158 votes to 136 with 24 abstentions. But abstentions count as votes against, so the formal result was a two vote defeat. It was not, technically, a confidence vote, so Prime Minister Prodi did not need to step down. But his Foreign Minister, Massimo D’Alema, argued that defeat meant it was time for everyone to leave, in “Italy: Pasta and fries”, The Economist, 24 February 2007.
establish with the Zapatero government the deep and close relationship we had with the Aznar Administration.”

Thus, Zapatero did not have the incentive to change his foreign policy approach.

8.6 Zapatero Second Term Opportunities

On 9 March 2008 Zapatero’s Socialists won 169 seats in general elections – seven short of an absolute majority in the 350-seat Parliament. US President Bush’s greetings to Prime Minister Zapatero, that followed on his second electoral victory, were a sign of a thaw after four years of cool ties over Iraq. Zapatero said Bush’s tone was friendly during their conversation, adding that he had already received a congratulatory message from the White House. Bush spoke of his wish “to continue cooperating closely with Spain.”

After Zapatero’s re-election, Spain threw itself into rebuilding the relationship. Zapatero later told a New York Times reporter off the record that he had a “certain consideration” for George Bush because “I recognise that my electoral success has been influenced by his governing style”, implying that Bush was so unpopular in Spain that he helped Zapatero win in 2004 and 2008. The Spanish prime minister’s drastic change in his foreign policy approach in his first term, that at times angered Bush Administration, was overshadowed by Zapatero’s success with Spain’s economy. Zapatero boasted that the average Spaniard was now richer than the average Italian. Referring to new economic data published by Eurostat, the European statistics agency, at the beginning of 2008 Zapatero proclaimed that: “Spain has overtaken Italy. I told Romano [Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi] it would.”

81 27 April 2005 Embassy Madrid confidential cable in El Pais: Scene setter for Secretary Rumsfeld’s meeting with Defence Minister Bono, El Pais, 8 December 2010.
85 “Zapatero Ribs Prodi As Spain Overtakes Italy”, 19 December 2007, www.corriere.it

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that Spain was now as economically advanced as France and Germany. In light of Zapatero’s triumphalism, Spaniards were nonetheless asking themselves why their Prime Minister was not invited to a mini-summit about the global financial crisis that was held in London on 29 January 2007. That meeting was limited to the leaders of Europe’s “major” powers: Britain, France, Germany and Italy. The reaction in Spain to the perceived snub was swift. Mariano Rajoy, the leader of Spain’s centre-right opposition Popular Party, said: “It’s a slap in the face for Spanish foreign policy and it’s a slap in the face to our country.” Many Spaniards agreed. The non-invitation of the Spanish prime minister highlighted what analysts had pointed out for a long time. Although Spain was then in its fifteenth year of uninterrupted economic growth, and was benefiting from the longest period of expansion in its modern history, Zapatero was not able to translate his country’s strong economic performance into increased geopolitical influence. Undeniably, Spanish influence — both in Europe and elsewhere — has waned precipitously during first term of Zapatero’s government. “Bush had been a convenient cover for expressing an ideological antipathy towards the US,” was argued by Soeren Kern, a German analyst for transatlantic relations at the Strategic Studies Group GEES in Madrid. “Even many socialists believe that Zapatero has taken Spain too far to the left. Zapatero grew up with a hard-core leftist ideology, so it is not just a matter of being anti-Bush, but anti hyper-capitalist America,” he added. “It will take a new US president in 2009 to restore bilateral relations,” said Antonio Garriguez Walker, Honorary President of the Spain-US Council in Madrid. Yet, he emphasized

86 Ibid.
89 Glen Kessler, “Rice’s stop in Spain signals thaw; Chill over Cuba persists”, 2 June 2007, www.washingtonpost.com
that military cooperation, along with commercial and cultural exchanges were thriving in spite of the personal animosity between Zapatero and Bush.90

Possibly due to this personal antipathy, Washington did not want to include Spain in an upcoming meeting of the G-20 global economic summit. Invited to the 14 - 15 November 2007 gathering were the leaders of the G-20 nations, a group that included the seven leading industrial powers, Russia and developing countries such as China, India, Argentina, Mexico and Brazil, but not Spain.91 The Iberian nation had the world’s eighth-largest economy and Madrid’s demand for inclusion had received public backing from French President Nicolas Sarkozy, European Commission chief José Manuel Durao Barroso and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Backed by three of Europe’s leading policy makers, Zapatero said that his country should have a seat at the table.92 In effect, Zapatero was one of a number of world leaders who expressed hopes that the Washington summit was to draw up blueprints for a new global financial order and the Socialist premier has made it a personal priority to ensure that Spain played a role. For that reason, the Spanish government used all its diplomatic leverage to secure a seat for its prime minister at the summit. According to an anonymous source, the Spanish government was taking initiatives “in all directions, with everyone, and at all levels” to be included in what Madrid viewed as a historic event.93 The same source said that while Zapatero did not speak to Bush, contact had been established with White House aides and with the campaigns of the candidates in the 4 November 2008 election to choose the next US president: Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain.94

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92 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
Moreover, Spanish Ambassador Jorge Dezcallar requested a meeting with US Deputy Treasury Secretary Robert Kimmitt to make Madrid’s case for inclusion, and Treasury Department spokesman Andrew Desouza told Spanish News Agency *EFE* that the two men discussed the matter in full detail. According to Dezcallar’s aides, Kimmitt acknowledged Spain’s “significant weight” in the world economy, but said that given the urgency of the financial crisis, the Bush Administration decided it would be better to limit the summit to the already established G-20.\(^{95}\) Kimmitt promised to relay Spain’s request to the White House, but a spokesman for Bush indicated that the plans for the conference were not likely to change.\(^{96}\) Tony Fratto, Deputy Press Secretary to President Bush said that Spain was free to present proposals via one of the G-20 nations or through the delegation representing the European Union.\(^{97}\) Moratinos believed his country deserved to be included in the conference and questioned the relevance of groupings such as the G-8, comprising the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Canada and Russia. In a calm, firm manner he said, “Spain and the government, its diplomats, will do everything necessary to try to be in that summit, because we believe we should be […] it is not for an element of national pride - which, logically, we all have - but rather because Spain has a financial system that is very solid, which it has proven during this crisis.”\(^{98}\) Sources in the Zapatero government reacted very negatively to a suggestion by the White House that Spain submit proposals to the Washington summit via participating countries or the representatives of the EU. To secure his seat personally, Zapatero left for Beijing to take part in an annual gathering of leaders from the EU and Asia followed by a trip to El Salvador for the annual Ibero-

\(^{96}\) Ibid.
American Summit. Those events were to give the prime minister the chance to enlist his counterparts from G-20 members China, India, Singapore, Indonesia, Brazil and Mexico in Spain’s lobbying for inclusion in the Washington conference.

8.7 Looking to the East for Influence and a Seat at the US Summit

China’s rapidly expanding economic, political and military influence in the Americas, Asia and in the Middle East threatened to alter existing geostrategic and traditional relationships, causing great concern within the Bush Administration. To the dismay of the White House, Beijing had taken steps in their quest to secure new global allies, targeting Europe’s rapidly rising economy – Spain. Eager to gain favour with Beijing and reap the benefits associated with China’s global economic expansionism, Zapatero made China the cornerstone of an evolving foreign policy strategy, promoting bilateral cooperation and exchanges which were expected to grow significantly in coming years. Zapatero voiced his support for the “One-China” policy and strong opposition to Taiwanese independence, supporting national reunification instead. When the US and its Western allies imposed a blockade on the sale of weapons to China, out of concern for the hegemonic nature of that nation’s foreign policy, the Spanish government saw a market for its products. In his zest to improve bilateral relations, the Spanish prime minister endorsed the removal of the UN imposed arms embargo against China in early 2005, in opposition to US objections. During the annual gathering of leaders from the EU and Asia in Beijing, Zapatero met with high-level Chinese leaders to discuss the expansion of Sino-Spanish relations, noting that Spain desired greater cooperation on international and regional issues such as politics, economics, science and technology. “China, without a doubt, is knocking on the door of world leadership. Spain admires

100 “Faithful to Themselves”, 16 November 2005, Libertad digital n 595, www.gees.org
101 Ibid.
this modern China; this China is becoming a great power in the world” Zapatero said. Yet, it was not Zapatero’s rapprochement to China that secured his seat at the Washington summit, but rather the diplomatic leverage of its European allies. Once Sarkozy devised a formula to include Spain, the Netherlands won a spot within France’s delegation, and the Czech Republic – which was to assume the EU presidency the following year – was given room in the Spanish contingent.102

Undeniably, Zapatero’s popularity within Spain for his foreign policy pacifist approach of engagement and against US hegemony, strained the bilateral relationship between the two countries further. Yet, Zapatero’s success in weathering the first wave of global economic turmoil in Spain presented an opportunity for a long awaited invitation from the White House.103 That was a one off opportunity for Spain’s prime minister to play a part in the economic summit as those economic credentials disintegrated as the Spanish economy went from bad to worse by 2009.104 It was just two months before Bush handed over the presidency to Barack Obama, that the invitation to the Washington summit provided the last chance for a face-to-face meeting between Zapatero and Bush. In the four years of Zapatero’s leadership of Spain, he only met Bush in formal multilateral forums, the last one being in April 2008 at a NATO summit in Romania. When Bush had called Zapatero days earlier to congratulate him on his re-election, he said at the time that the two agreed to “chat” in Bucharest. But Bush merely offered a brief greeting – “hi, hi, congratulations” – and the Spanish prime minister left the Romanian capital without the anticipated meeting taking place. Despite the lack of contacts at the highest level, Zapatero always insisted that Spain’s relations with the US

were good and highlighted the countries’ joint efforts in the political, economic and cultural spheres.105 There had been a couple of perfunctory hand-shakes in public meetings, but the fact that Zapatero, a NATO ally, had not visited the White House after nearly four and a half years in office was obvious.106 As top political analyst Rafael Bardaji of the Foundation for Advanced Education and Analysis (FAES) and personal adviser to Aznar, pointed out back in 2005: “Until Rodriguez Zapatero and his wife are invited by Bush to stay over in the White House, the United States-Spain relations have not recovered.”107 Hence Zapatero’s satisfaction over Obama’s victory on 4 November 2008 was evident. In his first remarks after the election, Zapatero said he was convinced that “it would usher in a period of more fluid and positive bilateral relations.”108

8.8 Obama: a Chance to Renew Friendship

The departure of Bush and the arrival of Barack Obama to the Presidency of the US brought the anticipated affirmative changes in the US-Spanish bilateral relations. Three days after Obama was elected as the 44th President of the United States, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Zapatero described by the Spanish administration aides as introductory in nature and about five to ten minutes in length.109 Spain’s Parliament President Jose Bono Martinez stressed the importance of the end of the Bush era. “Even before I knew election result, I said that anything is better than Bush.”110 US National Security Adviser General James Jones’ meeting with Spain’s King Juan Carlos in Miami on 19 February 2009 was the first sign of a positive


diplomatic breakthrough. In his public remarks, Jones said the Obama Administration desired the renewal of US-Spanish “ties of friendship at all levels.” General Jones took the opportunity to hail what he called the King’s enormous contribution to maintaining “warm and fruitful links” between Spain and the US. During the meetings Jones told Spain’s king that the Obama Administration wanted Washington and Madrid “to stand together in the face of the global economic crisis and potential security threats.” According to Moratinos, the US national Security Adviser was likewise interested in hearing Spain’s appraisal of the situation in Afghanistan, where Spanish troops were serving with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. For Moratinos the presence of Jones at the Miami conference was an “unmistakable sign” that the Obama Administration wanted to re-build diplomatic ties with Spain. Prior to the personal meeting between the two leaders, Moratinos visited Washington to meet Secretary of State Hilary Clinton on 29 February 2009. According to official reports, Clinton and Moratinos discussed Iran, Iraq, the situation in the Middle East, in particular the international donors meeting for the Palestinian Authority, Afghanistan, energy issues and Latin America. Moratinos said the meeting mainly focused on the part Spain could play in facilitating US relations with Latin America, the Middle East and North America in light of the new, broader conception of security necessitated by the world economic crisis. After this meeting, Moratinos told reporters that Spain was ready to take some prisoners from Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba, provided

111 Following a telephone call between President Barack Obama and the Spanish monarch, the White House said Jones was to participate in a Spain-Florida economic development symposium that King Juan Carlos would also attend. Obama telephoned Juan Carlos prior to the meeting to apologize for him being unable to attend the event in Miami, which came during the Spaniard’s first visit to the US since the new President took office. The former NATO military chief first met the Spanish Head of State in 1991 and subsequently had occasion to see Juan Carlos at gatherings of the Alliance, in “Top US security aide to meet Spanish King”, 19 February 2009, www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article

112 “Obama aide tell King Juan Carlos that ties with Spain are valued”, 21 February 2009, www.surinenglish.com
that “the judicial conditions are acceptable.” Moratinos added that in any event “a new stage in relations between the US and Spain was opening “that is more intense, more productive.” He said Latin America faced challenges and issues that “require[d] the work not only of Spain and the EU but also of a US administration more interested in Latin America, and not just Cuba.” After years of chilly relations, Moratinos’ first meeting with Clinton thus opened the way for a new phase in Spain’s diplomatic relations with President Obama.

8.9 The Kosovo Withdrawal

Yet certain divergences continued to exist that did not help to strengthen Madrid’s position in the eyes of the new US administration in 2009, such as Spain’s refusal to recognize Kosovo’s independence. Instead, Spain sided with the pro-Serbian group comprised of the Russian Federation, Albania, Romania and Greece, a decision justified by Moratinos on the grounds of international legality. Moreover, the unilateral decision announced by Defence Minister Carme Chacón in March 2009 to gradually withdraw Spanish troops from the international peacekeeping mission in Kosovo (KFOR) gave rise to a certain confusion among NATO members as to the motives behind Spain’s foreign policy. This withdrawal – completed in September and initially explained as a decision that was coherent with the non-recognition of the old Serbian province – brought harsh criticism both from the US Administration and from the secretary general of NATO. The lack of coherence between, on one hand, a multilateralist discourse and a defence of international institutions, and on the other, making unilateral decisions of this magnitude was not unusual in Spanish foreign policy, but it did not help to facilitate


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the international trust that was required to achieve greater projection and presence in this sphere.\footnote{Jan Techau & Alexander Skiba, “Transatlantic Relations 2009, European Expectations for the Post-Bush Era”, Working paper no. 20 November 2008, \textit{European Policy Institute Network}, www.epin.org, p. 11-12.} The US Administration, however, recognised that Kosovo was becoming a sensitive issue for Spain’s own complex federal versus regional struggle. For this reason, US Ambassador to Spain Eduardo Aguirre, in May 2007, voiced the importance of a UNSC Resolution explicitly authorising independence of Kosovo as an essential point for Spain to maintain its troops there.\footnote{“Cable de E.E.U.U. que prepapa la visita de Condoleezza Rice a Madrid”, 25 May 2007, Embassy of the US in Madrid, published by \textit{El País} in July 2008.}

From June 1999, Spanish troops had been part of the Multinational Brigade Southwest of the International Security Force for Kosovo (KFOR).\footnote{Fernando Martinez Lainez, “Kosovo: la asignatura pendiente”, \textit{Revista Española de Defensa}, a 18 n 208-210, July/August 2005, pp. 60-65.} In spring 2008 Zapatero came under fierce international criticism for announcing a pull-out of Spanish troops from the 15,000-strong NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR).\footnote{“The World this week: politics”, \textit{The Economist}, 28 March 2009.} The government’s decision to pull 630 peacekeeping troops out of Kosovo drew fire from the US State Department and NATO. Carme Chacón, Spain’s Defence Minister, justified the move on the grounds that Spain had not recognised Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence. She declared “Mission accomplished. It’s time to go home.” According to press reports Chacón had been unable to contact top US officials about it and left a message instead. She had not even informed the Spanish Ambassador in Washington, Jorge Dezcallar, who was summoned to the White House to “clarify” what happened. During the press conference that followed, the US State Department spokesman repeated four times how “deeply disappointed” the administration was with Spain.\footnote{Paula Stuart and Paul Mitchell, “Spain: Zapatero government sends more troops to Afghanistan”, 2 May 2009, http://www.wsws.org/articles/2009/may2009/spai-m02.shtml}

The US State Department, in unusually strong language recalled that NATO allies had
agreed in 1999 to enter and leave Kosovo together. “We are surprised by this decision”, said spokesman Robert Wood. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the outgoing NATO Secretary-General, expressed his dismay at a meeting with NATO Ambassadors, “we were warned just before it was announced publicly”, he remarked. According to the Barometer of the Elcano Royal Institute (BRIE) in Spain, 70% of Spaniards supported the announcement of withdrawing Spanish troops from Kosovo, while less than half of Spaniards (43%) thought that it had hurt relations with the US. Unfalteringly, there was a clear difference between voters of the left and right, as the former thought that troop withdrawal did not hurt relations with the US, while the latter thought that it did.121

Kosovo’s independence, declared in February 2008, was recognised by 56 out of 192 UN members and by 22 of the 27 EU countries. The Socialist government’s position on Kosovo, shared by the Conservative Popular Party, was well known and reflected, to some extent, its concern not to fan the flames of separatism in the Basque Country and in Catalonia. The government also questioned the legality of the move. However, it was safe to say that electoral politics were responsible for Spain’s decision, especially because the US pushed for Kosovo recognition just before the Spanish general election.122 Chacón said the troops were to leave by August 2009 and in “perfect coordination” with NATO. Yet, US Vice President Joseph Biden met Prime Minister Zapatero in Chile, where he said that despite the disagreement over Kosovo and the way in which the move was communicated, Spain remained a solid ally. Later on, Vice President Biden stated that the American relationship with Spain goes beyond “whatever disagreement we may have over Kosovo.”123

121 Barometer of the Elcano Royal Institute (BRIE), 20th Wave, Results of March –April 2009 Press Summary, www/royalinstitutoelcano.org
All political parties in Parliament – to the left and right of the Socialists and nationalist parties-- criticized the government for the way in which it handled the Kosovo decision.\textsuperscript{124} The Chacón affair was a diplomatic disaster for Spain, which had made painstaking preparations for the G-20 summit in London and NATO summit in Strasbourg in April 2009. Within days, Zapatero’s top foreign policy advisor, Bernadino Leon, had been summoned to Washington to explain the reasons for the withdrawal and to reach a joint decision on a timetable.\textsuperscript{125} It is important to mention the fact that Barack Obama said he would withdraw American troops from Iraq by September 2010, but he might leave a residual force of up to 50,000 there longer, to help train Iraqis and to engage in “counter-terrorism”, if need be.\textsuperscript{126} Unlike his Spanish counterpart, the US President was not criticized for his executive decision. Asking if the US shared the assessment (Spanish troop withdrawal from Kosovo) Robert Wood, US State Department Spokesman said, “Not at all. We are deeply disappointed by this decision taken by Spain.”\textsuperscript{127} Antonio Remiro, Professor of International Law at Madrid’s Autonomous University argued that “NATO is starting to help the embryo of an independent Kosovan army, they are reinforcing civil institutions too. It’s becoming more and more contradictory for Spain to be a part of that since they don’t recognise Kosovo’s independence.”\textsuperscript{128}

8.10 Spain Becomes a Normal Ally

The five year stand-off between the White House and the head of Spanish government was thus marked by Zapatero’s meetings with President Obama during the NATO

\textsuperscript{124} http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/materiales/insideespana/Chislett042109Newsletter.pdf
\textsuperscript{126} “The world this week; politics”, The Economist, 7 March 2009.
\textsuperscript{127} IHT, 29 March 2009.
Summit on its 60th anniversary in Strasbourg-Kehl, followed by the EU-US summit in Prague and at the G-20 London Summit on the international crisis in spring 2009. The bilateral meeting, held during Obama’s encounter in the Czech capital with EU-27 leaders, was the first time Zapatero had been officially received by a US President since he first took office in 2004. In Prague, the two held a 45-minute behind closed doors meeting with advisors, and afterwards shared a photo for the press, where Obama called Zapatero a friend, and said he thought that the two nations would establish an even stronger relationship in the years to come. More importantly, Zapatero’s words during the summit, where he said: “We shouldn’t ask ourselves what Barack Obama can do for us but what we can do to support Obama and make his ideas in the international order successful” was a clear sign of significant rapprochement between Spain and the US. Zapatero’s words were a clear message to the US Administration of desire to become a responsible ally of the US. This new approach was evident at the NATO summit meeting in Strasbourg with Obama, where Zapatero agreed to send 450 more soldiers to Afghanistan to help guarantee security during the country’s presidential elections in August 2009. According to Moratinos, Spain’s participation in those events, had all represented a historic period in terms of Spain’s role in international relations, “one that is unprecedented in our contemporary history, and which has finally located Spain it its proper place.” Zapatero and Obama also met in Turkey, the first Muslim country the US president decided to visit as part of his policy of reaching out to the Islamic world. Zapatero went to Istanbul for the first inter-governmental summit

132 Ibid.
with Turkey, followed by a second forum of the Alliance of Civilisations (AoC).\footnote{133} During the AoCII forum, Moratinos justified the PSOE’s rapprochement with the new US administration saying, “I think that the Obama Administration’s focus on international relations, of supporting multilateralism, dialogue and respect for others and intelligent diplomacy fully coincides with the Alliance of Civilisations.”\footnote{134} El País commented that the Obama-Zapatero meetings “can and must herald a gradual, essential and full normalisation” of relations. Subsequently Zapatero used his initial contacts with Obama to encourage popular attitudes to war in the new US Administration, explaining “My impression of President Obama couldn’t be better. The US and the world in general are experiencing a time of great hope.” Moreover, Moratinos praised the strong bond between Obama and Zapatero saying the two men were “on the same wave length, partners, friends and allies”, who want to “strengthen and intensify their relations.”\footnote{135}

As Obama was elected by the world before American citizens and cast their votes on 4 November 2008, importantly, according to polls, 90 per cent of French and 95 per cent of Spaniards, to name just two examples, preferred Obama to Senator John McCain.\footnote{136}

The US-Spanish bilateral relationship saw further rapprochement when on 26 June 2009, US Attorney General Eric Holder and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Deputy Secretary Jane Holl Lute joined Spanish Interior Minister Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba to sign an Agreement to Prevent and Combat Serious Crime. This allowed for the exchange of fingerprints and other data on known terrorists and criminals while

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\footnote{133} Alliance of Civilizations was a UN-backed initiative co-chaired by Zapatero and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to defuse tensions between the West and the Islamic world. Both Obama and Zapatero expressed support for Turkey’s bid to join the EU. Spain, unlike Germany and France, actively backed Turkey’s membership bid, as did the UK and Italy, the other two big EU economies. William Chislett, “Inside Spain 55”, 21 April 2009, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/material/inside espan/Chislett042109Newsletter.pdf


\footnote{135} Ibid.

protecting individual privacy. “The United States understands that only through cooperation with our international partners can we prevent and prosecute crimes, including terrorism, corruption, fraud and drug trafficking, that most threaten our citizens and societies,” said Attorney General Holder. “Our common values and our mutual interest in protecting our citizens deepen our resolve for mutual cooperation with Spain through implementation of this important agreement [...].] which represents an important step in strengthening the security of our country and demonstrates the shared determination of our international partners to join with us in combating terrorism and putting a stop to international criminal activity,” said Deputy Secretary Lute. The United States has strengthened ties with ten other international partners to fight terrorism and combat international organized crime by signing similar agreements with nine European countries and Korea. According to the agreement, through lawful procedures, investigators and prosecutors were able to determine if either country holds evidence on a suspect that could advance a criminal investigation. The agreement also outlined processes for sharing vital information to help ensure the protection of citizens in both countries from terrorists or other criminals who may try to enter either country and provided for exchange of information on court trials on terrorism.137 This agreement was important in that it was a policy change in Zapatero government’s strategy for fighting terrorism through dialogue.138 Zapatero originally did not seem to grasp the difference between terrorism inflicted on Spaniards by Basque separatist and the violence from Islamic radicals in Madrid. In countering US claims of appeasement, Zapatero said that Spain had lived with attacks by the militant Basque organization, the ETA, well before the Twin-Tower attacks in the US, and that “we (Spain) did not

discover the ruthless face of terror three years ago.” Yet this view was contested by Spain’s experts in terrorism who were involved in post M-11 trial: “It is a point of pride to be able to try people in a courtroom, with full constitutional guarantees, but in Spain there is space for debate about whether we need to adapt our judicial legislation and culture to confront international Islamic terrorism”, said Fernando Reinares, an expert at the Royal Elcano Institute in international terrorism. Manuel Torres, director of Athena Intelligence, a research group that monitors Islamic activity, has argued that the Spanish legal system was primed to combat hierarchical, disciplined terrorism organisations like ETA. “The idea of rings within rings and hierarchies is useful for the police or judiciary, but in reality the structures are much less rigid,” Torres said in an interview before the verdict on M-11 suspects back in November 2007. “We are applying old concepts to new realities.” Thus, the agreement between Spain and the US provided for vital exchange of information and experience in dealing with this new form of international organised crime.

8.11 Afghanistan

In spite of withdrawing Spanish troops from Iraq, Zapatero immediately re-deployed the same number of troops to Afghanistan to placate the Bush Administration. While Spain’s peacekeeping troops in Iraq suffered 24 attacks, some of them very serious, before they were withdrawn, in Afghanistan, under a UN mandate, there has not been one. In practice, however, this distinction was not always a simple one to make or to explain to Spanish public opinion; having questioned the efforts by Washington and its allies in attempting regime change in Iraq, it was not easy to convince Spaniards that a

heterogeneous, US-led international coalition would achieve stability and progress in Afghanistan simply because it enjoyed UN support. Spain established its own military–civilian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in August 2005 in western Afghanistan, and the embassy in Kabul was reopened by Zapatero himself later that year. By mid-2008 Moratinos said he was in “no doubt” as to the “legitimacy” of a Spanish intervention in Afghanistan. It was accompanied by cabinet promises that Spain would never station more than 3,000 troops abroad at any one time. As Kurt Volker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs remarked: “It may come as a surprise, but I believe the most important place where the US and Spain are working together is Afghanistan. The Spanish PRT has made a substantial commitment of development resources [...] many Americans and Spaniards have lost their lives in the effort to help the Afghan people, 17 Spanish soldiers died in a helicopter crash last summer, and 62 others were killed as their transport plane crashed on the way home to Spain in 2003. Yet Spain’s commitment to helping the Afghan people has not wavered.” He further argued that in spite of conventional wisdom, Iraq was not a hugely divisive issue between the US and Spain. Spain first sent soldiers to Afghanistan when the Conservative Popular Party was in power, but the Socialists continued it. According to PP, the Socialist Party, and most especially the Defence Minister Bono, used the Spanish presence in Afghanistan as a means to relax the strained international relationship brought about by Spain’s withdrawal of troops from

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143 Ibid., p. 526.
144 The “legitimacy” was subject to the earlier passed law which obliged all overseas troop deployments to be approved by Parliament. Guided by this law, the Spanish government stressed that the Afghanistan mission was a legitimate one with an international mandate. Paul Stuart and Paul Mitchell, “Spain: Zapatero government sends more troops to Afghanistan”, 2 May 2009, www.wsws.org.
145 Kurt Volker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State or European and Eurasian Affairs, Remarks at the CSIS/Real Instituto Elcano Conference on US-Spain Bilateral Relations, Washington, DC, 3 April 2006.
Iraq. Moreover it maintained that Zapatero had made all these decisions not because of his infinite longing for peace, even compassion for the Afghan people, but at the request of United States and in a desperate attempt to be forgiven by Bush Administration. Stung by Socialist criticism of Spain’s involvement in Iraq under the Conservatives, the Popular Party was always pressing Prime Minister Zapatero to acknowledge that the Spanish troops in Afghanistan were in the middle of the war, not keeping the peace. PSOE opposition asked: “Is Spain at war on Afghan soil? If so, political establishment has to clarify in which war, against which enemy and with what objectives, with what allies.” Isn’t staying in that war not only unnecessary but counterproductive to end terrorism? How can we be the champions of dialogue between civilizations and at the same time deploying our soldiers to tackle radical Islamism? Is it worth our soldiers dying in Afghanistan? The internal strife between ruling PSOE and opposition PP party over Afghanistan, was nevertheless a proof of democratic pluralism plus freedom that Spain had gained over decades of US support bringing Spain to its position in the new world order.

8.12 Afghanistan and Troop Commitments Move Centre Stage

The annual reports on the terrorism situation in the EU concluded that Spain continued to be vulnerable to a terrorist attack due to its troop’s presence in Afghanistan. In March 2007 Spain’s government said it did not attach “undue importance” to a warning to Austria and Germany to withdraw from Afghanistan, after the Spanish media reported that the threat also targeted Spain. It was widely reported that the threat included Madrid’s 700-strong troop contingent in Afghanistan, and a government

spokeswoman told *AFP* that Madrid was “aware” of the threat but added little else. Spanish media reported that the masked man seated in a makeshift studio on the *Voice of the Caliphate* website had used the example of Spain to warn Germany and Austria, whose flags appeared in the background, of the dangers of “standing by the US.” In the web broadcast, the speaker warned that Spain’s fellow Europeans should “not follow the example of the Socialist government in Spain which fooled its people by withdrawing its troops from Iraq and then sending another 700 soldiers to Afghanistan.” The speaker said that by doing so, Madrid was “putting its country at risk once more,” in an apparent reference to the March 2004 train bombings whose anniversary fell on the day of webcast. According to Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, authorities believed Spain remained a “preferred” target of radical Islamists sympathetic to al-Qaeda and that Spain was “generally worse off” regarding the threat than prior to the Madrid bombings of three years ago. Following the warning incident, Zapatero interviewed by *EFE*, claimed: ”No more troops to Afghanistan” and that Spain was not going to “extend the quota of 690 military personnel deployed to Afghanistan” and this was confirmed by the Chief of Defence, General Felix Sanz Roide.

The rising number of casualties in Afghanistan prompted another debate in Spain regarding its participation in the US led war on terror. Back in November 2008, following the deaths of two soldiers in the western Afghan province of Herat, Moratinos told EU foreign ministers, “The debate should not be over sending more troops, it should be about how to carry out a political-military development strategy that will end an unstable situation.” In February 2009, when Obama first made his call for more troops, Moratinos repeated that “the answer is not to increase Spain’s military presence.

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The military presence has been increasing every year, and the situation has only gotten worse.”\textsuperscript{154} At that stage 778 Spanish troops were deployed to Afghanistan. Although US-Spanish relations had improved since Spain’s pull out of its troops from Iraq in 2004, Spain’s decision not to send more troops to Afghanistan infuriated the US, as President Obama was looking to build troops numbers in the country. The overwhelming majority of Spanish people were against the increase in troop numbers, they had long been against the war and they wanted their troops to come home, not more to be sent out. This was compounded by the fact that Spain has had proportionally one of the highest casualty rates throughout the conflict. Since 2002, 87 military personnel have been killed. However, Chacón rejected claims that by lifting the 3,000 troop limit sent to foreign missions at any one time, more troops would be dispatched to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{155} Before the NATO Summit in March 2009, only 4% of Spaniards seemed to support sending more troops, although as a whole, the majority supported maintaining same troop’s number and only 39% supported complete withdrawal. However, after the Summit, 60% had a positive opinion of the new NATO strategy of institutional strengthening and development cooperation for Afghanistan and 46% approved of sending more troops to support Afghan elections.\textsuperscript{156}

By spring 2009, Spain however recognised the importance of developing the newly emerging US-Spanish bilateral relations with the Obama Administration. To that end, the Spanish government finally announced in March 2009, that the number of Spanish troops in NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) would rise from 778 to over 1,000. “Spain’s commitment [to Afghanistan] was recognised to be among the

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{156} Barometer of the Elcano Royal Institute (BRIE), 20\textsuperscript{th} Wave, Results of March –April 2009 Press Summary, www.royalinstitutoelcano.org
most solid and important of the allies, combining military and electoral presence, training and aid”, said Zapatero. Spain’s increased military presence was only possible due to the fact that in December 2008 the PSOE had removed the self-imposed limit it had placed on the numbers of troops deployed abroad. However Defence Minister Carme Chacón stressed that Spain was to limit its intervention abroad only “by the legality of the Spanish mission and by the capability of the armed forces.” As the NATO led intervention continued in Afghanistan, by summer 2009 Zapatero’s government offered to further increase Spain’s troop’s presence. Following this announcement, which was made official after a meeting held between the Spanish Defence Minister Carme Chacón and Defence Secretary Robert M. Gates, Spain declared it would be sending an extra 532 service members to Afghanistan before the national elections on 20 August 2009. Gates spoke of US appreciation for Spain’s continued involvement in the GWOT: “we talked a good bit about Afghanistan and I expressed our appreciation for all that Spain is doing there, including the additional troops that were announced last week in time for election security.” Chacón elaborated on this when she spoke about cooperation over counter-piracy initiatives and building up of the military-to-military relations between Spain and the United States. She stressed Spain’s commitment and belief in the strategy in Afghanistan and underlined its determination to provide governance and economic support to Afghanistan. Gates on his part confirmed the importance of this meeting when he said “all in all, we had a very broad, wide-ranging conversation […] we look forward to the high-level meetings this

fall, and look forward to a bold and ambitious agenda.” Gates went on to confirm that the relationship between the US and Spain was “excellent.”

Yet, following two attacks in the Sabzak Pass against Spanish troops, where one Spanish soldier was injured and 13 insurgents were killed, and aware of the lack of public support for an on-going presence in Afghanistan, Chacón requested to appear before Parliament to report on the situation in the country. Chacón spoke to Spanish television about the attack in Sabzak, describing it as “one of the worst” that the Spanish mission in Afghanistan had encountered in its seven years there, she went on to declare that avoiding civilian casualties “was fundamental” to Spain. “We’re very aware, and so are our troops, that we’re working on maximum alert, that this is the hardest, most complex and riskiest mission that Spain has engaged in,” stressed Chacón, and she continued by saying that she would ask Parliament for an increased Spanish presence in Afghanistan if conditions required it. Deputy Prime Minister Maria Teresa Fernández de la Vega confirmed this by saying that once the government had evaluated security situation, a decision would be disclosed to Parliament. Simultaneously, in an interview with The New York Times, Prime Minister Zapatero said that the 450 extra troops sent out to bolster the security for the general elections would remain there after the elections. Indeed, the US urged its allies to send new troops to help fight the resurgent Taliban and back up the hard-pressed allied coalition. De la Vega announced that Spain wanted to further contribute to the NATO led mission to bring peace to Afghanistan. By September 2009, the Spanish government went even

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159 Ibid.
160 “Spanish Troops Repel an Insurgent Attack in Afghanistan”, La Moncloa, Gobierno de España, 03 September 2009.
161 “Spain mulls sending more troops to Afghanistan”, 5 September 2009, www.theindian.com/.../spain-mulls-sending-more-troops-to-afghanistan_100243028.html -
further and agreed to send an extra 220 troops to Afghanistan. De la Vega announced that the new troops were to provide increased security for the troops who are already there, many of which were tasked with the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, and went on to say that the Presidential elections in Afghanistan “will be followed by legislative and local ones in 2010, and thus the extra troops were being sent out at an extremely important time.” However, considering the Spanish public’s sensitivity to foreign troop deployment, she was quick to add that the new troop deployment was ‘in line with its international commitment, Spain contributed to the reinforcement of the peacekeeping mission, “which as you know NATO is carrying out with a mandate from the United Nations”.’\(^{162}\) NATO was imploring all of its members to intensify their commitment to Afghanistan in order to guarantee that the biggest and most ambitious mission in the alliance’s history, with a combined force of 43,000 soldiers, was a success.

8.13 Afghanistan Entrenched, Options Constrained

In spite of the slow start, the US military made huge strides and adapted to the demands of irregular warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq, and had begun to institutionalize these adaptations with its allies, including Spain. The importance of counterinsurgency and stability operations had been heightened and they were viewed as being of similar importance to the defensive operations and military offensive, as 2009 US Department of Defence (DOD) directives had shown.\(^{163}\) In spite of these developments, Spain refused to move its troops from its relatively safe positions in Northwest Afghanistan to the conflict-ridden south, due to security fears for its troops. Among these commitments


to make the NATO mission a success, was a strategy to deploy 70 training units to support and train the local police and military in Afghanistan. There were less than 50 training units in operation at that time, among those were two Spanish units which had 26 men each. As a means of appeasing both the Obama Administration and European voters, who were against sending more troops to the region, France took a different route and proposed to send EU gendarmes to train the paramilitary police in Afghanistan instead. The French proposal was to send officers from the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF), which was specifically set up in 2004 to deal with crisis management, whose mission would be the training of the Afghan security forces. However, France was alone in this stance as most EU countries were of the belief that that EGF forces should form a part of the NATO mission in Afghanistan, as opposed to an EU mission, which was France’s belief. Spain’s Ministry of Defence thus said that there were enough problems that needed to be addressed in the west and its troops should stay there. Germany took a similar position to Spain and repeatedly refused to move its soldiers to the more dangerous southern part of Afghanistan. The combat situation in the southern area of Afghanistan was more precarious because the Taliban were more entrenched and thus the fighting was more intense. However, Spain’s position was nuanced, in spite of fears over increasing troop deployment, as back in March 2009 Spain sent an additional four aircraft with 36 military staff. Their aim was to give aerial reconnaissance, thereby reducing the number of ground patrols, which have proven to be the most vulnerable to rebel attack, that were needed. Yet, by fall 2009 defence experts in Madrid believed the time had come to have a complete rethink of their country's mission, once NATO decided on its mid-term strategy. Among the proposals were plans to work alongside the civilian population in Afghanistan more closely, so that the good done by the Allied reconstruction efforts might prevent locals

from supporting the rebels. The Spanish troops had already made encouraging steps in the Badghis province, where they worked alongside Afghan security forces to protect Spanish NGOs. Furthermore, the presence of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation in the area saw roads and hospitals being built, homes being connected to electricity and the provision of drinking water and sewers. Indeed, the presence of Spanish troops in Afghanistan had a positive effect on US–Spanish bilateral relations. By that stage Zapatero’s government was concerned not to overstep the mark with public opinion that saw a huge defeat for Aznar Administration following 90 per cent opposition to the war in Iraq back in 2003. Yet, the speech given by Obama on 13 October 2009 on engagement in Afghanistan reassured Zapatero’s Administration of a need to continue its bilateral cooperation and to enhance its strategic ties in the Global War on Terror. During the speech on US-Spanish relations, Obama said: “Our engagement in Afghanistan is firm, is solid. And we’re guaranteeing the reality, the security, reducing radicalism and Taliban is essential in order to make it possible for their people to have a future. And we will continue working together in our cooperation in Afghanistan with our training in security matters and also with economic support. [...] I will tell you that our principal goal remains to root out al-Qaeda and its extremist allies that can launch attacks against the United States or its allies. That’s our principal mission. We are also obviously interested in stability in the region, and that includes not only Afghanistan, but also Pakistan.” Yet, interestingly the speech did not mention the importance of US continued access to military bases in Spain, used both for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The downplaying of importance on one side could have been due to the US Administration’s carrot and stick policy towards its allies. On the other hand, the Obama government was possibly refraining from publicizing the

sensitive issue of electoral politics in Spain, in order to protect the cornerstone of US-Spanish relations, that since the death of Franco saw three decades of active use of the bases, which consequently enhanced Spain’s standing in the world affairs.

8.14 The Spanish Approach: a Remedy for Global Governance?

“Spain and the G-20: A Strategic Proposal for Enhancing its Role in Global Governance” published by the Elcano Royal Institute in 2009 pointed out that in spite of the fact that the country ranked eighth in the world economy, it was still regarded as a lightweight in international affairs. Spain’s invitation to the spring 2009 enlarged G-20 summit was in no doubt last minute and came only after intense diplomatic lobbying. However Zapatero did not contribute a great deal to the G-20 discussions. On many of the key policy issues confronting the EU – such as Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, financial regulation, Eurozone governance and climate change – the Spanish voice was muted. The paper stated that whilst it was obvious that the economic crisis had hit Spain hard, it was “up to the government to tap the opportunities that the crisis provides in order to give the country a stable spot in the new world order, one that allows it to use its full potential as a global player. In order to do this, besides the structural reforms needed at the domestic level, the Zapatero government must embrace a foreign policy with greater strategic clarity, and more strength and effectiveness.” It also highlighted that “the structural problem of Spain’s small military budget (the lowest in NATO, when measured as a percentage of GDP) or its small number of diplomats and diplomatic missions (less than those of the Netherlands or Sweden) must be addressed if

Spain wants to achieve its goal of playing a greater role in the process of globalisation." It is safe to assume that this would call for just the right blend of “soft” and “hard” power. The paper called for greater involvement from political parties, trade unions and business associations in order to execute a direct and long lasting influence over everyday citizens and in order to bring about intellectual thought and debate on Spain’s role in the world. It concluded that “One cannot forget that an effective foreign policy depends to a large extent on domestic strength. While Spain’s main overseas asset is its success at home, its main challenge also lies in its obvious domestic shortcomings.”

Many commentators have highlighted that wars abroad must be accompanied by stepped-up effect on jobs and social services and the further provision of democratic rights. Two out of three Spaniards thought that it would be good for Spain to mediate between the US and Muslim countries or between the US and Cuba. Fifty five per cent also agreed with contributing financially to the reconstruction of Iraq. However, 63 per cent rejected the possibility of accepting Guantanamo prisoners in Spain, opening up more US military bases in Spanish territory or purchasing weapons from the US. Given the concern about the economic situation, for two out of every three Spaniards, the priority objective was the fight against the international financial crisis, far ahead of gender equality (24 per cent) and relations with the US (4 per cent). Nevertheless, seventy three per cent of Spaniards believed that the US would continue to be the world’s leading power after the international financial crisis. When in fall 2009 Spain was preparing to take over the six-month rotating EU Presidency in January 2010,

170 Ibid.
171 Barometer of the Elcano Royal Institute (BRIE), 20th Wave, Results of March –April 2009 Press Summary, www.royalinstitutoelcano.org
Zapatero’s party campaign was already trying to sell him as “Europe’s Obama.”

What these revelations do highlight is that the US-Spanish association remained as intriguing as ever.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined how consecutive Spanish governments used political and strategic ties with the United States to achieve their own policy goals. The analysis was undertaken by compiling an in-depth study of high level diplomatic and governmental motivations for engaging with the US. From the period of General Francisco Franco to the post Jose Maria Aznar era, the ties between the US and Spain became increasingly deep and were based, in large part, on the US use of military bases in Spain. The study looked at the changing contexts of the US-Spanish relationship under all Spanish governments from 1953 to the mid-2009.

The 1953 Madrid Pact marked the birth of modern Spanish-US relations, it was based on mutual need, but there were divergent aims. General Franco desired increased international recognition to escape post-World War II isolation. This position contrasted with that of the US, who saw bases in Spain as a key link in the chain of defence against the Soviet Union. The pact achieved the US’s short and medium term goals, but also contained within it seeds of future anti-Americanism. This sentiment arose as the bases were seen as an imposition by an imperial power, and were associated, in the eyes of opposition politicians and much of public opinion, with the support of Franco. This led to anti-Americanism which has characterized, and still characterizes, much of the Spanish political discourse.

The continued use by the US military of Spanish bases would remain a key plank in the relationship between the US and Spain for the much of the period examined. This study has shown how this was particularly true with the end of the Franco regime when the possibility arose that Spain might assume the neutral status in the Cold War context.
The idea of losing military bases led the US to upgrade the pact to a treaty, in the process diminishing its asymmetrical nature. Spanish aims in the negotiations were not only to rebalance the relationship, but also to move forward in the pursuit of NATO membership, with the intention of ending Spain’s marginalisation from the European community.

This thesis has shown how successive Spanish governments have viewed close ties with the US very pragmatically, as a means to achieve their own policy objectives. This pragmatism was vividly in evidence during the Socialist government of Felipe Gonzalez dates. The ideological association between the US government and the regime of Franco was one of the key reasons that the Gonzalez government put Spain’s partial NATO membership to a referendum vote. However, the wording of the referendum – voters were not asked whether they wished to be part of NATO or not, but merely to ratify membership – demonstrates that it was a fait accompli in the minds of Socialist leaders. This indicates that anti-Americanism was tempered by the realization that Spain gained geopolitically from having the US as an ally. In this instance, membership of NATO was a key step towards membership of the EEC, an achievement that brought increased trade and community funds to Spain. Further to the desire to integrate Spain into the political and economic architecture of Europe, this study has shown that the PSOE also thought closer European links would weaken Francoist sentiment inside Spain. The 1988 bilateral agreement indicated the new direction of US-Spanish ties with a move away from a transactional model of “bases for dollars” to a partnership of equals built on military, industrial, scientific and cultural ties. Nevertheless, despite the new dynamic ‘base politics’ clearly brought both military, political, financial, cultural and social rewards particularly as the relationship became increasing multi-dimensional.
Whereas previous Spanish leaders saw US ties as a means to further their own ends, whether in ending isolation, or joining the European Community, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar saw Spain’s interests as being totally aligned with those of the US. The thesis showed how Aznar’s Atlanticism did usher in a new era of closeness between the US and Spain. Gone was the reluctant pragmatism of the Gonzalez, replaced by a “Special Relationship”, the same shared by Great Britain and the US. This ideological commitment to the US would prove the key to both Aznar’s successes and his undoing. The close working relationship between Aznar and George W. Bush gave the former some notable foreign and domestic policy victories. Success could be seen in the struggle against ETA, as the changed political environment of the post 9/11 era, allowed Aznar to fight ETA more effectively at home, by fighting them more effectively abroad. ETA was swiftly placed on the US’ terrorist list, whilst by May 2003 Batasuna were placed on the EU list of terrorist organisations. Through supporting Bush’s Manichean worldview, Spain gained important foreign policy influence. Outside the EU there was the favourable resolution of the Island of Parsley dispute, and within the EU, Spain also increased its influence.

However, the support for the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 came at the cost of Aznar’s disconnection from Spanish public opinion. While the M-11 train bombing of 11 March 2004 turned the people of Spain against Aznar, much of the damage had been done already. The election of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero saw political and strategic ties with the US move away from the close personal and ideological affinity shared by the Aznar and Bush Administrations, towards a more pragmatic view. This shift in orientation was in keeping with Spanish policy from 1953 to 1996, where close ties to the US were a means, not an end. Though in comparison to the previous close bond, and the polarizing nature of the unilateral approach of the Bush Administration, this return
into the norm seemed more radical than it was. The heterodox positions adopted by Zapatero in the Middle East, coupled with support for John Kerry, Gerhard Schroder and especially Hugo Chavez exacerbated tensions. The subsequent breakdown of the relationship between Madrid and Washington did lead to reverses for Spain. What this study has shown, however, is that regardless of the tensions between the US and Spain, the validity of the military bases was not questioned.

This study has shown that Zapatero believed that Spain could engage with the world, on a global stage, without being a subservient partner to the United States. The action in Afghanistan should be seen in that context. By providing a large contingent to the UN force, Spain remains engaged globally, showing itself to be a key contributor to the international community. The choice of war – Afghanistan and not Iraq – indicates that Spain wishes to participate in the UN, not US, sanctioned war.

How will the ties between the US and Spain develop in the twenty first century? This thesis has shown that the relationship with the United States is new one of mutual dependence. The Cold War ended Spain’s strategic defence role against the USSR, though as this coincided with the rise of US military operations in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia and the GWOT, the importance of US bases in Spain has remained high. The special relationship, which these bases create, will continue as long as American geopolitical interests require bases. Bearing in mind the continued volatility in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia, there will be a clear short, medium and long-term necessity for projecting American power.

Despite the vastly different views and short-term strategic interests of Spanish and American leaders from the time of Franco over half a century ago, the reality is, rhetoric
aside, that the US-Spanish bilateral relationship was defined by fundamental strategic mutual interest of transcending political differences, domestic resentment and the ebbs and flows of external factors that took Spain from isolation to influence. It is this dynamic that is at the cone of this thesis.
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