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# SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY AND THE IMPACT OF IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE

*Cara Skola*



## **Introduction**

Within the first weeks of his administration, Spain's prime minister-elect in 2004, Socialist leader Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, redefined the country's relationship with both the United States and Europe. After eight years of conservative rule under former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, who had prioritized Spain's relationship with the United States over that with Europe, Zapatero announced plans to restore strong ties to the European Union (EU). Spain must belong to "the heart of Europe," Zapatero told one reporter following his election win. (EU Business, Sept. 13, 2004) As I will discuss in this article, Zapatero's new plan for Spanish foreign policy is characteristic of Socialist ideals, which are intricately linked to both the party's development and internal evolution.

Since 1982, seven years after the death of General Franco and four years after the formal

establishment of constitutional democracy, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the conservative Partido Popular (PP) have dominated national politics in Spain. The PSOE, led by Felipe Gonzalez, was first elected in October 1982 and was re-elected on three subsequent occasions — 1986, 1989, and 1993. Power shifted hands in 1996 but returned to the Socialists in 2004, this time led by Zapatero. Founded in May 1879, the PSOE is the oldest party in Spain and one of the oldest in Europe. Traditionally, the party stands for the working class and was largely inspired by Marx; however, within the past two decades it has deliberately moved toward the center-left in an attempt to widen its electoral appeal. (Newton and Donaghy, p. 189)

On the other hand, the PP first gained power in 1996 under the leadership of Aznar, who was re-elected in 2000 and remained in power until 2004. Unlike the PSOE, the center-right party has modern origins. First called the

Popular Alliance, the party was founded in 1976 as a loose coalition of seven right-wing groups. After several poor performances in the elections, the party regrouped in 1989, adopted a new name (Partido Popular), and resolved to create a tightly structured party dedicated to incorporating the three main political strands of Spanish conservatism, liberalism, and Christian democracy. (Newton and Donaghy, p. 200)

Though the parties have different origins and naturally advocate opposite sides of the political spectrum, Europe, specifically the EU, has been crucial to the construction and development of foreign policy for the Socialists and conservatives alike. Following the death of General Franco, who left Spain isolated as an international pariah after 36 years of authoritarian rule, both Socialist and conservative leaders openly desired EU membership (then the EC — European Community). The EC was generally perceived as the means to a prosperous economy, as well as a symbol of political progress and an end to isolation. As a result of these views, both parties were overwhelmingly satisfied when Spain gained EC entry in January 1986.

Despite their common enthusiasm for EC membership, Socialist and conservative attitudes toward Europe diverged as both the parties and the country evolved. Broadly speaking, Socialist beliefs about Europe corresponded with existing EC policy and thus each enhanced the other. (Torreblanca, p. 2) Conservative beliefs about Europe, however, largely conflicted with EC goals and practices, which caused tension between the party and Europe to spread. (Torreblanca, p. 2) Overall, these beliefs contributed to the development of party principles and help give context to Zapatero's Socialist shift.

This article considers the reasons for Zapatero's foreign policy shift, as well as the ways it may affect Spain's ability to assert its power abroad and protect its interests within the framework of the EU. It explores Socialist and conservative identities in Spain to shed light on the shift, which are based on history and tradition, as well as the evolution of international perceptions of Spain and popular Spanish attitudes toward Europe. In addition,

the article argues that Zapatero's new policy plan has the potential to benefit Spain and increase its status within the EU. However, to achieve such benefits, Zapatero must deliberately assert Spain's authority abroad, as Aznar did, and resist pursuing a passive foreign policy agenda based on Socialist traditions and principles from the past.

## **Spain's History as an International Pariah**

Spain's history as an international pariah resulted broadly from two historical legacies: *recogimiento* and Franco's opportunism. In brief, *recogimiento* meant Spain's recognition of its own self-importance. The concept was founded by a nineteenth century statesman, Antonio Canovas del Castillo, and idealized isolationism and encouraged Spaniards to feel proud of being different. Franco's regime, which began in 1939, advanced the concept until his death in 1975 by encouraging a nationalistic identity in Spain based on the myths of empire, language, statehood, and religion. (Torreblanca, p. 23) "Spain was not isolated, the official propaganda argued, but self-excluded from a world where two options dominated: liberalism, whose individualism was a dangerous source of corruption of Catholic values and personal ethics, and Communism, which was simply evil," says Jose Torreblanca, senior analyst for *Real Instituto Elcano* in Spain. (Torreblanca, p. 23)

In addition to its history of self-exclusion, Spain's pariah status resulted from Franco's opportunism during World War II and the immediate post-war years. The devastation caused by civil war, 1936–1939, left Franco few foreign policy options during World War II, largely because of Spain's war-damaged economy and scarce resources. He sympathized with the Axis powers and openly opposed the Allies; yet he resisted pressure to commit troops to battle and declared a policy of neutrality in the opening days of war. The policy, however, was not without ulterior motives. "It was as important to Franco to gain international recognition at the time of war, as a nationalist/Fascist leader, as to distance himself from the Germans by proclaiming his neutrality and independence, in

case the Germans lost the war,” says Benny Pollack in *The Paradox of Spanish Foreign Policy*. (Pollack, p. 5)

Franco shifted Spain’s policy of neutrality to one of non-belligerency following Germany’s early success, which suggested Spain’s full military commitment to the Axis powers was near. When the Allied powers regained control, however, Franco abandoned this policy and adopted a stance of “benevolent neutrality” toward the Allies in hopes to gain their favor. Despite this change in policy, liberated Europe and the international community were quite eager to punish the dictator for his opportunistic behavior during the war and subsequently denied Spain membership in the United Nations (UN) at its conception in 1945.

Ten years later, the UN approved Spain’s membership — the culmination of a complicated process of pressures prompted by Cold War necessities. (Pollack, p. 24) United States President Harry S. Truman worked especially hard to build Spain’s international legitimacy because he was anxious to create an alliance against the Soviet Union. Similarly, United States policy-makers and intelligence officers worked to facilitate Spain’s integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). (Pollack, p. 25)

Europe’s policy approach, however, was less pragmatic than Truman’s. Mistrust and caution caused most European leaders to resist Spanish integration even after Franco’s death in 1975. As a result of their resistance, Spain was slow to join the international community. Between 1976 and 1978, however, Spain made considerable progress toward consolidating democracy and affecting political reform. For example, on June 15, 1977, Spain held national elections for the first time in forty years. Similarly, in December 1978 Spain established its first democratic constitution since 1931 after more than a year of cooperation among all the major parties represented in Parliament. (Newton and Donaghy, p. 5) Both events triggered acceptance abroad and the start of Spain’s return to the international community, a return which culminated on January 1, 1986, when Spain gained entry into the EC.

## **Franco’s Legacy and Party Identities in Spain**

While both the Socialists, under the leadership of Gonzalez, and the conservatives, led by Aznar, advanced their post-Franco policies within the same symbolic framework of seeking international acceptance and appeal (Torreblanca, p. 27), the parties had different views of Europe based on different beliefs about Franco and the legacy he left behind. To the Socialists, Francoism is “a parenthesis in Spanish history, an anomaly proving Spanish backwardness, isolation temptations, and the incapacity of its elite to modernize the country.” (Torreblanca, p. 25) To the conservatives, however, Francoism is hailed as successful, seen as establishing the socioeconomic basis which would make democracy possible later on. (Torreblanca, p. 25) These beliefs directly affected Socialist and conservative identities, as well as the foreign policy goals of Gonzalez and Aznar.

The Socialist party, on the one hand, was influenced by the vision of European integration as an opportunity to modernize Spain. As a result of this vision, “Europe” became an integral part of the party’s foundational identity, causing post-Franco Socialists to show true enthusiasm about EC/EU foreign policy cooperation and convergence. (Torreblanca, p. 24) As Torreblanca says, the result was that in 1996, after 14 years of Socialist rule and 10 years of EC/EU membership,

Spanish foreign policy had acquired a clear EU profile: all 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. (Torreblanca, p. 11)

According to Torreblanca, “As Gonzalez himself put it, Europe had become ‘the frontier of our ambitions,’ meaning that, in his view, Spaniards could achieve little or nothing of their collective project beyond or without the EU.” (Torreblanca, p. 25)

On the other hand, Aznar and the conservative PP were influenced by a different view of Europe and therefore took a different approach to integration. Like the Socialists, the party is firmly committed to the EU. However, the conservatives generally favor the “Europe of nations” concept rather than that of a “federal Europe.” (Newton and Donaghy, p. 202) This means that the party prefers the idea of the EU as an intergovernmental organization where each member-state retains its sovereign identity and exercises its national interests within the EU’s framework. One (unidentified) political leader from Aznar’s party exemplified this ideal in an interview with Menendez-Alarcon, director of the International Studies program at Butler University and Assistant Professor of Sociology. According to Menendez-Alarcon, the leader said,

I support the idea of the European Union in terms of agreements among states, particularly on economic matters, defense, peace agreements, and the fight against crime, but I think we should try hard to keep our own state and keep Spain as an independent country with its own army and particular culture. (Menendez-Alarcon, p. 340)

This concept opposes that of a federal Europe where the EU as an institution acts as a supranational power and supercedes the general interests and identities of its member-states. As a result of this view, the conservative party is equally committed to transatlantic ties and does not advocate Europe as central to Spanish success like the Socialists.

### **International Legitimacy and Its Effect on Foreign Policy**

Just as Spanish history and party identities have affected the foreign policies of both the Socialist and conservative governments, each party’s policy agenda has also been affected by the degree to which the international community has perceived Spain as a legitimate and capable contender in foreign affairs. In other words, Spain’s ability to promote its policy agenda within the framework of the EC/EU has largely depended on its status and reputation within Europe, which was linked to its

progress and development as a democracy. That said, Gonzalez had fewer opportunities than Aznar to maneuver 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.

Foreign policy during Gonzalez’s Socialist rule was therefore as much a product of the times as it was a product of party identity and history’s effect on party ideals. When Spain entered the EC in 1986, Gonzalez had been in power for almost four years, and Spain had been formally established as a constitutional democracy for almost eight. Yet at this time, and despite concentrated efforts to promote economic progress and modernize political institutions, other Europeans viewed Spain as a backward, rural, and conservative society. (Menendez-Alarcon, p. 334) Europeanization thus became a prerequisite for having the EC serve Spain’s national interests. (Torreblanca, p. 15) This meant that Gonzalez, especially during Spain’s early years as an EC member-state, was largely confined to adopting European standards when devising Spanish policy. The effects of his confines are evident, for example, in Spain’s policy on Latin America during the 1980s. In 1982, when Gonzalez first gained power, Foreign Minister Fernando Moran asserted that maintaining a “special relationship” with Latin America would contribute to Spain’s overall clout in international affairs and boost its value to the EC and the United States. Gonzalez, however, and Moran’s successor in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Fernandez Ordonez (1985–1992), opted to assume the EC’s policy on Latin America before seeking to lead and manage Europe’s relationship with the region. (Torreblanca, p. 12) This decision was the direct result of Gonzalez’s awareness of the workings of international politics. He knew that Spain needed to gain trust and confidence internationally before he could assert Spanish interests abroad. Foreign policy under Gonzalez, therefore, was intricately linked to the EC because of history and party identity but also because of the sheer timing of Socialist rule.

In 1996, when Aznar first gained power, Spain’s political and economic climate was completely different than when Gonzalez had inherited it. As Torreblanca has said, “Spain’s

foreign policy had suffered a radical transformation: a country that had not participated in either of the century's world wars and which had not been a founding member of the UN was now a full member of the international, Western and European community." (Torreblanca, p. 7) In addition, Spanish troops, who had previously been seen fighting abroad only in colonial wars, had participated in both the Gulf War and twelve peacekeeping operations around the world (Torreblanca, p. 7), which indicated Spain's full and faithful commitment to its international allies.

Spain's economic transformation was equally impressive. According to Menendez-Alarcon, data provided by the Instituto Nacional de Estadisticas in 1996 show that between 1985 and 1995 the Spanish economy grew three percent per year on average and per capita income increased by 41 percent overall. In addition, per capita income rose from 66 percent of the EU average in 1986 to 77 percent in 1995. As a result of these changes that occurred pre-Aznar, the conservative government had the ability to immediately promote Spanish interests abroad, whereas Gonzalez's Socialists were compelled to first gain credibility in international affairs.

### **Changing Public Attitudes under Gonzalez**

The Socialist and conservative policies that were deeply rooted in history, and linked to both party identity and international perceptions of Spain, were partly affected by public attitudes toward Europe as well. When Gonzalez first gained power in 1982 and when Spain joined the EC in 1986, few Spaniards rejected the idea of membership. Overall, Spaniards were content to become part of the select club of developed and democratic nations, having been isolated from Europe for a half century, and looked forward to the structural and cohesion funds Spain would receive from the EC. (Menendez-Alarcon, p. 333) Since the early 1990s, however, support for the EU has dwindled; this change in public attitudes coincides with the Socialist-conservative power shift in 1996 when Aznar won elections after 14 years of Gonzalez's rule.

According to Menendez-Alarcon, who cites

Eurobarometer public opinion polls, almost 70 percent of Spaniards felt positive about belonging to the EC at the end of the 1980s. By 1996, however, this proportion declined to 51 percent. Similarly, the proportion of people who viewed membership as negative for Spain grew from 9 percent in 1986 to 20 percent in 1997; and the proportion of those who considered membership neither negative nor positive increased from 21 percent in 1986 to 26 percent in 1997. In general, these changes in public attitudes were the result of two things: economic grievances and a growing concern over the preservation of Spanish sovereignty and national identity.

In macroeconomic and purely financial terms, membership in the EU has contributed to Spain's overall economic growth. (Menendez-Alarcon, p. 335) "Indeed, if we include in the analysis both the commercial exchange and resources received by Spain from the structural and cohesion funds," says Menendez-Alarcon, "there is a small net positive balance for 1986-1995." (Menendez-Alarcon, p. 225) Despite this, the public's perception of the effects of the EU on Spain's economy was poor: the difference between those who expected EU effects on Spain's economy to be good and those who considered them to be bad was 40 percentage points in 1991 and only 5 points in 1995. (Perez-Diaz, p. 127) Similarly, the difference between those who considered the effects of the EU on Spain's job market to be good and those who thought them to be bad, which was negligible in 1991, went down to *minus* 25 points in 1995. (Perez-Diaz, pp. 127-28) The overall result of these attitudes was a growing frustration with Gonzalez's constant support for Europe.

This frustration intensified when, during the early- to mid-1990s, several key events regarding Spain's relations with the EU caused a rise in nationalistic feelings among Spaniards. Menendez-Alarcon cites several of these events. He says:

In 1993, the Spanish government hoped to obtain the headquarters of a relevant EU office such as the Environment Agency. Instead Spain was assigned the Office for Harmonization of the Internal Market, a much less prestigious orga-

nization. Again, in the second half of 1993 and early 1994, during the negotiations for admission of the Nordic countries, the EU accepted none of Spain's main propositions regarding institutional reforms. Then, in 1995, Spain was engaged in a confrontation with Canada over fishing rights; many respondents<sup>1</sup> believe that Canada was able to impose most of its conditions because Spain could not obtain solid backing from the EU. (Menendez-Alarcon, pp. 227–28)

A renewed focus inward emerged as a result of these events. Most Spaniards began viewing the EU as a distant, top-down power in contrast to local and national institutions, which were seen as providing a more meaningful context for social action and participation. (Menendez-Alarcon, p. 338) In addition, by 1995, the public usually ranked the national state first when it came to a choice of where to place the center of gravity of political decision-making, Spain or the EU. (Perez-Diaz, p. 128)

In spite of these views, Gonzalez did little to address the situation. In fact, according to Perez-Diaz, "In the view of the critics, the Spanish government was doing little more than preaching the virtues of nominal convergence of the European economies and repeating the mantra, 'we want to be among the core nations of the European Union.'" (Perez-Diaz, p. 127) In the end, Gonzalez's relative lack of attention to changing public attitudes about Europe contributed to his defeat in 1996. For the purpose of this article, however, it is important to see how this shift in attitude coincided with the start of conservative rule and thus how conservative policy, like that of the Socialists, was partly a product of its time. In Gonzalez's Socialist case, policy was limited by whether the international community perceived Spain as a legitimate and trustworthy contender in foreign

affairs. In Aznar's conservative case, the reverse occurred. Although conservative policy was not necessarily *limited* by popular perceptions of Europe, Aznar's government was compelled to take public attitudes into account when devising foreign policy. Fortunately for Aznar, traditional conservative views just so happened to correspond to public attitudes toward Europe at the time he was elected.

### **Aznar's Conservative Shift and Changes in International Affairs**

As discussed in the sections above, foreign policy under Aznar was affected by the same factors that shaped Gonzalez's agenda and dictated Spanish relations with the EU and the United States. First, Aznar's conservative policies largely resulted from his party's identity and specific interpretation of Spanish history, particularly of Franco's regime. Second, Aznar's policies, like those of Gonzalez, were influenced by international perceptions of Spain, which affected Spain's overall clout in European and global affairs. And third, foreign policy during Aznar's and Gonzalez's rules was affected by popular Spanish attitudes toward Europe, which changed dramatically from the time Spain gained EC entry in 1986 to the time Aznar gained national power in 1996, and again from the time Aznar gained power to the time his party lost elections in 2004.

Generally speaking, each of these factors caused Gonzalez to assume EC/EU policies as part of Spain's own foreign agenda. Paradoxically, these same factors, which took on different characteristics during Aznar's rule, allowed the conservative leader to firmly assert national interests abroad. Therefore, when Aznar assumed office, he initiated policy based on two broad goals: to make Spain more visible at the international level and to make Spain more respected within the EU. These goals were carried out in three distinct ways.

First, Aznar abandoned Spain's Europeanist path to prioritize the country's relationship with Washington and the United States. This change is best exemplified by Aznar's public support of the Anglo-American bombing of Iraq in 1998, as well as his support for United States president George W. Bush during the U.S.-led

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<sup>1</sup>Menendez-Alarcon collected empirical data "based on in-depth, semi-structured individual interviews conducted in different regions of Spain in 1996, 1997, and 1998." (Menendez-Alarcon, 2000, p. 333) He used this technique of research "to try to gather data on people's perceptions beyond the official declarations of leaders, as reported in newspapers, and more in-depth information on perceptions than the surveys generally offer." (Menendez-Alarcon, p. 333)

invasion of Iraq in 2001. In the first case, Aznar was the sole Continental leader to support the bombing while in the second he was one of few European nations to join Bush in the preemptive strike against Iraq.

Second, Aznar sought new, more pragmatic alliances within Europe to strengthen Spain's political weight within the EU. This approach to policy contrasted with that of his predecessor, who had remained committed to the Franco-German alliance, traditionally considered the engine of Europe, throughout his 14-year rule. Whereas Gonzalez had perceived adherence to the Franco-German partnership as automatically beneficial for Spain (Closa, p. 7), Aznar looked toward the axis with a more critical eye. The conservative prime minister therefore worked to promote himself as leader of a Europe that no longer admitted to Franco-German hegemony. (Lecha)

Third, Aznar maintained a liberal view of socioeconomic integration in Europe which opposed the federalizing initiatives of his predecessor. According to Closa, Aznar's main contribution to socioeconomic reform was the Strategy for Sustainable Development initiative jointly presented with British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The initiative rested on three pillars including: (1) progress toward an economy and a society based on knowledge, a pillar that would be accomplished through the implementation of new R&D policies, structural economic reform, and the completion of the single market; (2) modernization of the European social model based on new employment policies, greater investment in human capital, and measures to prevent social exclusion; and (3) stable economic growth secured by deregulation and other economic reforms. (Closa, p. 8)

Each of these three policy reforms was consistent with the conservative party's traditional identity and specific interpretation of Spanish history. Whereas the Socialist party viewed Franco's isolationism as a symbol of backwardness and thus found solace in Europeanizing national policy after the dictator's death during Gonzalez's rule, the conservative party saw Francoism as contributing to the socioeconomic basis of Spanish democracy. As a result of this view, Aznar and the PP have neither felt nor acted on the "need" to

assume EC/EU policy as perceived by Gonzalez and the PSOE, and therefore pursued the reforms described above.

In addition, two of the PP's three broad policy changes directly affected Spain's status in international affairs and political pull within Europe. The first change, Aznar's decision to abandon Spain's Europeanist path and prioritize ties to the United States, ultimately resulted in the emergence of an alliance with Bush during the Iraq War that began in 2001. According to the director of the European Security Policy Training Course at the Geneva Center for Security Policy, Julian Lindley-French, this alliance allowed Spain to demonstrate its close friendship with the world's only superpower and thus emerge as no longer a follower but as a co-leader in European affairs. (Lindley-French, p. 3) "Iraq enabled Spain to return to the top table of power at a key moment in both European and transatlantic politics," Lindley-French says. This made it "more difficult not just for France and Germany to 'lead' Europe but also for Britain, France, and Germany to exclude Spain from a *tri-rectoire* should they reach an accommodation at some time in the future." (Lindley-French, p. 3)

In addition, Aznar and the PP publicly framed Spain's alliance with the United States as both privileged and necessary for Europe and the continued cohesion of international affairs. In 2003, Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs during Aznar's rule, Ana Palacio, expressed the party's perceived necessity of this link as it related to international security and defense. She said:

From the beginning, the development of the [European Security and Defense 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 management. (Palacio, p. 79)



This public frame, in addition to Spain's partnership with the United States during the Iraq War, contributed to a gain in international prestige during Aznar's rule. In June 2001 Bush helped seal this gain during a joint press conference with Aznar at the Moncloa Palace in Madrid. "Spain is a friend of the United States and President Aznar is a friend of mine," Bush said during his opening remarks at the press conference. "Spain is one of America's most reliable allies and one of the world's most dynamic societies. Spain has made one of Europe's most remarkable transitions to democracy and prosperity. It is now the world's eighth largest industrial economy. Mr. Aznar, you deserve a lot of credit." ("Joint Press Conference ...," p. 1) Bush's recognition of Spain as a friend and reliable ally publicly asserted the country's value to him and America, and implied Spain's value to the world. The end result: Aznar seemingly achieved at least one of the goals he set out to achieve at the beginning of his administration — to make Spain more visible at the international level.

Aznar's second broad policy change, the decision to pursue practical alliances within the EU as opposed to adhering to the Franco-German lead, also contributed to a gain in Spanish prestige abroad and an increase in Spain's political weight within Europe. This gain is best exemplified by Aznar's alliance with Poland's Leszek Miller at the December 2003 summit in Brussels. At the summit, Aznar and Miller jointly refused to relinquish their voting rights within the European Council as defined by the Nice Treaty in 2000. According to the treaty's system of weighted votes, Spain and Poland had almost the same number of votes as member-states with much larger populations including Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. (Chislett, p. 1) According to the voting scheme proposed at Brussels, however, which was based on a qualified majority formula instead of a weighted votes system, both countries would have lost a great amount of effective power within the EU. In the end, Aznar's alliance with Miller against the voting scheme proposed at Brussels allowed the two leaders to paralyze negotiations on the draft Constitution. Likewise, the outcome of this alliance signaled Spain's ability to exercise its political weight

within the EU and served as a demonstration of the country's political clout within Europe.

These same two policy changes (strengthening ties to the United States and forming new, more practical alliances within Europe) that contributed to Spain's overall gain in international status and political weight within Europe also contributed to an internal shift in public attitudes about the EU and Spain's role in politics abroad. Ironically, while Spain's link to the United States and its role in Iraq was in large part the reason for the country's increase in prestige during Aznar's rule, as argued above, most public opinion polls conducted during this time showed that a majority of Spaniards maintained conflicting feelings about the United States and overwhelmingly negative feelings about Spain's participation in the Iraq War. For example, a 2003 telephone survey of 1,204 Spanish nationals aged 18 and above conducted by *Transatlantic Trends and the Barometer of the Elcano Royal Institute* showed that a majority of respondents (37 percent) regarded the United States as Spain's closest friend. However, a minority (6 percent) considered the United States more important than Europe to Spanish foreign policy while 56 percent answered the opposite — that Europe is more important than the United States to Spanish foreign policy. In addition, 76 percent of respondents maintained a negative view of the international situation, and no fewer than 85 percent indicated that the Iraq War was not worth the trouble. Along with France, this is the highest percentage of popular opposition to the war in Europe, according to sources at the Elcano Royal Institute. Despite this result, 72 percent of respondents indicated that Spain should continue to play an active role in international politics.

Just as Gonzalez failed to pay adequate attention to changing public attitudes about Europe in the mid-1990s, which partially contributed to his election loss in 1996, Aznar did not fully consider public attitudes about the United States or the Iraq War in 2001–2004. Instead, like Gonzalez, who maintained close contact to Europe despite popular skepticism about the EU, Aznar remained staunchly allied with Bush during the war despite a public that desired otherwise. As discussed above, chang-

ing public attitudes under Gonzalez were largely consistent with Aznar's perceived policy approach at election time and subsequently coincided with the shift in government in 1996. The same appeared true almost ten years later. Zapatero's perceived policy approach, and particularly his pre-election pledge to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq, appeared more consistent with popular attitudes that had changed under Aznar. And although there is much debate about reasons for the shift in Spain's government that took place in 2004, most scholars agree that Aznar's failure to respond to public attitudes about Iraq contributed, in part, to his party's loss.

### **Zapatero's Socialist Shift and Its Implications for the Future of Spain**

While it is too soon to determine how the Spanish public will react to Zapatero's policy agenda, or how Spain's international status and political clout in Europe will change under Socialist rule, it is evident that Zapatero's initial shift in foreign policy was affected by both characteristics in ways similar to those that caused change under Aznar. 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 United States. Similarly, Zapatero's election win, like Aznar's, has coincided with changing Spanish attitudes toward Europe, the United States, and Spain's relationship to both. Despite these similarities, Zapatero's new policy plan contrasts with Aznar's and instead corresponds to party lines as defined by Gonzalez's Socialist rule.

For example, within days of his election win on March 14, 2004, Zapatero announced plans to reestablish a "magnificent" relationship with France and Germany and pledged that his government would be "deeply pro-European." (EU Business, Mar. 15, 2004) "Our top priority is to get back into Europe and be at one with Europe," said Miguel A. Moratinos, a member of the advisory committee of the Secretary General of the PSOE, at a conference held just days before general elections. (Moratinos, p. 1) This type of rhetoric mirrors

Gonzalez's Europeanist approach to policy; however, because the country's role in international affairs has dramatically changed since Gonzalez's rule, Zapatero has 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 can reprioritize relations with Europe as is characteristic of the PSOE yet also continue to assert Spanish authority abroad. This ability is most apparent in Spain's potential to play a major role in international affairs with regard to the future of EU security and defense.

Since the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks in the United States and the Madrid bombings that took place on March 11, 2004 (3/11), security and defense have become both inescapable and integral parts of EU policy development. In the past, the makeup of most European armed forces reflected decisions made after the Cold War. At that time, international security threats had diminished and defense budgets generally shifted toward other societal needs. (Lindley-French, p. 1) In today's post-9/11 and post-3/11 world, however, EU member-states have forcibly made a commitment to the progression of collective defense. For example, since 9/11, EU initiatives have included the following: the appointment of a security coordinator to coordinate the EU's efforts against terrorism; the increased exchange of information among law enforcement authorities; and the creation of a European CIA made up of an intelligence agency but no police force. (Montero, pp. 1–2) Against this background, Spain, led by Zapatero, is in a position to capitalize on its past history with terrorism and take a leading role in contributing to counter-terrorism efforts within the EU. Since 1959, Spain has been involved in an ongoing fight against ETA, a group of Basque separatists who use terror tactics in hopes of forming an independent state. ("Basque Fatherland ...") The group targets national and regional officials and government buildings in Spain, and almost killed Aznar in a car-bomb attack in 1995. ("Basque Fatherland ...") Thus, as a result of its past experience with ETA, Spain maintains both critical insight and unique perspective into the

workings of terror and how to counter terrorist threats.

## Conclusions

Since 1982, four years after the formal establishment of constitutional democracy in Spain, Socialist and conservative leaders have dominated national politics. Felipe Gonzalez, leader of the PSOE, was first elected in 1982 and reelected on three subsequent occasions — 1986, 1989, and 1993 — until power shifted hands in 1996 and conservative leader Jose Maria Aznar gained rule. Eight years later the Socialist party regained control, this time under the leadership of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Changes in foreign policy accompanied each shift in government and were primarily based on party identity, international perceptions of Spain, and popular Spanish attitudes toward Europe. However, while each of these aspects

consistently affected foreign policy when power changed hands, the varying characteristics of each aspect resulted in different policy pursuits under Gonzalez, Aznar, and Zapatero. Consequently, whereas Gonzalez had to assume a large degree of EU policy to gain credibility abroad, Aznar was able to pursue an agenda more independent of the EU because Spain had gained both prestige and a large degree of international trust by the time he won. Likewise, whereas popular Spanish perceptions of Europe gave Aznar reason to pursue stronger ties to the United States instead of Europe, a shift in these perceptions consequently gave Zapatero reason to reestablish ties to the EU. As a result of this shift and Spain's increased degree of prestige abroad, Zapatero has been able to both rekindle Socialist ideals as defined by Gonzalez and assert Spanish interests abroad as practiced by Aznar.

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