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The Sixteenth Nation – The historical
legacy of Spain from isolation to its entry
into NATO

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Abstract

Questo studio si prefigge di condurre un'analisi approfondita sulla storia, i tempi e le modalità che hanno consentito alla Spagna di aderire all'Alleanza Atlantica. Il primo capitolo si addentra nel contesto storico antecedente all'adesione della Spagna alla NATO, gettando luce sui complessi rapporti tra la Spagna franchista e le diverse amministrazioni statunitensi. Particolare enfasi viene posta sui Patti di Madrid del 1953, esaminando le complessità politiche e gli sviluppi che ne sono seguiti, plasmando il percorso della Spagna verso la NATO.

Il secondo capitolo si propone di esplorare in dettaglio l'effettiva integrazione della Spagna nella NATO. Si approfondiscono le opposizioni, sia interne che esterne, che hanno caratterizzato questo processo, analizzando le dinamiche politiche e le tensioni diplomatiche. Vengono altresì esaminate le ricadute positive sia per la Spagna che per l'Alleanza Atlantica, evidenziando gli impatti strategici e geopolitici. Il referendum del 1986 emerge come un momento cruciale, delineando il destino futuro dello stato spagnolo in seno all'Alleanza.

Il terzo e ultimo capitolo si concentra sul ruolo attivo svolto dalla Spagna all'interno della NATO, esaminando nel corso dei suoi 42 anni all'interno dell'Alleanza, sia gli aspetti militari attraverso un'analisi delle varie missioni partecipate, sia quelli diplomatici che hanno contribuito a plasmare la posizione internazionale del paese. La rilevanza della Spagna nel contesto NATO viene esplorata nei dettagli, sottolineando le sue influenze nella configurazione geopolitica globale.

In conclusione, questo studio si propone di sottolineare come la Spagna, benché possa apparire come uno stato di dimensioni modeste e con influenza limitata, abbia esercitato un impatto straordinario, non solo in ambito europeo ma anche a livello mondiale, evidenziando il suo ruolo dinamico e significativo nella comunità internazionale.

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Introduction

This thesis embarks on a nuanced exploration of Spain's involvement in the Atlantic Alliance, seeking to unravel the historical intricacies, chronological developments, and underlying mechanisms that facilitated its participation in NATO. The narrative unfolds in three interconnected chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of Spain's trajectory within this pivotal international alliance.

The decision to delve into this intricate historical tapestry is driven by the imperative to decipher the geopolitical and diplomatic nuances that define Spain's role within the global context. Despite its ostensibly modest size and influence, Spain's impact within NATO has been substantial, necessitating a detailed examination of the historical antecedents, opposition dynamics, and the transformative events that have shaped its position in the alliance.

The rationale behind this research lies in the recognition that Spain's integration into NATO is not merely a historical footnote but a critical episode that reflects broader geopolitical shifts and diplomatic alignments. By scrutinizing the historical context preceding Spain's NATO accession, including the relations between Francoist Spain and various U.S. administrations, and subsequently, the actual entry into NATO with a focus on the 1953 Madrid Agreements, this thesis aims to contribute to a more profound understanding of Spain's role in the international arena.

The research methodology employed in this inquiry is qualitative, drawing upon a diverse array of sources, including historical documentation, diplomatic archives, and scholarly analyses. This methodical approach enables a thorough examination of the multifaceted aspects of Spain's journey within NATO, encompassing not only military engagements but also diplomatic negotiations and strategic considerations.

The structure of the thesis is designed to provide a logical progression of insights. The first chapter navigates through the historical landscape, contextualizing the pre-NATO era and illuminating the significance of the 1953 Madrid Agreements. The second chapter scrutinizes Spain's accession into NATO, emphasizing opposition dynamics, mutual benefits, and the transformative 1986 referendum. The final chapter meticulously explores Spain's multifaceted role within NATO, encompassing both military contributions and diplomatic engagements.

As a culmination of this extensive exploration, the skills acquired in the course of researching and composing this thesis extend beyond the realm of historical analysis. The inquiry has fostered a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between historical context, geopolitical dynamics, and the complexities inherent in international alliances. This thesis, therefore, seeks not only to contribute to the academic discourse on Spain's role in NATO but also to enhance the broader understanding of the intricate connections between historical narratives and contemporary global affairs.

1. Chapter One: 1953

This first chapter of the thesis explores the historical foundations that shaped Spain's trajectory towards integration within the NATO framework. Being a European nation, Spain had to navigate a complex landscape marked by historical, political, and military dynamics, which affected its positioning within crucial decision-making forums. The chapter aims to unravel the intricacies surrounding Spain's historical isolation from forums where pivotal economic, political, and military decisions were made, accentuating its unique standing in Europe.

The opposition faced by Spain within certain NATO states cannot be attributed to a single factor. Rather, it was the result of a multifaceted interplay of historical, ideological, and psychological considerations. A pivotal moment in this historical narrative occurred with the signing of the U.S.-Spanish defense arrangements in 1953. This agreement conferred upon the United States strategic bases in Europe, thereby aligning Spain with the Western Alliance. Despite tacit approval from responsible defense officials within NATO states, this pact remained discreet, revealing the nuanced diplomatic landscape of the time.

Seventy-one years have passed since Spain and the United States of America entered into three significant economic and defense agreements. These agreements authorized the US government to "*develop, maintain and use military bases [...] in return for military and economic aid.*"¹ To comprehend the significance of the Madrid Pacts of 1953, a pivotal moment for Spain that granted the US strategic access to military bases and coincided with the country's departure from international isolation, it is

¹ Spain Emerges from Isolation - Rhea Marsh Smith - Current History, Vol. 47, No. 280 (DECEMBER, 1964), pp. 345-349, 366

essential to explore the events leading to Spain's isolation.² These pacts played a key role in shaping Spain's position within the Western Alliance, paving the way for subsequent integration into NATO. A thorough understanding of this historical context is vital for grasping the rationale behind Spain's diplomatic and strategic maneuvers, as discussed in the following chapters of this thesis.

1.1. Background

The relationship between the two countries - Spain and the United States of America - dates back to the end of the Second World War where the winning powers took various measures aimed at isolating Spain³.

There have been several international actions concerning the country. It was inevitable that the question of Spain would arise during the San Francisco Conference in the spring of 1945, given the association of Franco and the Axis, which was still fresh in people's memories. On June 19, 1945, Luis Quintanilla from Mexico, representing the state that was offering asylum to the Spanish Republican Government, introduced a resolution that stated that no state whose regime had been established with the help of the Axis could be admitted to the United Nations while that regime remained in power. He quoted Franco's message to Hitler, in which the former expressed his wish that Germany might "*reach its immortal destiny under the glorious sign of the swastika*"⁴, and concluded that the voice that spoke these words must never be heard in the international organization that had been created by the conference.

After this resolution was introduced, the French sent a note to the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, requesting them to join with it in asking the Security Council to consider the severance of diplomatic and

² Palma, "Los Pactos De Madrid De 1953: España Rompe Su Aislamiento Internacional."

³ *ibid*

⁴ The United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, California, April 25 to June 26, 1945, p. 571

economic relations with Spain as long as the Franco government remained in power.⁵

Indeed, at the beginning of Francisco Franco's regime, most countries did not recognize this "new" government due to its origins and its undemocratic nature. Even though Europe was dependent on Spanish supplies during the war and needed a source of non-dollar suppliers, Spain's political characteristics became more important.⁶ Public opinion called for tougher action against the Franco regime, which was seen as the last bastion of the authoritarian regimes against which the Second World War had been fought.

On March 4, 1946, the three governments issued a statement calling on the Spanish people to peacefully remove the Franco government, to avoid a civil war, and to form a new government of liberal and patriotic leaders.⁷

This statement is particularly interesting as it lays out the basic policy of the United States towards the Spanish question throughout most of the subsequent United Nations' discussions on this issue.

The United States was eventually forced to directly oppose the Security Council's consideration of the Spanish issue due to strong pressure from France. The State Department emphasized the importance of preventing the threat of another Spanish civil war by stating that, based on all available facts regarding the Spanish situation, it did not believe that there was a situation that could endanger international peace and security.⁸

At that time, there was a risk of the Spanish issue becoming intertwined with the Iranian crisis in the Security Council, which made French

⁵ Extracted from a letter sent January 18, 1950 and written by the Secretary of State to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

⁶ CARRASCO-GALLEGO, JOSÉ A. "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." *The Economic History Review* 65, no. 1 (2012): 91–119. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41475546>.

⁷ The United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, California, March 5, 1964

⁸ *Ibid.*, March 12, 1946. At the same time official quarters in London were expressing regret at having been "stampeded" by the French into going even so far as the tripartite declaration

alignment with the United States and Britain a very critical issue: if France continued to insist on Council action, it would likely align with the Soviet Union.⁹

Shortly after the Iranian crisis was resolved, the Polish government announced that they would bring up the Spanish issue in the Security Council. This move revealed the positions of the different powers involved: the United States and Great Britain wanted to get rid of Franco and forget about the non-intervention days, but they were worried that a Communist government would replace Franco and pose a threat to the Iberian Peninsula.

During the thirty-fourth meeting of the Security Council¹⁰, the Spanish question was brought up by Oscar Lange of Poland. He mentioned recent troop movements by Spain near the French frontier, as well as the presence of numerous Nazis and war criminals within Spanish borders. Lange also made allegations that Spain was involved in atomic research and production. He argued that this situation could endanger international peace and security, as outlined in Article 34 of the Charter. To address this concern, Lange introduced a resolution stating that under Articles 39 and 41, any member of the United Nations who had diplomatic relations with the Franco government should immediately sever those ties.¹¹

A blockade began when various UN Resolutions were made regarding the “*Spanish Question*”.¹² The discussion that followed mainly focused on two legal issues. Firstly, whether Chapter VII or Chapter VI of the Charter should be used - with Chapter VII allowing enforcement measures and Chapter VI only permitting recommendations by the Council. Secondly,

⁹ *Ibid.*, March 22, 23, 1946

¹⁰ Security Council official records, 34th year: 2113th meeting, 19 January 1979, New York

¹¹ Official Records, First Year: First Series, No. 2, (United Nations, Security Council), p. 167 ff.

¹² Wikipedia contributors, “Spanish Question (United Nations).”

whether the matter was one of domestic jurisdiction. After almost six weeks of study and investigations, a committee was formed, consisting of representatives from Australia, Brazil, China, France, and Poland. This committee presented its report and recommendations.¹³

The most significant conclusion reached by the committee was that the Franco government's activities were not a threat to peace as defined by Article 39. Instead, they amounted to "*a situation [...] the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security within the meaning of Article 34.*" This meant that Chapter VI was applicable, rather than Chapter VII, and this distinction would have far-reaching consequences. Regarding the question of domestic jurisdiction, the committee noted that the situation in Spain was of international concern. They stated that the Franco regime was being accused of threatening the maintenance of international peace and security and causing international friction. The allegations against the Franco regime went beyond the limits of domestic jurisdiction and concerned the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations was seen to be responsible for ensuring this duty was performed smoothly and efficiently.

The committee's findings led to two recommendations. The first was for the Security Council to endorse the tripartite declaration of March, 1946. The second was for the committee's evidence to be sent to the General Assembly, with a recommendation that if the principles of the declaration were not complied with, all members of the United Nations should terminate diplomatic relations with Spain immediately. However, the Soviet Union reacted negatively to the report. Gromyko¹⁴ emphasized their belief

¹³ Documents S/75 and S/76 (United Nations).

¹⁴ Andrei Andreyevich Gromyko was a Soviet politician and diplomat during the Cold War. He served as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1957–1985) and as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (1985–1988). Gromyko was responsible for many top decisions on

that the Security Council had primary responsibility for peace, and referring the question to the Assembly would set a dangerous precedent.¹⁵ Sir Alexander Cadogan¹⁶ suggested a different approach, proposing an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice to resolve the legal question. He also offered an amendment to the committee's resolution, removing the recommendation of any action to be taken by the Assembly. In contrast to Gromyko's view of the United Nations organs, Cadogan declared that the British government trusted the General Assembly of the United Nations as a general principle.

Herbert Evatt, an Australian representative, tried to reconcile two opposing sides by suggesting that viewing Franco as a current - rather than a possible - threat to peace would trigger a "*chain of events*"¹⁷ under Article 27 of the Charter. This would leave no choice but to take whatever measures necessary, including waging war, to eliminate the threat. Gromyko, in response, disagreed with Evatt's ripple effect theory, distinguishing between Article 41's "preventive" measures and Article 42's "corrective" measures. He then hinted at the necessity of making a proper decision. Despite Evatt's warning that Madrid would be pleased by a veto, Gromyko remained firm in his stance. When the Cadogan amendment received only two affirmative votes, Gromyko cast the only opposing vote, blocking the committee's draft resolution and ending any possibility of Security Council action on the Spanish issue.¹⁸

Soviet foreign policy until he retired in 1988. In the 1940s Western pundits called him Mr Nyet ("Mr No") or "Grim Grom", because of his frequent use of the Soviet veto in the United Nations Security Council.

¹⁵ Official Records, First Year: First Series, No. 2, (United Nations, Security Council).

¹⁶ He was a British diplomat and part of the delegation that accompanied Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Winston Churchill at the Atlantic Conference with President of the United States Franklin Roosevelt, where parties agreed to the Atlantic Charter.

¹⁷ Houston, "The United Nations and Spain."

¹⁸ Official Records, First Year: Second Series, No. 19, (United Nations, Security Council),

Mr. Lange resorted to the General Assembly after failing to succeed in the Council - after obtaining Security Council approval of a resolution deleting the Spanish agenda.

In the first session of the United Nations General Assembly in London in February 1946, the matter was debated and ended with Resolution n. 32 (the complete text can be found in Annex I), regarding the relations of the Member states with Spain. Then subsequently in April of the same year, the Security Council, with Resolution n. 4, continued to put Spain in a position of diplomatic isolation, by stating that "*Hereby resolves to make further studies in order to determine whether the situation in Spain has led to international friction*" (the complete text can be found in Annex II)

At this point on December 2, 1946, Mr. Lange presented a resolution at the First Committee suggesting that all members of the UN immediately cut diplomatic ties with Spain and that the nation be prohibited from joining or taking part in any UN-established organizations or agencies¹⁹, with Resolution n. 39 (I)²⁰. The resolution recommended that the GA take the necessary measures if, within a "*reasonable time*"²¹, no new Government was established whose authority emanated from the consent of the governed. Likewise, the resolution recommended the immediate withdrawal of ambassadors accredited to the Government of Spain.²² (The complete text can be found in Annex 3)

This resolution was passed after the Polish delegate Oscar Lange described Franco's regime as a threat in the Assembly.^{23 24} According to

¹⁹ Official Records, Second Part of the First Session, First Committee, (United Nations, General Assembly), p. 226 ff.

²⁰ For documentation on the Spanish question before the United Nations in 1946, see Foreign Relations, 1946, vol. v. pp. 1023 ff.

²¹ UNGA Documents A/RES/39(I) (1946)

²² Leonart y Amsélem, Alberto. "España y la ONU: la "cuestión española" (1945-1950)" (in Spanish).

²³ Official Records, First Year: First Series, No. 2, (United Nations, Security Council), p. 167 ff.

²⁴ Houston, John A. "The United Nations and Spain." *The Journal of Politics* 14, no. 4 (1952): 683-709. Accessed December 13, 2023. <https://doi.org/2126447>.

him, there were three reasons for this menace: the high concentration of Spanish troops along the French border, the large German population in Spain and the work of German scientists in Spain on German scientists in Spain on the production of atomic bombs²⁵. However, the American and British secret services considered these reasons to be unlikely.

To strengthen its moral standing, the Franco administration held a questionable referendum and passed a new succession statute designating Franco as president of state for life. Mr. Lange remained unimpressed with these events and, during the Assembly's second session, he introduced a resolution stating that additional action was necessary *"if the resolution adopted the previous year was to be implemented with an honest intention"*²⁶ and that all the facts that had led to the 1946 resolution's adoption still existed.

Lange's suggestion was met with little enthusiasm, and it soon became evident that a holding action would be the most that could be hoped for. While acknowledging that the 1946 resolution had been mainly ineffectual, several speakers—including the representatives of the Netherlands, Pakistan, India, Belgium, and the United States—argued that it would be absurd to expect that any more action could be taken.²⁷ The UN measure was not very significant in that there were very few ambassadors in Spain: three had already left, only the ambassadors of Portugal, the Vatican and Switzerland remained. Nevertheless, it represented an important point in the isolation policy against Franco's regime.

²⁵ Carrasco-Gallego, José A. "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." (2012): 91–119.

²⁶ Official Records, Second Session, First Committee, (United Nations, General Assembly), p. 400 ff.

²⁷ Document A/315, (UN), p. 3 ff.

The Spanish Question²⁸ was discussed again by the General Assembly in November 1947, however, in the voting on various resolutions, the two-thirds rule resulted that the 1946 resolution was not reaffirmed, and was not repealed.

In March 1948, France reopened the border with Spain, which had been closed since the shooting of Cristino Garcia Granda - a trade unionist, Spanish communist, Franco guerrilla and member of the French resistance during the Second World War - in February 1946.²⁹

In April, Spain and Argentina recently signed an economic agreement, while in September, Spain and Portugal have renewed their existing treaty of friendship and non-aggression for a period of ten years. Moreover, In the spring of 1949, when the Assembly revisited the Spanish question, significant changes occurred in the international scenario. The Cold War had thawed considerably, resulting in notable shifts in attitudes towards Spain among important groups in the United States. This was evidenced by the House of Representatives adoption of an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948 in March 1948. The amendment, proposed by Representative O'Konski of Wisconsin³⁰, made Spain eligible to participate in the European Recovery Program and was passed by a vote of 149 to 52.³¹ As the third session of the Assembly approached in the autumn of 1948, several US spokespeople expressed their opinions on Spain. James Farley - an American politician-, upon his return from Spain, declared that the United States should immediately restore full diplomatic relations with Madrid. He blamed left-wing writers and commentators for

²⁸ Wikipedia contributors, "Spanish Question (United Nations)."

²⁹ Wikipedia contributors, "Pactos De Madrid De 1953."

³⁰ An American politician and educator who served 30 years in the United States House of Representatives. A Republican, he represented northwestern Wisconsin from 1943 until 1973.

³¹ The New York Times, March 31, 1948.

the current situation, stating that Spain had no communism and that there was no threat of communist infiltration.

These years also marked Spain's exclusion from the Marshall Plan, also known as the European Recovery Plan (ERP)³². Spain remained neutral during the Second World War, but this status did not prevent its exclusion from the ERP. The Marshall Plan was signed in Paris on July 12, 1947 by all Western countries except Spain and Finland. The main reason for the exclusion of Spain was the origins of the Franco dictatorship and not Spain's political system. Moreover, the public opinion of many states - especially the USA, Great Britain and France - considered the admission of Spain unacceptable, even to the point that if Spain had been invited to join the ERP, France would not join.

Secretary of State Marshall proposed to the British and French Foreign Ministers that the 1946 Assembly resolution be rescinded as the first step towards the international rehabilitation of Spain³³, which was the most crucial proposal.

Before the second part of the third session of the Assembly, where the Spanish question was to be taken up again after not reaching it in the first part, an important event occurred. The Franco government got a 25-million-dollar loan from the Chase National Bank, and it was rumored that the State Department had authorized this loan to test US public opinion on Spain, and the response was not considered violent.³⁴ The day before the First Committee of the Assembly addressed the Spanish question, the

³² Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Marshall Plan." Encyclopedia Britannica, December 21, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Marshall-Plan>.

³³ The New York Times, October 6, 1948.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1949. Economic relations between Spain and other European countries improved notably about this time.

State Department suggested that direct negotiations for an Export-Import Bank loan might be initiated right away with the Spanish government.³⁵

After many Assembly sessions, the votes were cast in 1950, and the result was nearly identical to the committee tally, 38 to 10, with 12 abstentions. The negative votes and abstentions remained the same. Franco-Spain had reached the end of one road.

All of the resolution in fact eventually started to fade from 1948-1949, also because of the geo-strategic value of the Spanish territory that increased significantly over the years. Spain was a quite remote territory from the influence of the U.R.S.S., as the Pyrenees, the extensive coastline and the numerous harbors formed a natural barrier that necessitated the call for reinforcements.

One of the early indications of the shift in the Western powers' stance toward Spain and the Franco regime was the rupture between former allies of the Second World War, which led to a division of the world. This event marked a significant development in the erosion of Spain's isolation, which continued to progress rapidly in the years that followed. Thus, it can be said that the Cold War – that was at its starting point -, favored Spain's situation by making it a desirable nation.

Nevertheless, there was a problem: as Spain was excluded from the Marshall Plan, it was desperate for economic aid and recognition from outside.

Spain and more specifically Franco thought of a strategic plan to secure aid from North America consisted of three stages. The first stage involved integrating economic aid with domestic liberalization to legitimize the American association with Spain. In the second stage, Franco suggested the possibility of a bilateral agreement. The third stage aimed to convince

³⁵ *Ibid.*, May 4, 1949.

the executive that Spain's integration into the Western defense network was in its best interests.

In 1950, Spain and the United States held talks amidst political challenges. During the same year, the United States authorized a loan provision of \$62.5 million for various capital outlays³⁶, including farm machinery, fertilizer, and railroad equipment. The loan's final approval was subject to two conditions: Spain's membership in NATO or President Truman's assessment that providing U.S. economic aid to Spain would benefit both countries' foreign policies. Despite Truman's personal dislike for Franco, the United States extended economic and military support to Spain due to concerns over losing access to Western military bases. This decision was based on the belief that Franco, despite his political views, was a strategic ally of the United States.

From a strategic standpoint, the United States was keen on keeping the Soviet Union out of the Iberian Peninsula and gaining access to Spanish territory in order to defend against potential Soviet attacks. A Soviet presence in Spain would have given the Warsaw Pact numerous advantages over the Western powers, including a staging ground for tactical deployment of aircraft, control over shipping lanes in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, and the capability to attack from the south and the east simultaneously. To prevent this scenario from happening, the United States approved the release of economic aid to Spain in 1951, under the General Appropriations Act. This move marked the end of the first phase of modern Spanish-American relations and helped strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries.³⁷

³⁶ Mildred Adams, "Spain as an Investment," (1951), p. 99.

³⁷ Angel Viñas, "La primera ayuda económica norteamericana a España" (1981)

1.2. Signing of the Agreements

The negotiations for an agreement between the United States of America and Spain were announced on March 12, 1952, and formally began on April 17 of the same year.³⁸

The group of military mediators was led by Major-General of the Air Force August W. Kissner, while George F. Train was responsible for the economic aspect. However, negotiations were disrupted on April 30 due to an interdepartmental conflict caused by a clerical error committed by General Kissner. He presented not only the interdepartmental agreement of principle but also the General Staff's document, which had been blocked by the State Department, to his Spanish counterpart.

On April 1, 1952, there was the first conversation between Foreign Minister Artajo and the US ambassador in Madrid, Lincoln MacVeagh.³⁹ At this meeting, the Spanish Foreign Minister stressed that if the Americans wanted bases in Spain, these should be available for joint use between Spanish and American troops.

The issue of sovereignty within the bases became a concern for the Spanish government, which also noticed an unequal distribution of aid in comparison to other countries. Along with this, the US demanded political and military reforms as a prerequisite for any agreement. Despite the Spanish government's reservations about the US's position, they were able to leverage the situation to establish the US as their communication channel with the authorities in Washington.

So much so that, a few months later, on July, 25 Ambassador MacVeagh sent a telegram to the State Department⁴⁰ outlining his conversation with Spanish Foreign Minister Artajo. During their discussion, Artajo expressed

³⁸ Solsten, Meditz, and Library of Congress. "Spain: A Country Study".

³⁹ FRUS Document n. 847

⁴⁰ FRUS Document n. 863

concern over the lack of defense guarantees for Spain in the event of an attack, unlike other countries. Artajo also believed that the presence of US military bases on Spanish soil increased the risk of potential attacks. To address this issue, Artajo proposed a *do ut des*⁴¹. MacVeagh conveyed this message to the US government and supported the Spanish position, emphasizing the need for a visible and symbolic result. He also stressed the importance of treating Spain equally to other countries and avoiding any second-class ally status.

George F. Train, the United States Commissioner for Economic Affairs, became increasingly supportive of the Spanish government and called for a redefinition of the United States' objectives towards Spain. Train argued that the limits imposed on the negotiation of a partnership agreement were excessive and invalidated the achievement of common interests. General August Kissner supported the Spanish claims and proposed a military assistance package of 465 million dollars over four or five years, a sum greater than the previously provided aid⁴². The proposal aimed to rethink the US position and provide a disproportionate increase in economic aid.

In light of these events, US personnel in Spain decided to reassess their policy towards the country from a high-level perspective. In a letter to John Y. Millar, the then head of the Office of Western European Affairs, MacVeagh acknowledged Artajo's willingness to negotiate "*gobierno a gobierno*"⁴³ and agreed with him. However, the response from Washington was delayed and it was only on October 7 that the State Department announced an aid package of up to 125 million dollars, to which Artajo found this offer to be insufficient for the Spanish government⁴⁴.

⁴¹ "A commutative contract whereby something is given so that something may be received in return " - Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "do ut des,"

⁴² FRUS Document n. 334, 335

⁴³ Escudé, Carlos, "¿Cuánto valen esas bases?", p. 72

⁴⁴ FRUS Document n. 871

On December 23, 1952, the Spanish presented a draft Defensive Pact to General Kissner that restricted the use of military bases by the United States. The negotiations were almost paralyzed due to the change of presidency in the United States. However, the only change made during this period was the appointment of a new ambassador in Madrid, James Clement Dunn, instead of Lincoln MacVeagh. It's important to mention that the Eisenhower administration was no more favorable than the Truman administration in reaching an agreement with Franco's Spain. The transition from a democratic to a republican administration did not result in greater sympathy but rather real continuity, both at the bureaucratic level and at the level of achieved outcomes.

In February 1953, negotiations between the United States and Spain were underway to secure the delivery of funds for the new fiscal year. The new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, was keen to finalize the agreement and put pressure on the Spanish to reach an agreement quickly, as further delays would mean that the funds for 1953 would not be delivered until 1954⁴⁵. However, when this matter was communicated to Artajo in a letter on March 16th⁴⁶, the response was formal and insulting, with the Spanish Minister blaming the United States for the delay and stating that the law of Congress did not require an agreement between the two states for the allocation of funds.

Before the National Security Council (NSC) meeting, it was also held a "*Top secret*" session of the Planning Board of the NSC to the NSC on May 11, 1953.⁴⁷ In this session – for reference NSC 72/6⁴⁸ - it was discussed the need to provide continuing aid to Spain, and the precise amount to be given to the Spanish State. Indeed, a few days later on May 13, 1953, at

⁴⁵ FRUS Documents n. 879, 881

⁴⁶ FRUS Documents n. 885, 886

⁴⁷ FRUS Document n. 895

⁴⁸ For text of NSC 72/6, see Foreign Relations, 1951, vol. iv, Part 1, p. 820

the 144th meeting of the NSC, President Eisenhower and several high-ranking officials and military leaders - such as Undersecretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, Secretary of Defense Charles Erwin Wilson, Secretary of the Treasury George M. Humphrey, President Robert Cutler's Special Assistant, General John Hull representing the Joint Chiefs of Staff - were presented with a classified proposal called "*Top Secret, Eyes Only*." The proposal discussed in item no. 2 "Negotiation with Spain" involved spending 465 million dollars over four years, plus ongoing maintenance costs, to allocate operating bases.

At the end of the discussion, the President instructed the Secretary of Defense to weigh the arguments and decide. Finally, the proposal was ultimately approved and the decision was communicated to the NSC, the Secretary of State, and Congress.⁴⁹

In 1952-53, the bureaucrats of the Spanish dictatorship faced tough negotiators who emphasized that the responsibility for appropriations rested with the US Congress and that they could not exceed certain limits. In spite of the fact that Congress was the arbiter of these decisions, this explanation was weak. It is clear that Washington's intention was to have the agreement at a low cost, but this proved impossible, and the solution was to promise the Spanish more economic aid.

Spanish negotiators were tough only on finance, but otherwise accommodating. They made generous concessions, especially in areas of great interest to the United States, such as the range of basing sites, facilities, rights to use Spanish infrastructure, and the legal and institutional status of U.S. forces and their dependents. All concessions

⁴⁹ FRUS Document n. 536

were not outlined in the final agreement, yet in agreements that were not made public on September 26, 1953.⁵⁰

The agreement was in fact signed in the afternoon of September 26, 1953⁵¹, but it did not have the status of a treaty - as requested by the Spanish government - instead of an «executive pact», a “*convenio*” between governments, since for it to be a treaty it would have been necessary the approval of the US Senate, something impossible to achieve since the majority of its members refused to support the political regime of Franco.⁵²



Signing of the Madrid Pacts in the *Salón de Embajadores* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In the act of signing the Pacts, which took place in the Palace of Santa Cruz - Madrid, the headquarters of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was already possible to see that it was not an agreement between equals. On behalf of Spain, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Commerce - Alberto Martín Artajo and Manuel Arburúa - were present; however, the American representation was reduced to its ambassador in

⁵⁰ Angel Viñas, 2003, “Negotiating the US-Spanish Agreements, 1953-1988: A Spanish perspective”, p. 19

⁵¹ The Spanish Commission was formed by: Martín Artajo who dealt with the diplomatic, political and legal aspects. For military matters, Lieutenant General Vigón; and for economic affairs, the Minister of Commerce, Arburúa.

⁵² Pecharromán, (2008).

Madrid, James Dunn, and the President of the United States Chamber of Commerce in Spain.⁵³

A press release containing the texts of the three main public documents was issued in Washington and Madrid simultaneously with the signing of the agreements in Madrid.⁵⁴ The State Department sent letters to those members of Congress who had expressed special interest in the treaties, attaching a copy of the press release. Finally, the embassy representatives of Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey, Canada, Australia, and Portugal in Washington received a briefing on the final updates of the Spanish negotiations in September 1953. During a press conference on September 27, 1953, President Eisenhower acknowledged that the U.S. had obtained certain benefits in return, he called it a "*quid pro quo*"⁵⁵ (the complete text of the Press Conference can be found in Annex IV).

The so-called Madrid Pacts consisted of three *convenios*. The first agreement was about the supply of war materials by the United States to Spain. The second, concerned economic aid and the provision of loans. The third, the most significant, it involved mutual defense aid and the establishment of US military bases on Spanish territory. The Spanish government was obligated to contribute its full potential in terms of human resources, facilities, and general economic conditions towards the development and maintenance of its defensive power and that of the free world. This obligation was contingent upon Spain's political and economic stability, which was a guarantee of United States support for the Franco regime.⁵⁶

⁵³ Pecharromán, 2008, p. 109.

⁵⁴ "U.S. And Spain Sign Defence Pact - WASHINGTON, September 27. - The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954) - 28 Sep 1953." p. 1

⁵⁵ Public Papers of the Presidents of the USA: Eisenhower. Doc. 198, Washington, 1960.

⁵⁶ Pecharromán, 2008, p. 108.

Franco in October, 1, 1953, wanting to state the reasons why Spain had signed such pacts, gave a speech⁵⁷ in Parliament assessing the Agreements as a very important goal for the regime's foreign policy. But, despite Franco's words, Spain did not benefit either economically or militarily.

As mentioned beforehand, the defensive "*convenio*" was the most important of the three since it was also the one that provided for the installation of North American bases in Spanish territory. One of the most substantial aspects was certainly the quantity of concessions granted through the secret clauses' mechanism.

As regards the economic allocations in the secret clauses, apart from fixing the exchange rate between the dollar and the peseta, the percentage of expenditure on economic aid was fixed. That is, 30 percent could be dedicated to the improvement of the transport on road and for the increase of the military endowment; 60 percent for the construction and the maintenance of the military bases.

Even for the military concessions there was clear asymmetry between the two states: it guaranteed full tax exemption for all activities and expenses that the United States had to incur for the common defense; there appeared to be no obligation to the US government vis-à-vis the Spanish government. Moreover, the ambiguity of the Madrid Pact was also that it did not specify the type of material that Spain would receive.

In the event of war, US support depended on several factors: the priorities of the United States' international compromises, the demands of the international situation, and the granting of credit by Congress. However, the greatest inequality will then be represented by Article III of the secret

⁵⁷ "Mensaje a Las Cortes Españolas, 1953."

technical agreement stating that US military bases on Spanish soil were under the jurisdiction of the United States, by completely removing the Spanish Government from any authority over them.

The agreement regarding the military bases read as follows:

Article 1 (2):

“In consequence of the above stated premises and for the same agreed purposes, the Government of Spain authorizes the Government of the United States, subject to terms and conditions to be agreed, to develop, maintain and utilize for military purposes, jointly with the Government of Spain, such areas and facilities in territory under Spanish jurisdiction as may be agreed upon by the competent authorities of both Governments as necessary for the purposes of this agreement.”

Furthermore, Article 3 states that:

“The areas which, by virtue of this Agreement, are prepared for joint utilization, will remain under Spanish flag and command, and Spain will assume the obligation of adopting the necessary measures for the external security. However, the United States may, in all cases, exercise the necessary supervision of United States personnel, facilities, and equipment.

The time and manner of wartime utilization of said areas and facilities will be as mutually agreed upon.”⁵⁸

According to a secret additional protocol, the bases in question would be theoretically governed jointly by Spain and the United States. However, this protocol was not made public until many years later. As per Article III, the bases would remain under the command and flag of Spain, but both countries would be allowed to use them jointly. However, the question of

⁵⁸ Avalon Project – “Military Facilities in Spain: Agreement Between the United States and Spain, September 26, 1953.”

activating the bases in case of an emergency remained a source of tension during the negotiations. The text of Article III states that "*the time and manner of wartime utilization of said areas and facilities will be as mutually agreed upon*".⁵⁹ Nonetheless, Angel Vinas - a Spanish historian - claimed that the term "mutuality" was undermined since a secret clause was added to Article III of the defense agreements. The secret clause enabled the United States to use zones and installations in Spanish territory as bases against communist military objectives in the event of communist aggression against the West. Furthermore, the first supposition suggests that both Spain and the United States interpreted the Pact of Madrid to be an alternate form of Spanish participation in NATO. Nonetheless, the United States did not want to fully commit to Spain as it did with its NATO allies. Indeed, the the secret clause that was included allowed the United States to activate the bases unilaterally in case of a threat to NATO security. Whereas, if Spain were attacked, the US or NATO were not obligated to defend the country.

It is therefore clear that the objective of this type of aid was not the economic development of Spain, but the construction and operation of military bases in the face of a possible military attack.

Ultimately, Spain's first agreement following its emergence from international isolation was highly unfavorable, as it restricted its legitimacy on the global stage. However, it allowed Franco to create a positive image in the Spanish media by announcing that "*España hacia política mundial*" (Spain was taking part in global politics)⁶⁰. This effect was magnified by the concordat signed between Francoist Spain and the Holy See on August 27, 1953. This concordat recognized Catholicism as the official state religion and reconfirmed the right of presentation of the Archbishops and Residential Bishops, which had been granted in 1941.

⁵⁹ "Avalon Project - Military Facilities in Spain: Agreement Between the United States and Spain, September 26, 1953."

⁶⁰ Espadas Burgos, Manuel, "Franquismo y Política Exterior", 1988, p. 198

1.3. Consequences and renewals

The defense agreement between the United States and Spain allowed the former to establish four major military bases on Spanish territory during the first decade of the agreement, which was later extended twice for five years each time. Among these bases, three were utilized as aerial bases under the Strategic Air Command (SAC) program, namely Moròn, Zaragoza, and Torrejòn. The fourth base was used as a naval base located in Rota.

Torrejon, Zaragoza, and Moron were built as bases for SAC B-47 bombers, which had a restricted range. After these bombers were decommissioned, the bases were redesigned to function as staging, reinforcement, and logistical airlift bases for units of the United States Air Forces, Europe (USAFE). Torrejon, in particular, served as the headquarters of the Sixteenth Air Force and housed a tactical fighter wing consisting of seventy-two F-16 aircraft that was rotated to other USAFE airbases at Aviano, Italy, and at Incirlik, Turkey.⁶¹

Zaragoza, on the other hand, functioned as a tactical fighter training base and was also the base for a detachment of five United States aerial refueling aircraft. It was strategically located near Spain's Bardenas Reales⁶² firing range, which provided a suitable location for gunnery and bombing techniques practice.

Lastly, Moròn (IATA Code: OZP, OACI: LEMO) served as a support base for units of USAFE, including a detachment of fifteen aerial refueling aircraft. Despite the phasing out of SAC B-47 bombers, these three bases

⁶¹ Solsten, Meditz, and Library Of Congress. "*Spain: A Country Study.*"

⁶² "Désert Des Bardenas Reales - Tourisme, Randonnées, Informations Et Conseils - Espagne."

continued to play crucial roles in airlift, communications, resupply, rear basing, and fighter training, which were in line with the NATO obligations of the United States.

The Rota Naval Base (IATA Code: ROZ, ICAO: LERT)⁶³, also known as NAVSTA Rota or as the Gateway to the Mediterranean, is located in the province of Cadiz, with a large area in the municipality of Rota, and a smaller part included in the municipality of El Puerto de Santa María. Of the 2,400 hectares that make up the base, 2,000 are utilized by the United States Armed Forces.

Located north of the Bay of Cadiz, it has a military naval port and a shared military airport. Rota's base is currently utilized by C-5 Galaxy, C-17 Globemaster III cargo planes, and ships of various types from the United States and many other NATO countries for refueling. Four Arleigh Burke-type destroyers are permanently deployed as part of NATO's naval missile system by the United States.

Spain, for its part, has numerous ships, such as the frigate F-80, the aircraft carrier Juan Carlos I, and the amphibious assault ship Galicia, as well as helicopters and aircraft type Harrier II and Cessna Citation based at this base.

Between 1953 and 1963, Spain received economic compensation of just over 1.5 billion dollars from the United States, which was distributed as credits managed by the Export-Import Bank for the purchase of US products, mainly food, cotton, and coal. Additionally, 456 million dollars in military aid was provided in the form of second-hand war material, which helped modernize the Armed Forces during the Franco dictatorship. Despite serving that purpose, the weapons used during the Spanish Civil War, which were of Italian and German origin, remained in use. However, the US - government imposed limitations on the use of the war material,

⁶³ Commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central, "Naval Station Rota."

restricting it to purely defensive purposes. In total, approximately 7,000 US military personnel and their families settled in the bases in Spain during that period.

Spain's geostrategic position made it a part of the Western defense system. However, it did not have access to decision-making processes as it was vetoed by NATO which was established in 1949. The European members of the Alliance opposed the Franco regime due to its dictatorial nature and its association with the Axis powers during World War II.

Thus, Spain became a "*satélite estratégico, más que aliado formal, de los Estados Unidos*"⁶⁴.

Currently, Spain and the United States share two military bases, Rota (Cadiz) and Morón (Seville). Both facilities are of exceptional importance to Washington due to their strategic position on the Atlantic route with the Middle East.

The Pacts brought significant political benefits to the Franco regime by ending Spain's international isolation since 1945. However, Spanish politicians and military officials felt that they were treated as minor partners in the strategic system of the United States and received little foreign aid. Despite the criticisms, the National Movement continued to govern Spain and maintain its relationship with the United States. The Pacts strengthened the regime's image both domestically and internationally, and some saw it as recognition of Franco's correct position from the beginning. Nonetheless, there was opposition within Spain to the asymmetrical relationship, with critics arguing that it would involve Spain or its territory in any international conflict in which the United States participated.

It was renewed in 1963 for a period of five years, retaining the basic structure and content of the 1953 pact.⁶⁵ However, the renegotiation

⁶⁴ Pecharromán, 2008, p. 108.

process in 1968 was more significant, as the withdrawal of U.S. units from North African bases strengthened the U.S. need for Spanish bases. Spain sought to strengthen the U.S. commitment to the defense of Spain, increase control over the uses to which the bases might be put, and have a greater binding defense agreement and assistance in return for the United States' utilization of the defense installations.

In 1970, both delegations reached an Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation of a broader scope than the Pact of Madrid of 1953⁶⁶. The new text provided cooperation and assistance in technology, urbanization, environment, oceanography, education, and agriculture, in addition to military and economic aspects. However, Washington was not assured a free hand because it was obligated to consult with the Spanish government on questions beyond the agreement's scope.

In 1975 General Franco died, and Juan Carlos I assumed the throne as King of Spain. Renegotiations for a new accord began in 1974, with Washington wanting to extend the 1970 Agreement of Cooperation and Friendship for five years, while Madrid wanted an entirely new text. The final text furnished two important modifications: the nuclear submarine squadron stationed at the Rota base would initiate a phased withdrawal, completed by July 1979, and the United States forces would not store nuclear devices or their components on Spanish soil. The agreement was elevated to treaty rank and signed on January 24, 1976, becoming the sole bilateral agreement with the rank of a treaty.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "Spain and United States: Renewal of Defense Agreement" 1963

⁶⁶ BOE, n 231, 26 September 1970, p. 15915 to 15918

⁶⁷ BOE n. 267, 6 November 1976, p. 21911 to 21941

2. Chapter Two: 1982

Building upon the historical foundations laid in the preceding chapter, Chapter Two of this thesis delves into the intricacies surrounding Spain's actual entry into NATO, representing a pivotal phase in the nation's international relations and a transformative moment within the broader context of the Atlantic Alliance.

This chapter seeks to unravel the multifaceted dynamics characterizing Spain's accession to NATO. It critically examines both internal and external opposition that emerged during this process, shedding light on divergent perspectives within Spain and the challenges faced on the international stage. Additionally, the chapter endeavors to highlight the mutual benefits derived by both Spain and the Atlantic Alliance from this integration, elucidating the strategic considerations that underscored this diplomatic alignment.

A focal point of this exploration is the pivotal role played by the 1986 referendum, a decisive moment shaping the trajectory of Spain's future within the alliance. By scrutinizing the political, social, and diplomatic factors influencing this referendum, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the forces at play during this critical juncture.

As we navigate the complexities of Spain's NATO accession, Chapter Two serves as a bridge connecting historical antecedents with transformative events that solidified Spain's place within the Atlantic Alliance. Through meticulous examination of opposition dynamics, mutual benefits, and the impact of the 1986 referendum, this chapter contributes to the broader narrative of Spain's evolving role in the international arena.

The historical backdrop that precedes this pivotal chapter reveals Spain's isolation from forums shaping decisions on its economy, politics, and military due to its European position. Opposition faced from certain NATO states, rooted in complex historical, ideological, and psychological factors, saw a crucial turning point in 1953 with the signing of U.S.-Spanish defense arrangements. This agreement, while discreetly welcomed by NATO defense officials, marked Spain's de facto integration into the Western Alliance, albeit with guarded enthusiasm.

However, the transformation of Spain into a democratic nation opens new political, economic, and security opportunities, fostering full integration into Western Europe and active participation in collective defense efforts on equal terms.⁶⁸ The opposition from certain NATO states to a more substantial security linkage between Spain and the alliance is complex and multifaceted. A democratic Spain signifies not only newfound prospects but also the potential for enhanced diplomatic and strategic engagement within the Western Alliance. In essence, this chapter unfolds as a pivotal exploration into Spain's journey from isolation to integration, paving the way for a nuanced understanding of its evolving role within NATO.

2.1. Transition to democracy and the opposition

Prior to its formal entry into NATO in 1982, Spain had already established its presence in the international community through its membership in various organizations, including the United Nations (1955)⁶⁹, the World Bank (1958)⁷⁰, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

⁶⁸ Zea, A. (1979). SHOULD SPAIN JOIN NATO? 32(6), 78–87.

⁶⁹ United Nations, "Member States | United Nations."

⁷⁰ "Member Countries."

Development – OECD (1961)⁷¹ and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe - OSCE (1973)⁷².

Before analyzing the long and difficult process Spain had to face when posed the question of whether to enter as a member of NATO, it is due a general and brief view of NATO principles and requirements.

At its core, this alliance is founded on several key principles that underscore the organization's commitment to collective defense and cooperation among its members. The cornerstone of NATO's principles is enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty or also called Washington Treaty, which states that an armed attack against one or more members shall be considered an attack against all, and that each member shall take such action as may be necessary to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.⁷³ In our history, this article has been invoked only once: on the evening of September 12, 2001, less than 24 hours after the terrorist attacks in New York.⁷⁴

In addition to collective defense, NATO emphasizes political consultation and the peaceful resolution of disputes among its members. Democracy and the rule of law are fundamental principles that foster a shared commitment to values that transcend national boundaries. NATO serves as a platform for political dialogue and cooperation, enabling member nations to address common security concerns together.

Becoming a member of NATO is a comprehensive process that involves meeting specific political, military and financial requirements. These requirements, listed below, serve as a foundation for nations seeking to

⁷¹ "Spain and the OECD."

⁷² "PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN TO THE OSCE."

⁷³ Clapp, Sebastian, and Anne Verhelst. "Article 5 Washington Treaty (NATO) and Article 42(7) TEU (EU)." European Parliament Members' Research Service.

⁷⁴ Grady, "Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty: Past, Present, and Uncertain Future."

join the Alliance and shape their commitment to shared values and mutual defense.⁷⁵

First and foremost, democratic governance is a fundamental criterion for prospective NATO members. Indeed, upholding democratic principles and practices is a non-negotiable expectation. This includes maintaining stable political systems characterized by free and fair elections and underpinned by an unwavering commitment to human rights and the rule of law. The Alliance places great importance on fostering a community of nations that share a commitment to democratic ideals, recognizing the central role of such governance in maintaining collective security.

This principle has placed Spain in a difficult position, as its history of governance has been rocky and far from democratic.

Military capabilities are another key aspect of NATO membership. Countries seeking membership must demonstrate that they are building and maintaining capable, interoperable military forces. This means not only investing in defense capabilities, but also actively contributing to collective defense efforts. The interoperability requirement underscores the need for member nations to work seamlessly with the armed forces of their NATO partners to ensure a cohesive and effective defense posture.

Again, as a country, Spain had a military force that underwent various changes and modernization efforts in the 1960s and was not as extensive as those of the major NATO members or superpowers of the time. Indeed, the military landscape continued to change in the decades that followed, until Spain's eventual integration into NATO, which brought about further changes in its military structure and capabilities.

⁷⁵ "Minimum Requirements for NATO Membership."; Brooke-Holland, "How Do Countries Join NATO? - House of Commons Library."

Spain's path to membership informally started in June, 1973, where Franco announced the possibility of an early withdrawal from political life, and appointed Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco (1903-1973) as Prime Minister, who was then killed in an attack by Basque autonomists in December of the same year⁷⁶. He was replaced by Carlos Arias Navarro (1908-1989), who was regarded as the regime's hard man. However, thanks to Navarro, the transformation process initiated by Franco's removal from power was resumed with vigor. On 12 April 1974, he announced a policy of liberalization, which included the election of mayors and municipal officials, the election of a larger number of members of the Cortes, the expansion of workers' rights in the state-controlled trade unions and the freedom to form political associations.⁷⁷

Thus, the death of Franco in November, 1975, marked the start of a new chapter in Spain's history, known as "*Transición democrática*"⁷⁸. When *la transición* started the country embarked on a path to open up to Euro-Atlantic affairs and advance its role in European diplomacy. This included significant reforms that modernized Spanish society and a swift transition to democracy. Spain's increasing openness to the international community led to its admission into the Council of Europe in 1977, NATO in 1982, and the European Economic Community in 1986.⁷⁹

In the early years of Spain's political transition, there was overwhelming support for the country's integration into the European Economic Community (EEC). However, there was not the same unanimity when it came to Spain's membership of NATO, since there were many factors that could preclude it. The main reason for joining was due to the geostrategic location of the Peninsula, as well as the presence of North American

⁷⁶ Mayall, Joe. "History Unknown: The Assassination of Luis Carrero Blanco." 2023

⁷⁷ "Spain | History, Map, Flag, Population, Currency, Climate, & Facts."

⁷⁸ Tusell, J., "Historia de España en el siglo XX - 4: La Transición democrática y el gobierno socialista", 2012

⁷⁹ Nato, "Spain and NATO - 1982."

bases. To facilitate this, negotiations were conducted by the President of the Government, Navarro, which led to the signing of a new Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1976.⁸⁰ This agreement showed the Washington government's support for Spain's integration into the Western defensive system.⁸¹

Although the country's strategic geographic location makes it a valuable partner for the Alliance, opinions on NATO membership were divided. Those in favor of membership felt that it would offer Spain the advantage of allied support in the event of a major conflict, especially given its vulnerability as a potential target. They also argued that integration into NATO would pave the way for the modernization of the Spanish armed forces and ensure adequate national defense. Another potential benefit of NATO membership was that it could shift the focus of army leadership from reactionary considerations to the defense of the West.

In the aftermath of Arias Navarro's resignation as Prime Minister of Spain (1976), various potential successors were identified. Following careful consideration, King Juan Carlos selected Adolfo Suárez due to his perceived ability to navigate the complex political challenges that lay ahead. The primary obstacle was the need to convince the *Cortes*, which consisted of Francoist appointees, to dismantle the existing political system established by Franco. Suárez was appointed as Prime Minister with the mandate to work within the Francoist legal framework and prevent any military intervention in the political process, and thanks to him and his efforts the transition to democracy was facilitated. His cabinet, which was oriented towards reform, introduced the institutional changes that were

⁸⁰ FRUS, Document n 212

⁸¹ See "*Tratado de Amistad y Cooperación entre España y EEUU*" in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE)*, 267, 6/11/1976, pp. 21911-21941.

necessary for the establishment of democracy: Suárez had a clear and precise political agenda consisting of two main points.⁸²

Firstly, he aimed to present a political reform bill that, upon its approval by the *Cortes* and the Spanish public in a referendum, would commence the constituent process for establishing a liberal democracy in Spain. Secondly, he proposed to conduct democratic elections in June 1977 to elect a *Cortes* that would be responsible for creating a new democratic constitution for Spain. Although Suárez's program was concise and unambiguous, its implementation was not devoid of challenges, he had to persuade the opposition to participate in his plan, convince the army to allow the process to proceed without any disruptions, and simultaneously bring the situation in the Basque Country under control. Despite these impediments, Suárez's plan was executed efficiently between July 1976 and June 1977 in which he had to work on several fronts to achieve his objectives.

At the international level, one of the primary goals of the newly established democratic government was to strengthen political connections with the rest of Europe. Together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs M.O. Aguirre, it was established a dedicated Ministry for Relations with the European Communities, indicating that joining the ECC was not considered merely a part of Spanish foreign policy. In addition, he also made foreign policy a key aspect of his political strategy, seeking to integrate Spain into the EEC and NATO.

On the other hand, at the national level, the government moved quickly to implement internal reforms, discarding many of the restrictions on personal freedoms that had been in place under the old regime. This

⁸² Carr, Raymond (1980). *Modern Spain, 1875-1980*. Oxford University Press.

included ending censorship of the press, allowing for multiple political parties, and lifting restrictions on language, free association, and religion. The government also granted clemency to most political prisoners, with the exception of those who had taken a human life. Additionally, efforts were made to depoliticize the military. The new government embraced a multi-party system without bias, providing a platform for groups expressing Communist or strongly separatist sentiments.⁸³ Suarez's pro-reformist cabinet introduced the institutional changes necessary for the establishment of democracy.

In the months leading up to the general elections – held on June 15, 1977 - a growing undercurrent of violence was observed, mostly from far-right groups⁸⁴. These groups sought a return to the Spain of the early Franco years and aimed to disrupt the democratic reforms and political processes instituted under Adolfo Suarez's leadership. By January 1977, political terrorism had claimed the lives of 48 people, ten of whom died violently in Madrid⁸⁵. This led Suarez to temporarily suspend two constitutional guarantees, protection against search and seizure, and the right to be charged within 72 hours of arrest, for a month starting on January 28.⁸⁶

Despite of sporadic acts of violence that persisted till May of 1977, the firm and courageous actions of Suarez during this period earned him great respect and prestige among the Spanish masses. His appointment as Prime Minister of the UCD party following their election victory was not a surprise. The new administration was faced with the daunting task of restoring calm after the social unrest of the preceding months, particularly in the Basque and Catalonia regions. In December 1978, a new Constitution was approved in Spain, followed by general elections in

⁸³ E. R. Arango, *The Spanish Political System: Franco's Legacy (1978)* pp.253-255.

⁸⁴ Público, "Resultados Elecciones Generales 1977."

⁸⁵ Carl F. Bush, "Spain's Strategic Culture and the impact of NATO, 1996

⁸⁶ E. Ramon Arango, p. 263

March 1979, in which Adolfo was re-elected maintaining the same base in his electoral program.⁸⁷

However, the results of the elections were similar to the previous ones with little progress made by the opposition, the PSOE party, resulting in regional violence, which was met by repressive police measures by the government. Political instability continued throughout those years, with terrorist attacks and rumors of impending *coups d'état*. The military, which had become increasingly frustrated with the government's decision to legalize communism in Spain, planned a coup in 1978.

At the close of 1980, the groundwork had been laid for the accession debate, but the UCD party leader delayed the process due to fierce opposition from the PSOE and left-wing parties, which could have destabilizing effects on the country. This postponement sparked a severe crisis within the party, causing many members to become increasingly agitated. In response to the unrest, in June 1980 Marcelino Oreja Aguirre, made an official announcement regarding Spain's plan to seek complete membership in NATO by 1983.⁸⁸ Oreja emphasized that the Spanish democracy had now attained stability and it was the opportune time to establish Spain's external orientation. He further argued that joining NATO would help achieve this goal and would also "*maintain the rhythm of Spanish integration into Europe,*" which was being hindered by the French government's efforts to obstruct or slow down Spain's entry into the European Community.⁸⁹

Officially, Suarez made a momentous decision on January 23, 1981, by declaring Spain's intent to join NATO, and shortly thereafter, he stepped down from his role as president and resigned to the King.

⁸⁷ Solsten, Meditz, and Library Of Congress. Federal Research Division. *Spain: A Country Study*. p. 58-61

⁸⁸ Nato, "Spain and NATO - 1982."

⁸⁹ *El Pais*, 15 June 1980

However, in the power vacuum before a successor was named, an attempted coup d'état took place on February 23, 1981 – also called 23F - led by Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Tejero of the Civil Guard, during the session of the investiture of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo as Spain's new president. Fortunately, the deputies were already prepared for a "*golpe blando*"⁹⁰, and together with the King's intervention, they were able to resist the coup.⁹¹

After Suarez resigned, Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, who represented the conservative sector of the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD) and publicly expressed his support for the Atlantic Alliance, was appointed as the new leader. Calvo-Sotelo was sworn into office and stated in his inaugural speech that he would guide Spain into the Atlantic Alliance.⁹² In August 1981, the Council of State was asked to determine the procedures to be followed in voting on NATO membership. The council found that a simple majority vote of Parliament was all that the Constitution required.⁹³ Subsequently, on October 27, 1981, Calvo-Sotelo introduced the question of NATO membership for formal debate in Parliament: he advocated Spain was proposed entry into NATO as soon as possible.⁹⁴

The government of UCD considered this year as crucial in formulating Spain's foreign and security policy for the upcoming years. This year was also significant as the treaty renewal negotiations regarding American military bases were taking place. Spain did not consider the 1976 treaty satisfactory.⁹⁵ However, opposition groups criticized the politicized

⁹⁰ Cubero Trujillo, 2016, p.62

⁹¹ Martínez Inglés Amadeo. 2001. *23 El Golpe Que Nunca Existió*. Madrid: Foca.

⁹² Times, "Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo."

⁹³ Victor Alba "*Spain's Entry Into NATO*", p. 110.

⁹⁴ Times, "Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo."

⁹⁵ Emilio A Rodriguez, "*Atlanticism and Europeanism*", "*Spain's Entry Into NATO: Conflicting Political and Strategic Perspectives*", p.61.

decision of the Council of State and argued that a national referendum should be held to decide such an important issue.

According to public opinion polls conducted in 1981, 69 percent of the Spanish population supported a national referendum. Out of all the respondents, 53 percent were against the idea of Spain joining NATO, while only 18 percent were in favor of the ongoing process to secure NATO membership. The poll figures predicted that if a national vote were taken at that time, 44 percent of Spaniards would vote "no" to NATO membership, 18 percent would vote "yes", and a large portion of the population would abstain from voting.⁹⁶ The UCD government fully expected that NATO membership would be approved by Parliament alone.

The accession of Spain to NATO⁹⁷ was highly contested by the opposition led by the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (although later and once in power, the socialist government called and won a referendum on NATO membership in 1986). In addition, as Minister for Relations with the European Economic Community, Sotelo succeeded in definitively re-establishing a stable link for the accession negotiations and, as President, the final preamble for accession to the Common Market, which would culminate in the entry into something bigger, a political union; the European Economic Community during the term of Felipe González.

The Democratic Party's (Union de Centro Democrático - UCD) viewpoint - led by Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, believed that Spain's integration with Europe was necessary for its growth, for him it was clear that "*desde 1977 [...] había que incorporar a España a la Comunidad Europea y a la Alianza Atlántica, porque quedarse afuera era quedarse en las tinieblas*

⁹⁶ Victor Alba, pp. 111-112.

⁹⁷ ABC.es, "España Y La OTAN, 25 Años Unidos."

exteriores del aislamiento internacional".⁹⁸ The European Community (EC) was its preferred option, but NATO's invitation was the only one available at the time. Sotelo represented the more Conservative wing of UCD, and identified the steps toward Spain's entry into NATO as *"the main lines of our foreign policy."*⁹⁹ Defence Minister Alberto Oliart echoed the same sentiment, stating that *"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."*¹⁰⁰

Despite making progress in EC membership, the slow pace of those efforts, along with a Prime Minister prioritizing Latin American ties over Europe, caused some disruption and fragmentation within the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD). During the 1977 elections, more than 100 political parties competed for public votes, but only six parties, including the UCD, the PSOE, and the Popular Alliance (PA), were significant.¹⁰¹

Spain's options were either NATO membership and the integration of bilateral relations with the United States into that framework, or neutrality, which would have disrupted relations with the United States. Spain had resources and industrial potential that could be valuable to NATO, despite its economic problems.¹⁰² For example, Spain had a developing military-industrial base and was manufacturing its own mechanized Infantry Fighting Vehicle, the BMR-600, which was reportedly comparable to any similar vehicle produced in NATO.¹⁰³ Spain's shipbuilding and repair facilities ranked among Europe's best and maintained U.S. and Spanish aircraft at depot level. The automotive industry also had significant military

⁹⁸ Calvo Sotelo, L., *Memoria viva de la transición*. Barcelona, 1990, p. 126

⁹⁹ "Europa y España", *El País*, 26 February 1981, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Heiberg, *The Sixteenth Nation: Spain's Role in NATO*, p. 32.

¹⁰¹ E. Ramon Arango, pp.259-260.

¹⁰² *A History of NATO — the First Fifty Years*

¹⁰³ "Spanish Army: Ejercito de Tierra" (1987)

potential, with nearly a quarter of the government's budget devoted to defense.¹⁰⁴

During the last years of the UCD government Spain's economic policies were characterized by inconsistency and vulnerability due to unforeseen political events and the impact of the second energy crisis. Despite these challenges, the government managed to achieve some notable accomplishments, such as the liberalization of the financial system, increased freedom for banks to open branches, and partial authorization for foreign banks. While many European countries were working to recover from the recession, Spain struggled with high unemployment rates and inflated prices, leading to an industrial crisis marked by bankruptcies, closures, and layoffs.¹⁰⁵

Despite these challenges, Spain continued to negotiate its entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) and ultimately made significant progress towards membership.

2.1.1. Entry into NATO under scrutiny

In collaboration with Foreign Minister Perez Llorca, Calvo-Sotelo broached the subject of NATO membership during the parliamentary deliberations on October 27, 1981. This move, however, stirred considerable debate within the Spanish Left, perceiving NATO accession as an exacerbation of Cold War tensions.¹⁰⁶

The dissenting faction voiced apprehensions about the implications for nuclear armament, the modernization imperatives of the Spanish military,

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*; Maritheresa F. Frain, "Iberia and Europe: A Post-Cold War Understanding in Spanish and Portuguese Defence Policies". Paper presented at the European Community Studies Association International Meeting, 1 June 1987, Washington DC, USA, www.aei.pitt.edu

¹⁰⁵ López-Claros, "Growth-Oriented Adjustment: Spain in the 1980s."

¹⁰⁶ William Chislett, "Spain and the United States: Quest for Mutual Rediscovery"

East-West confrontations, provocation of the Warsaw Pact, challenges to Ceuta and Melilla, North African security outside alliance protection, and concerns related to potential trade-offs regarding Gibraltar and entry negotiations into the ECC. Conversely, advocates of NATO membership focused on Spain's potential participation in a global political and strategic alliance. Given Spain's existing security ties with the West, serious opposition from political parties would have been challenging, positioning NATO membership as Spain's viable path on the international stage.

Before Spain's commitment to NATO crystallized, a pivotal concern revolved around securing a mutual security guarantee. From the outset, the Spanish government emphasized the necessity of such a bilateral assurance, primarily motivated by concerns regarding the North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. The belief that NATO would invariably support the UK on the Gibraltar issue due to Britain's superior power dynamics further fueled Spain's quest for a bilateral guarantee, constraining its maneuverability. Opposition to nuclear weapons and anti-American sentiment, predominantly rooted in left-wing ideologies, also contributed to the complex landscape of opinions.¹⁰⁷

According to Angel Viñas, the Spanish Left vehemently opposed NATO membership, leading to intense debates and a lack of persuasion from the Government.¹⁰⁸

The anti-nuclear movement in Spain gained momentum, notably with a large protest against the Lemoniz nuclear power plant in Bilbao in July 1977, attracting up to 200,000 participants.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Joffe, "Peace and Populism: Why the European Anti-Nuclear Movement Failed.", pp.3-40.

¹⁰⁸ Angel Viñas, "Negotiating the US-Spanish Agreements, 1953-1988: A Spanish perspective", Jean Monet/Robert Schuman Paper Series, Vol. 3, No. 7, September 2003, pp. 1-20, p. 19.

¹⁰⁹ "International Perspectives on Energy Policy and the Role of Nuclear Power", p. 371.

Euskadi TA Askatasuna (ETA), a terrorist Basque independence organization, also opposed the power station, resulting in casualties during their attack on plant workers.¹¹⁰

The deployment of US missiles in Spain faced complications due to the anti-nuclear movement's rise. In response to evolving military balances, NATO's decision to deploy US intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF)¹¹¹ in 1979 initiated a series of consequences, including the growth of the NATO navy's combat fleet and exercises in the early 1980s that garnered attention from anti-nuclear activists and politicians in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. NATO's strategic purpose faced internal conflicts, impacting its cohesion and strategic effectiveness, thereby casting doubts on the benefits of Spain's eventual NATO membership.

Some perceived NATO as a cover for US imperialism through military presence on foreign soil¹¹², echoing concerns shared with Greece, albeit with different motivations. Spain's aversion to nuclear weapons stemmed from pacifist sentiments and a desire to avoid becoming a nuclear target.¹¹³ Even after NATO entry, Spain hesitated to formally integrate its forces into NATO's military commands, driven by fear of nuclear targeting. The request for greater defense support from the US was motivated by the perceived dangers associated with the nuclear presence on Spanish soil.

Spain sought NATO's guarantee for the protection of its African enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla, considering them integral parts of the country. The Cortes emphasized the need to secure the national territory, both within and outside the Peninsula, placing particular importance on the protection

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹¹ Betts, "Security and Solidarity: NATO's Balancing Act After the Deployment of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces." (1985) pp.26-34, p.26.

¹¹² Ronald E. Powaski, "NATO: Joining the march of folly", (1998) pp.18-22.; Paredo Pombo, *La cooperación Española: política exterior y sociedad*, (2001), pp. 486-488.

¹¹³ Thankos Veremis, Yannis Valinakis, Marquino Barrio, *US bases in the Mediterranean, the cases of Greece and Spain* (1989).

of these enclaves. The debate over explicitly mentioning Ceuta and Melilla in the NATO agreement was tempered by concerns that it might escalate tensions, and Spain did not press for an extension of NATO boundaries in subsequent negotiations.¹¹⁴

Supporters contended that NATO membership was a logical consequence of Spain's democratic ideals, western and European affiliations, and the geopolitical realities that rendered neutrality impractical. The hope was that NATO membership would redirect the focus of army leaders towards the defense of the West and rationalize Spain's role in maintaining free access to raw materials and securing petroleum at market-driven prices. European integration played a pivotal role in the civilian political leadership's perspective, seen as crucial for successfully consolidating the 1981 NATO membership application.¹¹⁵

The resolution passed by the *Cortes* in 1981 reflected a commitment to Spain's integration into the political, economic, and defense structure of the Western world, emphasizing parallel negotiations with the EEC. The evidence suggests that Spain's interest in NATO was, to a significant extent, driven by the imperative to join the Common Market, with the government stressing that NATO membership would facilitate entry into the EEC. Additionally, economic benefits were anticipated as a direct outcome of NATO membership.

¹¹⁴ "Spain: A Country Study.", p. 269.

¹¹⁵ 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, in Kenneth Maxwell, *The New Spain, From Isolation to Influence* (1994), p.4.

2.1.2. González's government

By the end of 1981, Spain's economic situation remained unstable due to the effects of the second oil crisis, with GDP declining and trade balance deficits increasing.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, international reserves were slipping, and unemployment and inflation remained high. The business sector was also facing challenges, including unused production capacity and cost increases. These economic conditions set the stage for the victory of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) in the 1982 general elections, with Felipe González as its candidate for Prime Minister.¹¹⁷

In 1982, the Spanish democracy entered a new phase with the appointment of Felipe González as Prime Minister on December 1st. The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) had secured a broad victory in the general elections held on October 28, 1982,¹¹⁸ gaining a comfortable majority in both the Congress of Deputies and the Senate. The first socialist government, led by González and Deputy Prime Minister Alfonso Guerra, pursued a policy aimed at consolidating and deepening democracy while implementing a range of reforms. These included professionalizing the armed forces, fully implementing the state of autonomies model, introducing educational reforms, adopting economic measures, and enacting modern legislation such as legalizing abortion and promoting gender equality.

The Socialist Party's victory elections was largely attributed to: the Spanish resentment over US support for the Franco regime, as it can be seen in González 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*

¹¹⁶ Solsten, Meditz, and Library Of Congress. "Spain: A Country Study."

¹¹⁷ Garland, and Sagasti, "Spain case study: from Transition to modern times", 2010

¹¹⁸ "1982 Spanish General Election."
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982_Spanish_general_election

US, the last country with which we were at war."¹¹⁹¹²⁰ And also to its opposition to NATO, as symbolized by the famous slogan "*OTAN, de entrada, no*". However, González relied on the US support prior to the general election in Spain, and at a meeting in Santo Domingo on the August of 1982, he clarified the party's stance on various issues, implying that the US should not be concerned about the PSOE party gaining power.¹²¹

Nevertheless, the newly PM declared that he intended to thoroughly examine the previous administration stance on the NATO Alliance. Indeed, after the election, the party changed its position on NATO due to significant international pressure and the fact that Spain's application for EC membership was increasingly linked to the NATO issue.¹²² This change of perspective required the Socialists to convince a public that was largely opposed to NATO membership, as evidenced by public opinion polls.

To achieve its objectives, the Spanish government recognized the imperative of garnering public support. Bilateral discussions with the United States concerning US bases in Spain led to the suspension of Spain's position in the Western alliance for several years. The intricacies of Spain's alliance relations remained in abeyance until the resolution of the matter concerning the US bases. The Spanish government contended that the prolonged negotiations with the US impeded Spain's reintegration into the Western community of nations, impacting its standing in NATO and on the global stage, as well as influencing its purported "special relationship" with Latin America.

¹¹⁹ Smith, Dan. *Pressure: How America Runs NATO* (1989)

¹²⁰ Ya (Madrid), 1 November 1981, pp. 6-7, as reported by Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), vol. VII, n. 221 (17 November 1981).

¹²¹ Dr. Antonio Marquina Barrio, "España y Los Judíos en el Siglo XX-La Acción Exterior", (1987)

¹²² Maxwell, "Spain's Transition to Democracy: A Model for Eastern Europe", pp.35-49.

A military agreement between the US and Spain required renewal in 1981, setting the stage for Spain's withdrawal from NATO and its decision not to renew military agreements with the United States. This choice, while potentially risky, established a precedent that resonated with nations contemplating a reduction of US influence within their borders. The deficiencies of the 1976 pact became apparent during the 1981–1982 negotiations, with Spain arguing that the US had taken advantage of its vulnerable position during a crucial transition to democratic rule.

In July 1982, an executive agreement was reached between Spain and the US to revise their bilateral defense ties, coinciding with Spain's entry into NATO as its sixteenth member. However, the agreement's implementation was delayed until May 1983, following the change in the Spanish government after the October 1982 elections. The new administration under González sought to prevent the agreement from hindering Spain's complete military integration into NATO. A protocol appended to the agreement allowed Spain to reserve its position on NATO integration while facilitating the enforcement of the bilateral agreement. The overarching goal of the agreement was to enhance Spanish sovereignty and ensure transparency in American activities on Spanish soil.

The González government, skeptical of the rushed decision to join NATO by the previous administration, suspended the integration process. While Spain abstained from participating in NATO's military wing, it engaged in various committees, including the Defence Planning Committee. The government clarified that participation in these committees did not equate to "*military integration*."¹²³

¹²³ Washington Times, 9 December, 1982, p. 9. A robust anti-NATO sentiment had been gaining momentum within the Spanish populace. For a considerable number, the association of NATO membership with the presence of US bases and the anticipated escalation of the military budget became a focal point. The opposition in Spain aligned

The new Socialist government's stance on NATO appeared uncertain. Despite Fernando Moran's opposition to NATO and prior disagreements with González, he was appointed as the Foreign Minister. Moran's appeal to the left-wing party and electorate factored into his selection. The government proposed a referendum towards the end of its four-year term¹²⁴, reflecting Moran's belief in foreign policy contributing to the fortification of Spanish democracy and the pursuit of national goals.

González and Moran aimed to keep US agreements distinct from those of the Atlantic Alliance, a strategy aligned with their interests. Moran asserted, "*Spain has influence, not power*".¹²⁵ The cabinet, under González's leadership, prioritized Spanish entry into the European Economic Community (EEC), a NATO referendum, reducing the US military presence in Spain, and enhancing foreign relations with the Middle East and Latin America. They intensified negotiations for Spanish accession to the European Community, sought improved relations with France, and supported better ties with the Federal Republic of Germany. The cabinet affirmed Spain's connection to the Western world and its security interests, supporting formal Spanish membership in NATO within a uniquely Spanish framework.¹²⁶

NATO membership played a fundamental role in Spain's transition to democracy by enabling the military to take on a new role as a protector against external threats rather than internal ones.¹²⁷ In contrast to the

itself with a broader European movement that was concurrently emerging to oppose the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles on the continent. The interconnectedness of these issues resonated with the Spanish public, contributing to the burgeoning resistance against NATO, mirroring similar sentiments unfolding in other parts of Europe. - ("Spain - the World Factbook")

¹²⁴ A. Sarasqueta, *De Franco a Felipe*, p. 181.

¹²⁵ Angel Viñas, "Estrategia Nacional y Entorno Exterior, Vol. 5, January-March, 1984, p. 99.

¹²⁶ *New York Times*, 9 September 1982, p. 11.

¹²⁷ ADAŞ, S. (2019). Transition to Democracy in Spain. *Igdir University Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences* (4), 1-16.

Francoist state, where the military held a position of paramount importance, democratic Spain no longer required such a powerful military force. To prevent the military from becoming idle, NATO membership proved invaluable in ensuring civilian government rule. Additionally, some within the military believed that NATO membership would provide Spain with a fully equipped and professional army, essential for protecting democracy against internal threats.¹²⁸ Therefore, NATO membership served Spain in multiple ways during its transition to democracy.

Continuing with this study, it is imperative then to analyze and evaluate the worth of Spanish entry into NATO from both the Spanish and the Western (or NATO) viewpoint.

2.2. Benefits of Spain Membership

2.2.1. Spanish Perspective

The discussion within the country regarding NATO's inclusion revolved around four assertions put forth by the UCD, which were countered by the PSOE. These claims included the idea that joining NATO would facilitate Spain's entry into the European Community, enhance its national security, align with its existing bilateral agreement with the United States, and ultimately reinforce the country's democratic structure.

The accession of NATO was expected to be a catalyst for Spain's unsuccessful bid to join the European Community, which has been a major rallying point for the UCD. It was argued that by becoming a member of NATO, Spain's European credentials would be such that membership in the European Community would be virtually assured. However, the Left in Spain challenged the notion that NATO membership

¹²⁸ Heywood, *The Government and Politics of Spain*.

and EEC membership were causally linked. They pointed out that several countries that belong to NATO, such as Portugal, Greece (prior to 1981), and Great Britain (prior to 1969), have been denied entry into the Community at one time or another. Portugal, Spain's "Iberian brother," is cited as an especially relevant example. Despite being a founding member of NATO, Portugal has faced similar obstacles to Spain in its attempts to join the EEC.¹²⁹

Secondly, The UCD advocates for NATO membership as a means to enhance Spanish national security through a broad defense guarantee from several powerful countries. However, the Left opposes this view by arguing that there is no credible external threat to Spain's security. They contend that even if the Soviet Union aims for expansion or preservation of its spheres of influence, it poses no menace to Spain. Moreover, the Socialists claim that joining NATO may decrease Spanish security by exposing the country to conflicts it could otherwise avoid. Additionally, as a NATO member, Spain may become a nuclear target, which the Left considers to be a major factor influencing public opinion.

Regarding the relationship between being a NATO member and being a partner in the bilateral agreement, the UCD asserts that there is a fundamental continuity between the bilateral pact with the United States and NATO due to their shared anti-Communist origins. For them, Spain's entry into NATO is a natural evolution of the US agreement, made possible by the establishment of democratic governance after the Franco era. The Socialists, on the other hand, argue that there are qualitative differences between the two links. First, as a NATO member, Spain would be obligated to come to the defense of fellow members, whereas the US agreement has no such obligation. Second, NATO's commitment is

¹²⁹ Walker, "«Sobre La OTAN, Los Esquimales Y La Hospitalidad Española»."

indefinite, while the US pact is for limited periods and subject to revision. Finally, while the two agreements may be ideologically similar, Spain is officially considered a neutral country under the US bilateral pact, whereas it would become an aligned country as a member of NATO.¹³⁰

Finally, the issue of whether Spain should join NATO has been a topic of intense debate in the country. The UCD believes that NATO membership would support and strengthen Spain's democratic institutions by aligning with fellow democratic nations. However, the Socialists challenge this view and argue that NATO membership does not guarantee democracy, as the organization has included dictatorships in the past. Furthermore, the Socialists believe that NATO membership could potentially pose a threat to Spanish democracy, as there is no widespread public support for it and the refusal to hold a public referendum on the matter is seen as evidence of this. The Spanish military's historical involvement in political affairs could also create conflict with a Socialist government, potentially putting the country's democracy at risk.

From the Spanish standpoint, entering NATO isn't necessarily the indisputable boon it may seem to outside Western observers. While it could potentially aid in EEC entry, it might also subtract from national security and isn't an automatic next step after the US-Spain bilateral agreement. However, the most significant factor driving the debate in Spain over NATO entry is the crucial domestic concern of democracy, including its consolidation, operation, and expansion.¹³¹

¹³⁰ *Juan Garrigues Walker, loc. cit*

¹³¹ Carothers, "Spain, Nato and Democracy." 298–303

2.2.2. Western Perspective

Considering this different viewpoint one question that may arise is why the West is interested in having Spain as a part of NATO. The United States, in particular, is strongly advocating for Spanish membership. Western government officials commonly cite three reasons to support Spanish entry: strengthening the Alliance militarily, consolidating Spanish democracy, and adding political weight to the anti-Soviet front.

Although Spain's potential to add military strength to the Atlantic Alliance is acknowledged, it is generally believed that Spain's contribution to the Central European front would be negligible. Instead, much importance is placed on Spain's potential role in the Mediterranean region. Specifically, it is argued that Spain's sea and air bases, as well as its destroyers and fast frigates, would give NATO full control over the Western Mediterranean. While it is true that Spain would increase NATO's military resources to some extent, it seems that the high military value of its potential contribution to the Alliance has been exaggerated. This is because the United States has had access to sea and air bases in Spain for a long time, and it is not clear that Spanish membership in NATO would significantly enhance existing Western power in the West Mediterranean.

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The assertion that NATO membership helped to solidify Spanish democracy - a key argument presented by NATO governments in support of Spanish entry - is called into question by the coexistence of dictatorship and NATO membership in Portugal, Greece, and Turkey. While one could argue that NATO membership played a role in the eventual emergence of democracy in these countries, there is little evidence of a causal connection between NATO membership and the development of democratic institutions. NATO's tolerance for right-wing dictatorships

¹³² Sánchez-Gijón, "Spain and the Atlantic Alliance.", pp. 248-53

among its ranks and its expressed fear of Communist parties being voted into power in member states suggest that the alliance is more concerned with its members' geopolitical orientation than their internal political processes. Additionally, given that internal divisions in Spain over NATO membership could potentially threaten the preservation of Spanish democracy in the long term, it is clear that a simplistic argument equating NATO membership with democracy falls short.

The West's desire to strengthen the anti-Soviet front is disappointed by European "unreliability" and its own limited abilities to respond to Soviet actions. The United States aims to show resolve and revive the old Dulles antipathy for neutralism, believing that "if you're not with us you're against us". Spain is being asked to clarify its allegiances, as its addition to NATO could add some "weight" to the alliance, but it is unclear if this would make the Soviet Union more peaceful or contribute to alliance unity. Adding Spain is unlikely to intimidate the Soviet Union, and may even lead to a perceived need for "compensation" on their part due to a change in the NATO and Warsaw Pact powers line-up.

Regarding the Atlantic Alliance, it's important to consider the potential consequences of a Spanish government that is against NATO being elected in the 1980s. Such a government could be an unreliable and divisive partner for the Alliance.

Ultimately, the unity of the Alliance should be prioritized over its size. Therefore, it's necessary to reevaluate the Western belief that Spanish entry into NATO is entirely beneficial for both Spain and the Alliance. Spain's entry could have varying impacts on NATO's effectiveness and value, and on Spanish democracy. It's possible that the effects may not be significant in either case. However, Spanish entry could have a significant impact on Spain itself. In summary, Spanish entry into NATO could have a greater influence on Spain than on the Alliance. Consequently, Western

attention should be focused on the effects of NATO's entry on Spanish domestic political life.

2.3. Referendum of '86

2.3.1. Historical Background and Shifting Stance of the PSOE Government

During the Cold War, Spain aligned itself with the Western bloc but refrained from participating in any military or economic organizations embraced by other European and North American nations. This policy shifted after the Madrid pacts of 1953, signifying the end of Franco's dictatorship and Spain's reintegration into the global community. With the advent of democracy, the UCD government adopted a progressive stance, seeking to integrate Spain into key economic and military structures, including NATO. Subsequently, on May 30, 1982, Spain became the 16th member of NATO.¹³³

In the 1980s, Spain's decision to join NATO faced formidable opposition, notably from the PSOE, representing the Spanish left. The party staunchly opposed Spain's entry into any military bloc, articulating this stance with the well-known slogan 'OTAN, de entrada no'.¹³⁴ They not only pledged to advocate for leaving the alliance but also committed to holding a national referendum if they assumed power, allowing the populace to decide definitively. Critics of NATO membership argued that it would not align with Spain's defense and foreign policy goals. They contended that becoming a full NATO member might escalate tensions between the two global power blocs and make Spain more vulnerable to potential conflicts, particularly with the Soviet Union.

¹³³ "España y la OTAN" (2023).

¹³⁴ Pérez, "30 Años Del Polémico Referéndum Sobre La OTAN."

However, despite this opposition, the UCD government, led by Prime Minister Suárez, declared its intention to seek NATO membership. The political landscape remained divided on this issue, leading to internal discord. Following Suárez's resignation in 1981, his successor, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, prioritized Spain's NATO entry, viewing it as instrumental in expediting negotiations for integration into the European Community (EC). In the electoral campaign, the socialist opposition declared support for a popular referendum on the matter, effectively garnering the backing of large segments of the population opposed to a militaristic perspective.

In December 1981, the Spanish Congress approved NATO membership, encountering vehement opposition from the left. Accusations of violating a prior consensus ensued, leading to an aggressive negative campaign. PSOE leader González prominently featured the NATO issue in his 1982 electoral program, promising a popular referendum on withdrawal. The PSOE, led by Felipe González, secured an absolute majority in the October 1982 general elections, occurring a few months after Spain's formal entry into NATO.

However, upon their electoral victory, the PSOE, particularly González, deferred the question of Atlantic Alliance membership. No concrete steps were taken to fulfill the promises made during the electoral campaign, exemplified by PSOE participation in a substantial anti-NATO demonstration in June 1984. González, in a speech to deputies in the same year, declared support for Spain remaining in NATO, subject to three mitigating conditions: non-incorporation into military structure, the prohibition of installation, stockpiling, or introduction of nuclear weapons, and the reduction of US military bases in Spain installed after the Madrid Pacts of 1953. The main difficulty González had to face was to convince the Congress and its members since not everyone was on board with his

ideas. The change in attitude towards NATO led to the resignation of Foreign Minister Fernando Moran, who disagreed with him.¹³⁵

According to Santos Juliá, a prominent Spanish historian and sociologist, the PSOE government's shift in attitude towards NATO was influenced by several factors. These included external pressure from the United States and various European countries, the intricate relationship between Spain's NATO membership and its incorporation into the European Economic Community (EEC), and the Ministry of Defense's early adoption of a pro-NATO stance. Moreover, the fear that NATO withdrawal might become an insurmountable obstacle to EC entry played a pivotal role. Ultimately, withdrawing from NATO during the tense period of the Cold War was deemed unwise.¹³⁶

Historically, public sentiment leaned against Spain's NATO membership, with only 18.1 percent in favor and a significant majority (69 percent) advocating for a referendum in October 1981.^{137 138}

The question asked in the referendum was:

“El Gobierno considera conveniente, para los intereses nacionales, que España permanezca en la Alianza Atlántica, y acuerda que dicha permanencia se establezca en los siguientes términos:

1.º La participación de España en la Alianza Atlántica no incluirá su incorporación a la estructura militar integrada.

2.º Se mantendrá la prohibición de instalar, almacenar o introducir armas nucleares en territorio español.

¹³⁵ David, “La España Democrática (1975-2000). Política Y Sociedad.”

¹³⁶ Juliá, Santos (1999). Un siglo de España. Política y sociedad.

¹³⁷ El País, “En Principio, El 52% De Los Españoles Es Contrario Al Ingreso La OTAN, Y El 18,1% Favorable.”

¹³⁸ El País, “El Primer Sondeo De EL PAÍS Sobre El Referéndum Predice Una Victoria Del «No».”

3.º Se procederá a la reducción progresiva de la presencia militar de los Estados Unidos en España.

¿Considera conveniente para España permanecer en la Alianza Atlántica en los términos acordados por el Gobierno de la Nación?"¹³⁹

Thus, translating the last line it must be noticed that it is posed a seemingly paradoxical question to the Spanish electorate. The question was framed as follows:

"Do you consider it convenient for Spain to remain in the Atlantic Alliance on the terms agreed upon by the Government of the Nation?"

The peculiar nature of the question lies in its construction, as it seemingly presented a dichotomy between approving Spain's accession to NATO or rejecting an agreement already signed in 1982. The wording of the question created confusion and sparked controversy because it framed the issue as a retrospective endorsement of a decision made four years earlier, rather than a straightforward choice on whether Spain should remain a member of NATO.

This unconventional framing led to criticism and debates about the transparency and fairness of the referendum. Critics argued that the question was intentionally convoluted, potentially influencing voters to approve the NATO membership by emphasizing the commitment already made by the government in 1982. The wording raised concerns about the true intent behind the referendum and whether it accurately reflected the public's current stance on NATO membership.

¹³⁹ Rodrigo Luelmo, Francisco José (8 July 2016). "The accession of Spain to NATO"

Despite the controversy surrounding the question, the majority of Spanish voters ultimately approved Spain's continued NATO membership in the 1986 referendum.

The 1986 referendum, held on March 12th, was designed to fulfill a socialist electoral promise, plunging the involved political parties into a state of disarray. González's volte-face on NATO faced condemnation from the PSOE, leading to the resignation of Morán in July 1986 due to his Atlanticist positions. Alianza Popular, a right-wing political party, urged its supporters to vote against the referendum, aligning with the PSOE's prior stance. The government framed NATO membership as intricately linked to EC membership, emphasizing the severe economic repercussions of a vote to withdraw. Pre-referendum polls indicated a majority against NATO membership, but the unexpected outcome saw 52.6 percent supporting Spain's continued membership, while 39.8 percent opposed it.¹⁴⁰

The positive outcome of the 1986 referendum not only questioned Spain's participation in the Atlantic Alliance but also posed challenges to the government's and González's leadership within the PSOE. The subsequent year witnessed González applying for Spanish membership in the Western European Union (WEU)¹⁴¹, underscoring the European facet of the defense system. Despite Spain already being a full member of the Atlantic Alliance during the referendum, the positive vote solidified Spain's position not only within the 'Western family' but also on the international stage.¹⁴² This was exemplified by Spain's active involvement in global

¹⁴⁰ "Electoral Results Consultation. Referendum. March 1986. National totals". *infoelectoral.mir.es* (in Spanish). Ministry of the Interior.

¹⁴¹ NATO basic fact sheet Nr 9. NATO's Sixteen Nations, Spain New Approach, Atlantic Solidarity. Brussels, July 1992

¹⁴² Powell, "Fifteen Years on: Spanish Membership in the European Union Revisited." (2016)

Paper presented at the conference, "From isolation to integration: 15 years of Spanish and Portuguese Membership in Europe," Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University, 2-3 November 2001.

events, such as the dispatch of warships to the Persian Gulf in 1991, approval of the U.S., British, and French intervention in Iraq, and the selection of Madrid as the venue for the Middle East Peace Conference on October 30, 1991. In 1995, Francisco Javier Solana Madariaga, a member of the PSOE, assumed the role of Spain's first NATO Secretary General, marking a pivotal moment in Spain's international political engagement.

2.3.2. The advantages of membership to Spain

The advantages of NATO membership for Spain were multifaceted. Upon taking office, Felipe González faced a complex web of challenges, including the threat of a right-wing extremist military takeover, commonly referred to as *'el golpe'*, *'el síndrome militar'*, and *'el síndrome del miedo'*¹⁴³. Despite the failed attempt of the '23F' in 1981¹⁴⁴, this threat remained a concern for the Socialists. NATO provided an opportunity for the Spanish armed forces to mature and become a national defense force, protecting Spain from external threats. Additionally, staying in the alliance was expected to provide a stimulus to the electronics, aircraft, and shipbuilding sectors, resulting in much-needed job opportunities.

Furthermore, Spain's 'si' vote in NATO had intangible but crucial implications in the sphere of political credibility and influence. Spain's stronger ties to the rest of Europe and the cause of Western unity and cohesion within NATO were likely to prove the most significant dimension of this decision. As a member of both the European Commission and the Alliance, Spain had an equal voice and right to be heard as the other members. Politically, Spain became a full member of the European club, solidifying its position within the 'Western family' and in international politics.

¹⁴³ Julián, Casanova and Carlos Gil, Andrés, "Historia de España en el siglo XX", 2009

¹⁴⁴ Shubert, Adrian. "The Military Threat to Spanish Democracy: A Historical Perspective." (1984), pp. 529–42.

Without full integration into NATO's military structure, the Spanish armed forces could not be deployed outside the country. From NATO's perspective, their primary value lay in defending the key surveillance areas on either shore of the Straits of Gibraltar - the coast of Andalusia and Ceuta and Melilla. This is because an invasion of southern Spain and the loss of Gibraltar would close the Straits to the West.¹⁴⁵

Facing the reality, Felipe González concluded that withdrawing from NATO would be a mistake. However, the politician and their party not only promised to hold a referendum but also repeatedly stated opposition to membership. Failing to honor this pledge would cause irreparable harm. Thus, the only option was to appear before Parliament and place himself in the hands of the Spanish people. The final decision would be theirs. If, despite all the arguments in favor of remaining in NATO, they voted for withdrawal, that decision would be democratic, and he would withdraw Spain. During his campaign, González emphasized the negative consequences of leaving NATO rather than the benefits of staying. As quoted in *El País* on March 9, 1986, González warned, *'Anyone intending to vote against should think hard about the consequences of such vote.'*

He stated that if Spain were to leave NATO, she would lose the benefits of being officially aligned with the Western military, but due to her geostrategic position and relationship with the United States, she would still be vulnerable to the potential negative consequences. He also argued that in the event of a nuclear crisis, it would be unrealistic to assume that Spain would not be a target of Soviet aggression. If Spain were to leave NATO, it would become more reliant on the United States and would have less bargaining power in negotiations regarding military bases. Remaining in NATO would allow Spain to seek support from its European allies in any

¹⁴⁵ Gooch, "A Surrealistic Referendum: Spain and NATO.", p. 300–316

disagreements with the US. Leaving the alliance would be a self-defeating move.

Regarding the economy, Felipe González repeatedly warned of the potentially severe consequences of a 'no' vote, and he was strongly supported by his Minister of the Economy, Carlos Solchaga. González implied that he may consider resigning if he does not receive the necessary support, which could potentially lead to Manuel Fraga - right-wing leader - taking over. However, he clarified that the matter at hand was not about personal support for him or the Socialist government as a whole. He was requesting something that went beyond individuals and political parties, something that would benefit everyone and the entire nation. Therefore, he urged them to vote in favor of staying in by saying 'yes', '*en interés de España*'¹⁴⁶.

In the broader economic context, NATO membership aligned Spain with Western economic interests, fostering international trade and investment. This alignment positioned Spain as a stable and secure destination for economic activities, thereby bolstering its reputation and attractiveness to foreign investors. The economic advantages of NATO membership, coupled with the political and security benefits, constituted a comprehensive rationale for Spain's continued participation in the alliance.

2.3.3. The Outcome and consequences

The year 1982 marks the date in which Spain becomes the 16th member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ "Publicidad PSOE", EL PAÍS, 6 March 1986

¹⁴⁷ "NATO Update - 1982."

“Spain will be a loyal and active member of the alliance and will contribute to it with all the drive of a people which has just recovered its freedoms and wishes to preserve them in the peace and justice of the international community.”¹⁴⁸

- Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, President of the Spanish Government, speaking at the opening ceremony of the NATO meeting in Bonn, 10 June 1982

This significant development was underscored by President Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo's commitment to actively and loyally participate, emphasizing the nation's newfound freedoms within the international community. The subsequent years, however, witnessed a nuanced trajectory that would shape Spain's position within NATO.

The PSOE, in its campaign strategy leading up to the 1986 referendum, not only aimed to secure support for continued NATO membership but also linked it strategically to Spain's inclusion in the European Economic Community (EEC), promising economic growth. Despite the initial pledge of prosperity, the economic benefits envisioned by the PSOE did not materialize, potentially causing apprehension among voters. It's crucial to approach this issue impartially, acknowledging diverse perspectives on the matter.

Amidst the socio-political landscape characterized by pacifist sentiments and anti-militarist movements, the PSOE successfully navigated through challenges with a well-executed campaign, supported by media endorsement. This deft approach allowed them to overcome opposition and secure a majority 'yes' vote of 52.49% in the referendum, signaling both confidence and competence in achieving their objectives.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Nato, “Spain and NATO - 1982.”

¹⁴⁹ “Resultados oficiales definitivos del Referéndum” (1986)

However, the following years revealed a gap between the government's promises and the actual realization of the conditions outlined in the referendum. The initial commitment that Spain's involvement in NATO would not integrate it into the military structure was contradicted in 1997 when Spain joined NATO's integrated military framework during José María Aznar's government¹⁵⁰. Furthermore, provisions related to the prohibition and reduction of nuclear weapons and U.S. military presence faced challenges. Instances such as the Palomares incident^{151 152} and the storage of nuclear charges in the Rota naval base in 1986 - which belonged to the VI Fleet of the U.S. Navy - highlighted deviations from the original conditions.

The second provision was amended to include a clause that requires prior authorization from the Spanish government for the installation, storage, or introduction of nuclear weapons by the U.S. in Spain¹⁵³.

Furthermore, the third condition stipulated a gradual reduction of the U.S. military presence in Spanish territory, which has yet to be fully realized. On the contrary, the U.S. military presence is increasing¹⁵⁴, which is having an impact on the Spanish military presence in the joint-use bases. In 2016,

¹⁵⁰ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton (1997, Book II)

¹⁵¹ On January 17, 1966, a B-52G bomber from the United States Air Force's Strategic Air Command collided with a KC-135 tanker during mid-air refueling at 31,000 feet (9,450 m) over the Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of Spain. This incident, commonly known as the 1966 Palomares B-52 crash, was a regrettable event that highlighted the importance of safety measures during military operations. However, it also demonstrated the resilience and expertise of the United States Air Force in handling such situations with confidence and professionalism. The collision resulted in the destruction of the KC-135 when its fuel load ignited, tragically resulting in the loss of all four crew members. Additionally, the B-52G broke apart, leading to the loss of three of the seven crew members aboard.

¹⁵² Stiles, "A Fusion Bomb Over Andalucía: U.S. Information Policy and the 1966 Palomares Incident", pp. 49–67.

¹⁵³ Article 11(2) in Chapter 1: General Provisions of the U.S.-Spain Agreement on Defense Cooperation (ADC) - 1988

¹⁵⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, "U.S. Presence at Spanish Base Continues to Grow." 2014.

the military base at Morón de la Frontera was expanded¹⁵⁵, and part of the US anti-missile shield was located in Rota.

Despite these challenges and apparent non-compliance, Spain, a NATO member since 1982, has not seriously contemplated leaving the alliance, especially after the 'yes' vote in the 1986 referendum. The ongoing negotiations and proposals within NATO, often favoring American interests, bring to light the delicate balance between alliance commitments and national sovereignty. The NATO charter often includes proposals for agreements, bases, and facilities for the use of territory, as well as overt or covert nuclearization. It is worth noting that these proposals tend to prioritize American interests, which could potentially affect objectivity.

Spain's accession to NATO amid Cold War tensions facilitated its integration into Western European institutions, providing a collective defense alliance during a period of heightened international unrest. The subsequent cooperation between the Spanish armed forces and those of other Western Allies, catalyzed by NATO membership, created synergies and opportunities for mutual learning. Over time, Spain's initial reservations about participating in the integrated military structure gradually diminished, culminating in its endorsement in 1996, concurrent with Dr. Javier Solana's appointment as NATO's first Spanish Secretary General (1995-1999)^{156 157}. This evolution reflected Spain's growing role and influence within the NATO framework, despite initial public opposition and the complex challenges posed by evolving global dynamics.

The consequences of Spain's accession to NATO extend beyond the immediate aftermath of the 1986 referendum. Beyond the military and

¹⁵⁵ "España Celebra La Firma Del Acuerdo De La Base De Morón 'frente a La Amenaza Terrorista'" (2015)

¹⁵⁶ Nato, "NATO Member Countries."

¹⁵⁷ Craine, A. G. "Javier Solana."

strategic dimensions, economic considerations have played a pivotal role. NATO membership aligned Spain with Western economic interests, fostering international trade and investment. The stability and security associated with NATO membership positioned Spain as an attractive destination for economic activities, earning the confidence of foreign investors.

Moreover, Spain's participation in NATO facilitated its integration into Western European institutions, solidifying its position within the 'Western family' and international politics. The positive outcome of the referendum not only affirmed Spain's commitment to NATO but also signaled its willingness to actively engage in broader geopolitical affairs.

In addition to the economic advantages, Spain's alignment with NATO brought forth significant political benefits. The integration into the Western defense framework contributed to a more comprehensive foreign policy, allowing Spain to play a substantive role in international relations. The dispatch of warships to the Persian Gulf in 1991¹⁵⁸, approval of interventions in Iraq, and hosting the Middle East Peace Conference in 1991¹⁵⁹ underscored Spain's evolving influence on the global stage.

However, challenges and complexities persisted. The conditions outlined in the 1986 referendum faced deviations over time, prompting considerations about the delicate balance between alliance commitments and national sovereignty. The nuanced evolution of Spain's role within NATO, marked by its eventual integration into the military structure and adaptation to evolving geopolitical dynamics, reflects the intricate interplay between national interests and international alliances.

¹⁵⁸ Kimberly Ann Cochran, *Press Coverage of The Persian Gulf War: Historical Perspectives and Questions of Policy beyond the Shadow of Vietnam* (June 1992)

¹⁵⁹ "Milestones: 1989–1992 - Office of the Historian."

In conclusion, Spain's journey within NATO since 1982 has been a multifaceted exploration of its role in global geopolitics. The referendum, while decisive in affirming Spain's commitment to NATO, initiated a complex trajectory marked by economic, political, and strategic considerations. Navigating through challenges and evolving its stance over the years, Spain has become an integral part of the Western defense alliance, contributing to collective security and influencing international affairs. As the alliance continues to adapt to contemporary challenges, Spain's evolving role within NATO remains a dynamic facet of its foreign policy and global engagement.

3. Chapter Three: Beyond Membership

Chapter Three of this thesis provides an in-depth analysis of Spain's role in NATO, going beyond its accession to scrutinize its multifaceted contributions both militarily and diplomatically. It traces Spain's integration into the Western Alliance, examining its historical foundations and contemporary engagements to unravel the complexities of its position within the international security landscape.

From a military standpoint, the chapter delves into the various missions undertaken by Spain within NATO, highlighting the strategic significance of its contributions. It explores Spain's involvement in collective defense efforts, peacekeeping missions, and evolving military engagements within the alliance. By analyzing these aspects, the chapter provides insights into the strategic considerations that underpin Spain's active participation in NATO.

Simultaneously, the chapter examines Spain's diplomatic dimension, investigating how it employs its position within NATO to influence policies, foster international collaborations, and contribute to the alliance's overarching goals. This examination sheds light on the nuanced negotiations, alliances, and strategic alignments that have become integral to Spain's role within the Western Alliance.

In summary, Chapter Three provides a comprehensive exploration of Spain's dynamic role in NATO, encompassing both military and diplomatic dimensions. It examines Spain's contributions from historical foundations to present-day engagements, providing a holistic understanding of its impact within the Atlantic Alliance. Through this exploration, the chapter

contributes to a nuanced perspective on Spain's evolving role in shaping international security and diplomacy within the context of NATO.

3.1. Spain's Role in NATO during the 1990s

3.1.1. Historical Overview of Spain's Military Engagements

In the tumultuous landscape of the 1990s, Spain, as a NATO member, played a pivotal role in responding to the evolving global challenges. This section provides a detailed historical overview of Spain's military engagements during this transformative decade. From participation in NATO-led operations to its diplomatic endeavors, Spain's contributions unfolded against the backdrop of a post-Cold War world. This chapter delves into the nuances of Spain's military commitments, exploring the factors that shaped its role within the alliance.

The 1990s marked a transformative period in global geopolitics, characterized by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new security challenges. Spain, as a NATO member, actively participated in addressing these evolving dynamics. This subsection provides a meticulous historical examination of Spain's military engagements during this crucial decade, shedding light on the intricacies that defined its role within the alliance.

Spain's commitment to NATO manifested in various military operations and exercises aimed at maintaining collective security. Operation Provide Comfort, launched in 1991 to address the humanitarian crisis in Northern Iraq¹⁶⁰, witnessed Spain contributing logistical support and personnel. This marked a paradigm shift from the Cold War era, emphasizing NATO's role in addressing non-traditional security threats.

¹⁶⁰ Air Force Historical Support Division, "1991 - Operation Provide Comfort and Northern Watch."

The decade also witnessed Spain's involvement in the Balkans conflict, where it participated in NATO-led interventions, such as Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Spanish Armed Forces played a vital role in implementing peacekeeping measures and contributing to the stabilization efforts in the region. These engagements showcased Spain's adaptability to the post-Cold War security landscape and its commitment to upholding NATO's principles.

Moreover, military exercises, such as NATO's Partnership for Peace initiative, became integral to Spain's participation in fostering regional stability. These exercises not only enhanced interoperability among NATO member states but also reinforced Spain's role as a proactive contributor to the alliance's collective defense capabilities.

As Spain navigated the intricacies of a changing global order, its military engagements within NATO reflected a commitment to collaborative security and adapting to emerging challenges. The historical overview in this subsection aims to explore the various dimensions of Spain's military contributions during the 1990s, providing insights into the nation's evolving role within the NATO framework.

Operation Provide Comfort, 1991 - 1996

Initiated in 1991, Operation Provide Comfort stands as a pivotal chapter in Spain's involvement in NATO military endeavors during the 1990s, responding to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Northern Iraq, notably among the Kurdish population.

Affirming its dedication to collective security and humanitarian initiatives, Spain actively engaged in the operation, extending beyond symbolic commitment to provide tangible relief, protection, and support to the

Kurdish people displaced in the aftermath of the Gulf War ¹⁶¹. As part of the Provide Comfort Combined Task Force, which included over 11,000 Americans and troops from the United Kingdom, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Belgium, Spain played a significant role in establishing 43 tent camps within an 8,000-square-kilometer security zone in northern Iraq ¹⁶².

In pursuit of the overarching objective, Spain's Armed Forces assumed a pivotal role by contributing logistical support and deploying personnel comprising members from diverse military units, such as a legionnaire paratroopers brigade, engineers from the Parachute Brigade 'BRIPAC,' a contingent from the Army Helicopter Forces 'FAMET,' the Advanced Medical Echelon of the Military Hospital in Seville, a sappers unit from Engineer Command, a section from the 21st Tactical Communications Regiment, a detachment from the 1st Service Support Group, and individuals representing various command organizations¹⁶³.

A total of 635 Spanish soldiers, supported by a comprehensive logistical framework comprising 7 helicopters, 80 all-terrain vehicles, 31 trailers, 18 motorcycles, and 5 diggers, undertook a multifaceted approach¹⁶⁴. This encompassed the transportation of refugees, construction and administration of refugee camps, establishment and management of a field hospital, securing installations, and systematic distribution of humanitarian aid from Spain¹⁶⁵.

The disbursed humanitarian assistance, totaling 110 tons of food, 560 tons of clothing and footwear, 1 tonne of pharmaceutical products, and 150

¹⁶¹ D. L. Haulman, Crisis in Iraq: Operation Provide Comfort

¹⁶² D. L. Haulman, Provide Comfort I

¹⁶³ JEME, "Operation Provide Comfort - Spanish Army."

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁵ Colonel Donald G. Goff (United States Army), OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT (1992)

tons of miscellaneous items, played a pivotal role in addressing the immediate needs of the Iraqi Kurds in Zakho¹⁶⁶.

Operation Provide Comfort served as a departure from traditional NATO roles, illustrating the alliance's adaptability in addressing non-traditional security challenges in the post-Cold War era. Spain's active participation in humanitarian operations reflected its willingness to engage in missions transcending traditional military objectives. This commitment underscores Spain's dedication to upholding collective security principles while navigating the evolving global security landscape. This section elucidates the specifics of Spain's contributions to Operation Provide Comfort, emphasizing its integral role within the broader NATO framework during a period marked by shifting paradigms in international security.

Operation Joint Endeavor, 1995 - 1996

In the aftermath of the Yugoslav Wars, the Balkans emerged as a focal point for NATO's engagement in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Spain's decision to actively contribute to NATO-led missions in the region underscored its dedication to collective security and marked a significant chapter in its evolving role within the alliance.

Operation Joint Endeavor – codenamed IFOR (Implementation Force), the NATO-led multinational peace enforcement force - emerged as a critical response to the protracted Bosnian War, characterized by pervasive ethnic tensions and violence within the former Yugoslavia. With the negotiation of the Dayton Agreement during the Dayton Peace Conference, the international community sought to address the complex socio-political landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consequently, Operation Joint Endeavor was conceived to operationalize the provisions

¹⁶⁶ JEME, "Operation Provide Comfort - Spanish Army."

of this peace accord and initiate a comprehensive peacekeeping effort in the region.

The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, triggered by the Republic's declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1992, was characterized by ethnic and religious divisions among Muslim Bosnians, Catholic Croats, and Orthodox Serbs. The dissolution of Yugoslavia, influenced by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War, and long-standing internal tensions, created a complex geopolitical landscape.

The primary objective of Operation Joint Endeavor was the meticulous implementation of the Dayton Agreement. This encompassed the enforcement of a ceasefire, the supervision of the withdrawal of armed forces from designated zones, and the facilitation of the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons. Through these objectives, the mission aspired to establish the conditions necessary for enduring peace in the war-torn region.

This operation saw the deployment of a substantial multinational force, marshaled under the auspices of NATO. Comprising troops from NATO member states and partner nations, this diverse coalition reflected the international community's commitment to collective security and collaborative peacekeeping efforts. Furthermore, the tasks undertaken by the NATO-led forces were manifold. They included monitoring and enforcing the ceasefire, overseeing the withdrawal of belligerent forces to designated separation zones, and actively supporting the safe return of refugees to their homes. These tasks were integral to fostering an environment conducive to sustained peace.

Amid the escalation of hostilities, Bosnian Serb militias, with the agreement of the Federal Republic's president, perpetrated violent ethnic

cleansing, deportations, and massacres, culminating in the infamous Srebrenica massacre in July 1995¹⁶⁷ ¹⁶⁸. As Bosnian Serbs occupied a significant portion of the territory, NATO increased its presence, issuing warnings against further attacks on safe areas. The international community's reassessment of its approach became imperative after the Srebrenica massacre and ongoing security zone violations. The United States advocated for forceful intervention, leading to the initiation of Operation Deliberate Force by NATO. The second bombing of Sarajevo's main market in August 1995, coupled with Serbian propaganda attempting to shift blame, further prompted NATO's intervention¹⁶⁹.

Spain played a crucial role in IFOR, comprising approximately 60,000 troops¹⁷⁰, by deploying 1,376 soldiers, led by Colonel Julio López-Guarch Muro and General Luis Palacios Zuasti of the 62nd High Mountain Light Infantry Brigade (currently 1st Mountain Light Infantry Brigade -BRCZM-"Aragón"¹⁷¹). Subsequently, a Stabilization Force (SFOR) was deployed¹⁷², consisting of 32,000 troops. Spanish troops were tasked with demilitarization, withdrawal of armed forces from designated zones, and establishing a secure environment. Their expertise and competence were pivotal in achieving the mission's goals, despite challenges in the post-conflict environment, including managing ethnic tensions and facilitating the return of displaced populations.

¹⁶⁷ The New York Times, Times, "MASSACRE IN BOSNIA; Srebrenica: The Days of Slaughter."

¹⁶⁸ Genocidal killing of over 8,000 Bosniak in and around the town of Srebrenica during the war. The perpetration of these killings was carried out by units of the Bosnian Serb Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), led by Ratko Mladić. - "International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)

¹⁶⁹ Raugh, "Operation Joint Endeavor: V Corps in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1995-1996: An Oral History."

¹⁷⁰ "JOINT ENDEAVOUR - Freedom Anatomy."

¹⁷¹ JEME, "SPABRI I - Spanish Army."

¹⁷² NATO, "History of the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina"

The commitment persisted as Spain participated in and contributed to SFOR, focusing on patrolling, supporting local authorities, and facilitating reconstruction. Spanish forces collaborated seamlessly with NATO allies, showcasing their interoperability and cooperation. This engagement not only stabilized Bosnia and Herzegovina but also offered valuable lessons in diplomatic engagement, coordination with allied forces, and the challenges of post-conflict nation-building.

Operation Joint Endeavor played a pivotal role in facilitating the practical realization of the Dayton Agreement. By meticulously executing the outlined tasks, the mission contributed to the establishment of a unified Bosnia and Herzegovina, delineating the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and *Republika Srpska* as autonomous entities¹⁷³.

Spain's early involvement in the Balkans exemplified its commitment to collective security within the NATO framework. The experiences gained underscored its adaptability in addressing diverse security challenges and established its role as an active contributor to promoting stability and peace in regions recovering from conflict.

Operation Allied Force, 1999

In the late 1990s, the conflict in Kosovo, arising from ethnic and political tensions in the Balkans, reached a critical juncture, prompting NATO to initiate Operation Allied Force on March 24, 1999. The primary objective of this NATO air campaign was to halt the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's (FRY) campaign of ethnic cleansing against Albanian Kosovars, which had

¹⁷³ Tzifakis, "The Bosnian Peace Process: The Power-Sharing Approach Revisited.", pp. 85–101.

caused an estimated 1,000 civilian casualties in 1998 and resumed in early 1999¹⁷⁴.

Following the breakdown of peace negotiations and the withdrawal of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Kosovo Verification Mission on March 19, the Serbs launched 'Operation Horseshoe' on March 20. This coordinated effort involved widespread destruction, incidents of rape, killings, and other measures designed to displace non-Serbs from Kosovo. The resultant humanitarian crisis saw approximately 863,000 refugees (Kosovars displaced to neighboring countries), 100,000 individuals reported as missing, and potentially an additional 590,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1999)¹⁷⁵.

NATO's initiation of Operation Allied Force was prompted by the imperative to compel Slobodan Milosevic, the President of Yugoslavia, to cease the human rights abuses perpetrated by Serbs against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Concluding after a 78-day campaign on June 9, this military intervention witnessed the fulfillment of NATO's stipulations and the subsequent withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo, effectively mitigating the humanitarian crisis and reinstating stability in the region¹⁷⁶.

Spain, an active participant in NATO, played a significant role in Operation Allied Force by deploying military assets and personnel for NATO-led airstrikes targeting Yugoslav military objectives. This deployment encompassed six F/A-18A/B Hornets and a KC-130H positioned at Aviano

¹⁷⁴ Larson and Bogdan, "CHAPTER THREE Operation Allied Force (Kosovo, 1999).", p.63–124. (2007)

¹⁷⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) figures from October 15, 1999, presented in a NATO press briefing on May 13, 1999, cited in Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (1999, p. 167)

¹⁷⁶ Lambeth, "NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment."

for in-flight refueling¹⁷⁷, alongside a C.212 Aviocar stationed at Vicenza. The deployment of the Spanish Air Force, featuring F/A-18 Hornets and a tanker, played a pivotal role in the conflict, with the F/A-18s notably marking the first NATO aircraft to bomb Belgrade and engage in SEAD¹⁷⁸ (Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses) operations. Additionally, the deployment included the positioning of a frigate as part of Spain's strategic contributions to Operation Allied Force.

The principal objective of Spain's engagement was to coerce the Yugoslav government, led by President Slobodan Milošević, into discontinuing aggressive actions against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Following the conflict's conclusion, Yugoslav forces were responsible for the fatalities of approximately 1,500¹⁷⁹ to 2,131 combatants¹⁸⁰. Additionally, 10,317 civilians were reported as either killed or missing, with 85% of these casualties identified as Kosovar Albanians. Approximately 848,000 individuals were forcibly expelled from Kosovo¹⁸¹. The NATO bombing campaign led to the demise of around 1,000 members of the Yugoslav security forces and between 489 and 528 civilians. Moreover, it inflicted considerable damage on critical infrastructure, including bridges, industrial facilities, hospitals, schools, cultural monuments, private enterprises, barracks, and military installations. Following the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army, over 164,000 Serbs and 24,000 Roma vacated Kosovo. The remaining non-Albanian civilians, alongside Albanians perceived as collaborators, endured various forms of abuse, encompassing beatings, abductions, and homicides¹⁸². After the Kosovo

¹⁷⁷ Pike, "Operation Determined Force / Allied Force Order of Battle Trends."

¹⁷⁸ "Military Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD): Assessing Future Needs."

¹⁷⁹ Daalder; O'Hanlon, (2000). "Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo", p. 151.

¹⁸⁰ "Kosovo Memory Book Database Presentation and Expert Evaluation" (PDF). Humanitarian Law Center. 4 February 2015.

¹⁸¹ Judah, Tim (1997). *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, p. 150.

¹⁸² Hudson; Bowman, (2012). p. 30.

and other Yugoslav Wars, Serbia became the residence of the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Europe, including Kosovo Serbs¹⁸³.

The NATO bombing campaign represented the alliance's second significant military operation, succeeding the 1995 bombing campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This instance marked NATO's inaugural deployment of military force without explicit endorsement from the UN Security Council, thereby inciting debates surrounding the legitimacy of the intervention¹⁸⁴.

Spain assumed a pivotal role in the aerial campaign as part of NATO's overarching strategy to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and safeguard civilians in Kosovo. This operation constituted a critical juncture in Spain's dedication to collective security, exemplifying its preparedness to respond to emerging regional crises and actively contribute to NATO-led initiatives. Spain's decision to partake in Operation Allied Force underscored its commitment to upholding international norms, preventing human rights abuses, and fostering regional stability. As a constituent of the larger NATO alliance, Spain's involvement in this conflict spotlighted its willingness to engage in intricate security challenges, solidifying its position as a proactive member within the alliance during the late 1990s¹⁸⁵.

Collectively, Spain's engagements in these operations reflected not only its commitment to collective security but also its ability to navigate complex post-conflict scenarios. The experiences garnered during the 1990s positioned Spain as an active participant in promoting stability and peace,

¹⁸³ OSCE, "Serbia: Europe's largest protracted refugee situation" (2008)

¹⁸⁴ Zyla, *The End of European Security Institutions?: The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and NATO After Brexit*, p. 40.

¹⁸⁵ "A Humanitarian Milestone?: NATO's 1999 Intervention in Kosovo and Trends in Military Responses to Mass Violence - Serbia."

solidifying its role within NATO and contributing to the alliance's broader objectives. As Spain navigated the challenges of the Balkans, the nation's role in these operations became an integral chapter in its evolving narrative within the NATO alliance.

3.1.2. Diplomatic Initiatives and Alliances

Throughout the 1990s, Spain actively pursued diplomatic initiatives and alliances that significantly shaped its role within NATO and the broader international community.

Spain engaged in high-level diplomatic dialogues with fellow NATO member states, fostering mutual understanding, strengthening alliances, and coordinating collective security strategies. Notable examples include diplomatic exchanges with key NATO partners such as the United States¹⁸⁶, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Joint military exercises were conducted to enhance interoperability and strengthen diplomatic ties, showcasing Spain's commitment to collective defense.

In navigating regional challenges, Spain played a pivotal diplomatic role during the Yugoslav Wars. The country actively participated in peace negotiations, conflict resolution, and stabilization efforts in the Balkans. Spanish involvement in the Dayton Agreement brokered in 1995, stands as a diplomatic milestone with lasting implications.

Dayton Agreements

During the tumultuous period of the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s, Spain emerged as a diplomatic actor, actively engaging in efforts to address the complex and volatile situation in the Balkans. The dissolution of

¹⁸⁶ Congressional Research Service, “*Spain and its relations with the United States: In Brief*”, (2020)

Yugoslavia led to a series of conflicts marked by ethnic and religious divisions, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Spain's diplomatic role was pivotal in navigating the intricate regional challenges posed by the Yugoslav Wars. The country demonstrated a commitment to peace and stability by actively participating in peace negotiations, conflict resolution, and stabilization efforts. Spanish diplomats engaged with key stakeholders involved in the conflicts, contributing to diplomatic dialogues aimed at finding viable solutions.

One of the most significant diplomatic milestones for Spain during this period was its involvement in the Dayton Agreement, brokered in 1995¹⁸⁷. The Dayton Agreement marked the end of the Bosnian War and provided a framework for peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁸⁸. Spain's active participation in the negotiation process and its support for the agreement underscored its dedication to diplomatic solutions in addressing complex conflicts.

The Dayton Agreement had lasting implications for the region, as it established the framework for a unified Bosnia and Herzegovina, delineated territorial boundaries, and outlined the structure of a complex political system¹⁸⁹. Spain's diplomatic engagement in the negotiation and implementation of the Dayton Agreement contributed to the broader international efforts to bring an end to the violence in the Balkans and set the stage for post-conflict reconstruction.

By actively participating in the diplomatic resolution of the Yugoslav Wars, particularly through contributions to the Dayton Agreement, Spain solidified its reputation as a diplomatic actor capable of navigating and

¹⁸⁷ Dobbins et al., "Overcoming Obstacles to Peace: Local Factors in Nation-Building." Chapter 5 "Bosnia and Herzegovina", p. 93–124. (2013)

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁸⁹ Richard Holbrooke, "*To End a War*" (1998)

contributing to the resolution of complex regional conflicts. This diplomatic engagement also showcased Spain's commitment to the principles of peace, security, and stability within the framework of international cooperation.

Beyond the Balkans, Spain aspired to establish itself as a diplomatic force in the Middle East peace process. Although not directly linked to NATO, these endeavors illustrated Spain's commitment to broader diplomatic engagements. Within the NATO framework, Spain actively engaged in diplomatic initiatives orchestrated by the alliance. This encompassed participation in diplomatic dialogues, conflict resolution endeavors, and decision-making processes. Spain lent diplomatic support to NATO's enlargement initiatives, thereby contributing to the alliance's endeavors to integrate Central and Eastern European countries.

The impact of Spain's diplomatic involvements manifested in the nation assuming leadership roles within NATO structures. Spanish officials were appointed to pivotal positions within NATO's diplomatic and military hierarchy, emphasizing Spain's burgeoning influence and acknowledgment within the alliance. Active involvement in NATO decision-making processes highlighted Spain as a diplomatic player with a substantive role in shaping the alliance's strategic trajectory during the post-Cold War era.

Overall, Spain's diversified approach to diplomatic initiatives and alliances in the 1990s played a pivotal role in the nation's evolving position within NATO and its broader diplomatic influence on the global stage.

3.2. Spain's Role in NATO during the 2000s

3.2.1. Historical Overview of Spain's Military Engagements

The first decade of the 21st century marked a crucial period for Spain's military engagements, as the country navigated a dynamic international landscape within the framework of NATO. As the world grappled with evolving security threats and geopolitical shifts, Spain continued its commitment to global peace and stability. This historical overview delves into Spain's military involvements during the 2000s, exploring its active participation in NATO-led operations, contributions to counterterrorism efforts, and efforts towards enhancing its military capabilities. Simultaneously, the diplomatic alliances and initiatives undertaken by Spain within NATO forums and on the global stage underscored its dedication to collective defense and cooperative security measures. The decade witnessed Spain's strategic adaptation to emerging challenges, reflecting a nation actively shaping its role in the international security architecture.

International Security Assistance Force, 2001

On the 20th of December 2001, following the Taliban's defeat in November of the same year, the United Nations Security Council authorized the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)¹⁹⁰ in Afghanistan. ISAF's primary objective was to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in maintaining security within Kabul and its environs, supporting the Interim Authority's operations and creating a secure environment for United Nations activities¹⁹¹. The initial three rotations of ISAF were mainly staffed by personnel from four NATO

¹⁹⁰ "ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) - Freedom Anatomy."

¹⁹¹ NATO, *ISAF's Strategic Vision: Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the Nations Contributing to the UN-Mandated NATO-Led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan*, April 3, 2008

member countries: The United Kingdom, Turkey, Germany, and the Netherlands. Notably, this phase did not constitute a NATO-led operation, presenting considerable challenges in force generation for the participating nations.

In December 2002, Germany proposed that NATO assume command of ISAF IV, a proposition endorsed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in April 2003. Consequently, NATO took operational command of ISAF on the 11th of August 2003. Subsequent modifications to the ISAF Operational Plan (OPLAN) included the incorporation of Strategic Reserve Forces and an expansion of ISAF's mission beyond Kabul's confines. Stage 1 Expansion commenced on the 31st of December 2003, with the German Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT)¹⁹² in Kunduz transferring control to ISAF. Stage 2 expansion, encompassing the Central Region and Area West, began in April 2005. Under Stage 3, ISAF assumed command of southern Afghanistan from the U.S.-led coalition on the 31st of July 2006. The culmination of ISAF expansion took place during Phase 4 on the 5th of October 2006, placing eastern Afghanistan under ISAF control and making ISAF responsible for security throughout the entirety of Afghanistan^{193 194}.

Spain's proactive engagement in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan during the 2000s emerges as a pivotal chapter in the nation's commitment to global security and collaborative defense initiatives¹⁹⁵. Formed in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, ISAF aimed to stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan, addressing security challenges and fostering the establishment of a functioning government. Spain, cognizant of the broader implications of regional

¹⁹² North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Troop Contributions," June 4, 2007.

¹⁹³ NATO-ISAFs mandate has been expanded by: UNSCRs 1510 (2003), 1563 (2004), 1623 (2005) and 1707 (2006).

¹⁹⁴ NATO Archives, Public Diplomacy Division (PDD), "*NATO's role in Afghanistan*", (2010)

¹⁹⁵ JEME, "End of the ISAF Mission - Spanish Army."

instability on global security, demonstrated its commitment by contributing a substantial military contingent to the mission.

The deployment of Spanish military personnel, known as ASPFOR¹⁹⁶, ensued in adherence to the Council of Ministers Agreement of 27 December 2001, outlining the provision of a force encompassing around 350 troops. Subsequently, in 2004, this contingent was augmented to approximately 550 individuals in response to alterations in the tasks assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and its expanded operational scope across Afghan territory¹⁹⁷. Furthermore, this commitment experienced a subsequent augmentation in 2011, elevating the deployed personnel to over 1,500, a measure undertaken to accommodate the additional responsibilities assigned to Spain by ISAF during that period¹⁹⁸. The Spanish contingent operated in diverse capacities, including combat, reconstruction, and training roles, showcasing the nation's versatility in contributing to the multifaceted objectives of ISAF. Spanish forces actively engaged in rebuilding critical infrastructure, supporting local governance initiatives, and training Afghan security forces, thereby reinforcing the mission's comprehensive approach to achieving stability. Deployed personnel were stationed in three distinct locations¹⁹⁹. Firstly, in Kabul, they were positioned at the ISAF Headquarters, collaborating with the national intelligence cell, and managing a communications center. Secondly, in Herat, they were affiliated with a company from the Manoeuvres Battalion of the RC WEST, a helicopter unit, two liaison and advice teams, and a UAV Unit, along with a national support element (NSE) and personnel from the Regional Command Headquarters. Thirdly, in Qala-i-Naw²⁰⁰, personnel were associated with a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), tasked with the

¹⁹⁶ JEME, "ASPFOR XXVIII - Ejército De Tierra."

¹⁹⁷ "Defence – Spanish Participation in International Missions"

¹⁹⁸ JEME, "International Missions in Asia - Spanish Army."

¹⁹⁹ "Ejército de Tierra español". Ejercito.mde.es. (1 Dec. 2001)

²⁰⁰ "NATO-Resolute Support-EMAD-Afghanistan" - EMAD.

mission of establishing a stable and secure environment to facilitate the development of reconstruction projects by the international community²⁰¹.

Spain's commitment to the ISAF mission was not only measured in terms of troop contributions but also demonstrated through sustained financial support. The financial commitment, reaching millions of euros annually²⁰², underscored Spain's recognition of the importance of investing in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan as a means to ensure long-term stability. Additionally, Spain's humanitarian aid efforts, including healthcare assistance and educational support²⁰³, further emphasized the nation's commitment to addressing the socio-economic dimensions of the Afghan conflict²⁰⁴.

The Spanish military's involvement in ISAF also provided an opportunity for the nation to enhance its military capabilities and interoperability within the broader NATO framework. Through joint operations and collaboration with allied forces, Spain sought to improve its expeditionary capabilities, intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and crisis response strategies²⁰⁵. The experience gained in Afghanistan contributed to the professional development of Spanish armed forces, reinforcing their adaptability to complex and evolving security challenges.

²⁰¹ A. Pila, J. Rafael, "*NATO's Impact on The Spanish Army & Future Perspectives*" (2010)

²⁰² Spain has been a consistent, if relatively modest, donor to the international aid effort in Afghanistan, disbursing EUR 136 million in aid from 2001 to 2005 and pledging a further EUR 150 million at the London conference in 2006 to be spent from 2006–2010. In 2008 Spain spent EUR 50 million in assistance towards Afghanistan, of which EUR 17 million was distributed through Spanish agencies, with the rest being allocated to multilateral programmes. - Burke, "*Spain's War in Afghanistan*", Policy Briefs, n. 23 (Jan 2010), p. 2.

²⁰³ "The Last Spanish Troops Deployed in Afghanistan Arrive Home-Emad - EMAD."

²⁰⁴ Burke, "*Spain's War in Afghanistan*", p. 5

²⁰⁵ The specific joint operations and collaborations would have involved working closely with NATO allies contributing to the ISAF mission, which comprised a multinational coalition of forces. The ISAF coalition included countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and various other NATO and non-NATO nations. Through these partnerships, Spain aimed to strengthen its military capabilities, intelligence capabilities, and crisis response strategies, contributing to the overall success of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Spain actively participated in shaping ISAF's strategic direction through diplomatic channels within NATO. The nation's representatives engaged in discussions on mission objectives, resource allocation, and regional coordination, highlighting Spain's commitment not only on the field but also at the policy and strategic levels²⁰⁶. This diplomatic engagement showcased Spain's dedication to collective decision-making processes within the alliance.

In conclusion, Spain's active involvement in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan during the 2000s stands as a testament to its commitment to global security, its role as a responsible NATO member, and its recognition of the interconnectedness of international stability. The multifaceted contributions, encompassing military, financial, and diplomatic dimensions, underscored Spain's holistic approach to addressing the complex challenges posed by instability in Afghanistan, solidifying its position as a collaborative and proactive actor within the NATO alliance.

Operation Active Endeavour, 2001 - 2016

Operation Active Endeavour (OAE), NATO's exclusive Article 5 counter-terrorism operation, emerged in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks, signifying the alliance's resolute commitment to combatting terrorism.²⁰⁷ Commencing on October 6, 2001, it sought to express solidarity with the United States and underscore NATO's unwavering resolve, specifically aiming to deter and disrupt terrorist activities in the Mediterranean, with a focal point on securing vital maritime routes through the Straits of Gibraltar²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁶ Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Real Instituto Elcano, (2010)

²⁰⁷ Official NATO website "Operation Active Endeavour", nato.int.

²⁰⁸ Official NATO website "Operation Active Endeavour (2001-2016)

As part of the initiative, naval assets from the Standing Naval Force Mediterranean (STANAVFORMED), initially engaged in Exercise Destined Glory 2001²⁰⁹ off the southern coast of Spain²¹⁰, were swiftly reassigned to establish an immediate NATO military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. The operation, executed by diverse NATO military assets, including Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) and Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2), underscored the multinational commitment to regional security.²¹¹

During the early stages of OAE, on January 2, 2002, the Spanish frigate *Extremadura* of SNFL, Netherlands oiler HNLMS *Amsterdam*, UK naval vessel HMS *Beagle*, and the Greek Coast Guard collectively rendered life-saving assistance to passengers aboard a sinking ship in the Eastern Mediterranean near Crete.²¹² Subsequently, Spanish frigates, Danish, Norwegian, and German Patrol Boats, along with aircraft from Spain, Portugal, and the U.S., led operations in the Strait of Gibraltar.²¹³ From the initiation of these operations until their suspension in May 2004, a total of 488 vessels received escorts, highlighting the critical significance of this security measure in the region²¹⁴.

The operational scope of OAE was extensive, involving NATO forces hailing over 128,000 merchant vessels and conducting boardings of 172 suspect ships.²¹⁵ This maritime engagement not only showcased NATO's collective commitment but also significantly enhanced security perceptions within the shipping industry in the region, indeed safeguarding the Mediterranean's trade routes was pivotal.²¹⁶

²⁰⁹ "NATO Update: Exercise Destined Glory 2001 Curtailed - 1-7 October 2001."

²¹⁰ Taylor, "*Ten years of Operation Active Endeavour*"

²¹¹ *Ibid*

²¹² "Operation Active Endeavour."

²¹³ Official NATO southern command website for Operation Active Endeavour, afsouth.nato.int.

²¹⁴ NATO Archive, "Operation Active Endeavour."

²¹⁵ Pike, "Operation Active Endeavour."

²¹⁶ Nato, "Operation Sea Guardian."

On February 4, 2003, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decided to expand OAE's mandate, encompassing the escort of non-military ships through the Strait of Gibraltar. This expansion aimed to uphold security in the region and ensure the safe transit of designated Allied vessels, responding to the acknowledged vulnerability of the narrow Strait as a potential target for terrorist attacks. The inaugural NATO escort occurred on March 10, 2003, orchestrated by units from Standing Naval Force Atlantic, with support from U.S. and Portuguese Maritime Patrol Aircraft, along with Spanish helicopters.²¹⁷

Spain, a key NATO member, made significant contributions to OAE, reinforcing the alliance's operational capabilities. Spanish naval assets, particularly fast patrol boats, played a pivotal role in the execution of OAE²¹⁸, highlighting Spain's commitment to maritime security and its proactive role in ensuring the operation's success.

NATO's efforts in OAE extended beyond mere deterrence, encompassing the tracking and controlling of suspect vessels. Commencing in April 2003, NATO systematically boarded suspect ships, securing compliance from ship masters and flag states in accordance with international law. Spain's naval forces actively participated in these boarding operations, contributing significantly to the overall success of the mission.

Unexpectedly, OAE yielded benefits beyond counter-terrorism objectives, including the rescue of civilians from distressed oil rigs and sinking ships, showcasing NATO's multifaceted contributions to regional security. Moreover, OAE facilitated closer cooperation with partner countries,

²¹⁷ NATO, "24 - the Growing Operational Role."

²¹⁸ Center for Naval Analyses Alexandria (VA), "The Expanding Context of European and Mediterranean Security: A Joint Project Between the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) and Centro Militare di Studi Strategici (CeMiSS)", p. 41, (2007)

especially those engaged in the Mediterranean Dialogue. Spain's engagement in OAE strengthened its ties with NATO and contributed valuable intelligence about suspicious shipping in the region, aligning with NATO's commitment to regional security and stability.

The command and structure of OAE were pivotal to its success, operating from Maritime Command Headquarters in Northwood, United Kingdom²¹⁹; the Task Force Endeavour comprised a balanced mix of surface units, submarines, and maritime patrol aircraft, with high-readiness frigate forces, including contributions from Spain, strengthening operational capabilities²²⁰. The evolution of OAE, from a localized initiative to covering the entire Mediterranean, showcased NATO's adaptability and commitment to maritime security.

OAE's evolution over the years was marked by strategic shifts, including the extension of its mandate and the transition from platform-based to network-based operations. The operation's emphasis on information-sharing and cooperation with non-NATO countries reflected its commitment to maritime situational awareness and cooperative security. The operation's termination in October 2016 paved the way for Operation Sea Guardian²²¹ – that will be examined in the next paragraphs, a broader maritime operation in the Mediterranean, emphasizing flexibility and a comprehensive approach to maritime security.

²¹⁹ "Mediterraneo - NATO Operazione."

²²⁰ Veronica Martorana, "*MISSIONE ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR - Mar Mediterraneo*" (In Italian) (2015)

²²¹ "ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR - Freedom Anatomy."

Operation Sea Guardian, 2016 – present day

Operation Sea Guardian (OSG) replaced NATO's only Article 5 operation in the Mediterranean area ²²², Operation Active Endeavour ²²³, which aimed at combating terrorism post-9/11. This transformation was announced at the NATO Warsaw Summit²²⁴ in July 2016²²⁵, reflecting the Alliance's strategic response to the evolving security environment in the region²²⁶.

Operation Sea Guardian is a maritime security operation that has three main missions: enhancing maritime situational awareness, combating terrorism at sea, and providing assistance for capacity-building. ²²⁷. The mission operates through a flexible maritime force generated from national assets, capable of performing diverse tasks to achieve its objectives²²⁸. These tasks include preserving freedom of navigation, conducting maritime interdiction, countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and protecting critical infrastructure. To execute its objectives, Operation Sea Guardian conducts five or six focused operations annually in specific areas of interest within the Mediterranean. Utilizing sea, air, sub-surface, and other assets, these operations aim to gather, develop, and maintain an accurate and comprehensive picture of daily activities²²⁹. Moreover, these operations often incorporate port visits to non-NATO countries, contributing to maritime security capacity-building in the region.

The maritime situational awareness provided by Operation Sea Guardian is a collaborative effort involving Allies and Allied operational centers. By

²²² “*Operation Sea Guardian Patrols the Eastern Mediterranean*” (2017)

²²³ Nato, “Operations and Missions: Past and Present.”

²²⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “*Warsaw Summit Communique*,” Warsaw: July 9, 2016, (Para 90-94), www.nato.int

²²⁵ “NATO Operation Sea Guardian Kicks off in the Mediterranean.”

²²⁶ “Operation Sea Guardian (OSG).”

²²⁷ NATO, “*Operation Sea Guardian*”, Brussels: October 27, 2016, www.nato.int.

²²⁸ “SEA GUARDIAN - Freedom Anatomy.”

²²⁹ Nato, “Operations and Missions: Past and Present.”

sharing an accurate depiction of daily activities, NATO works to develop the most comprehensive picture possible, thereby identifying potential security concerns. Additionally, the operation enhances counter-terrorism capabilities at sea and supports maritime security capacity-building initiatives.

Operation Sea Guardian has been assigned a total of three NATO ships and two submarines to carry out its operations. These operational assets include the Italian frigate ITS *Aviere*, the Bulgarian frigate BGS *Verni*, the Turkish frigate TCG *Gemlik*, the Greek submarine HS *Papanikolis*, and the Spanish submarine ESPS *Mistral*²³⁰. Complementing these naval forces, air support is provided through rotational patrols by Maritime Patrol Aircraft from Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Turkey²³¹.

Furthermore, upon receiving approval from the Council of Ministers, Spain is actively participating in OSG by contributing various assets. This includes an average of four departures per month of Maritime Patrol Airplanes (MPA), deployment of a submarine for a specified period of 35 days, availability of an offshore patrol boat capable of immediate departure within 48 hours upon request, provision of a leading command ship accompanied by an onboard staff, readily available upon request, and the sustained diplomatic authorization for the utilization of Cartagena and Rota naval bases on a permanent basis²³². Additionally, Spain extends its commitment to provide assistance, upon request, to any naval units transiting within the operational domain of Operation Sea Guardian.

OSG also establishes NATO Maritime Command in Northwood, UK, serving as the central hub for maritime security information sharing within the Alliance²³³. This coordination facilitates the maintenance of a

²³⁰ The Spanish submarine *Mistral* was decommissioned in February 2021 after 35 years of service. - "NATO Multimedia - *Mistral* – Life on a Spanish Submarine."

²³¹ "NATO Operation Sea Guardian Kicks off in the Mediterranean."

²³² Official site of the Spanish Ministry of Defense (EMAD), "*Operation Sea Guardian*"

²³³ *Ibid*

comprehensive picture of the operating area, aligning with the operation's overarching goal of ensuring a secure and safe maritime environment in the Mediterranean.

In conclusion, Operation Sea Guardian represents a significant evolution from its predecessor, Operation Active Endeavour, responding to the contemporary security landscape. Through its three core missions and potential additional tasks, Sea Guardian actively contributes to NATO's collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security objectives while fostering regional maritime security and stability in the Mediterranean.

Operation Ocean Shield, 2009 - 2016

Operation Ocean Shield, initiated in 2009, represents a pivotal maritime security mission conducted by the international community²³⁴. Launched under the aegis of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), this operation aimed to counteract piracy and enhance maritime safety in the strategically significant waters of the Gulf of Aden and the broader Indian Ocean region. The main objective of Operation Ocean Shield was to safeguard commercial shipping routes and counter-piracy threats emerging from the Horn of Africa²³⁵.

NATO's involvement in Operation Ocean Shield involved a multi-faceted approach that incorporated naval assets and cooperative efforts from participating nations. The mission's strategic objectives included the provision of convoy protection, surveillance, and the interdiction of pirate vessels²³⁶. The multinational nature of the operation underscored the

²³⁴ NATO, "Counter-piracy operations (2008-2016)", (2022)

²³⁵ NATO, "Operation Ocean Shield", Archived from the original on 3 October 2015.

²³⁶ "NATO ends Ocean Shield | Maritime Security Review". www.marsecreview.com. (2016)

collaborative commitment of NATO member states and partner nations to safeguarding vital maritime interests.

Operation Ocean Shield served as a testament to the international community's collective resolve to address evolving maritime security challenges. Throughout its duration, the operation demonstrated the efficacy of collaborative efforts in fostering stability and safeguarding global maritime trade routes from the scourge of piracy.

Spain played a significant role in Operation Ocean Shield, contributing its maritime capabilities and resources to address piracy concerns in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, more specifically Commander Rear-admiral Eugenio Díaz del Río of SNMG-2 (Standing NATO Maritime Group 2) assumed command of the operation²³⁷. The Spanish involvement in the operation was marked by a commitment to enhancing maritime security through cooperative efforts within the NATO framework. Specific contributions from Spain included the deployment of naval assets and personnel to actively participate in the mission.

Spain's naval forces, including ships and aircraft, were integral components of Operation Ocean Shield. Maritime Patrol Airplanes (MPA), submarines, and other naval vessels were employed to conduct surveillance, reconnaissance, and patrol activities in the designated operational areas. These assets contributed to the overall maritime situational awareness and deterrence of pirate activities.

Furthermore, Spain actively engaged in collaborative endeavors with other NATO member states and partner nations, reinforcing the multinational approach of Operation Ocean Shield. The coordination and interoperability

²³⁷ (EMAD), Navy, "The Spanish Navy Takes Command of NATO's Counter-Piracy Operation - Navy News - Armada - Ministerio De Defensa - Gobierno De España."

demonstrated by Spain exemplified the collective commitment to countering piracy and upholding maritime security in the strategically vital regions covered by the operation.

To summarize, Spain's participation in Operation Ocean Shield highlights its commitment to international maritime security initiatives. By providing valuable assets and expertise, it has played a crucial role in the joint mission of combatting piracy and ensuring the secure transit of commercial vessels in critical maritime routes.

Operation Active Fence, 2012 – present day

The eruption of hostilities in Syria created a complex security landscape along the Turkish border, necessitating a robust response from NATO. Operation Active Fence, initiated in 2012, stood as a collective effort to address the escalating threats²³⁸. Spain played a crucial role in this operation, contributing to the alliance's commitment to collective security.

The conflict in Syria triggered a series of incidents along the Turkish border, prompting Turkey to seek NATO assistance. The use of Soviet ballistic missiles, SCUD type, by the Assad government heightened tensions²³⁹. On November 21, 2012, Turkey formally requested support from NATO²⁴⁰, setting the stage for the approval of Operation Active Fence on December 4, 2012²⁴¹. In response to Turkey's plea, NATO swiftly orchestrated a coordinated effort, deploying Patriot²⁴² missile

²³⁸ "ANATOLIAN PROTECTOR - ACTIVE FENCE - Freedom Anatomy."

²³⁹ European Parliament, "*Anatolian Protector: Missile Defence in Action*" (2013)

²⁴⁰ NATO Official Site, "*NATO support to Turkey: Background and timeline*", (2013)

²⁴¹ Nato, "Spain Joins Patriot Missile Defence Mission in Turkey."

²⁴² The PATRIOT is a surface-to-air guided air and missile defence system currently in use world-wide, including in several NATO countries (Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States). PATRIOT stands for "Phased Array Tracking Radar to Intercept on Target" - NATO FactSheet, Augmentation of Turkey's Air Defence, (2017)

batteries to bolster air defenses against Syria's ballistic missiles²⁴³. Initially led by Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, the operation witnessed a seamless transition as Spain replaced the Dutch contingent, solidifying its commitment to NATO's collective security agenda²⁴⁴.

Originally named "Anatolian Protector," the operation underwent significant evolution due to the intensification of violence in Syria; and consequently, it was renamed Operation "Active Fence".²⁴⁵ Spain, along with Italy, played a crucial role in the mission's multinational framework. Indeed, since January 1, 2015, Spain's involvement took on a more concrete form as it actively participated in Operation Active Fence²⁴⁶. A Patriot battery, a defensive stronghold, became operational under Spanish command, ensuring the protection of the southeastern city of Adana²⁴⁷. This commitment extended until the close of 2017, underscoring Spain's unwavering dedication to the operation's objectives²⁴⁸. The operational transition was seamless, with Spain's Patriot battery falling under the jurisdiction of the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Command. The second contingent, primarily comprising personnel from the 74th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment, assumed control on July 22, 2015, ensuring a continuous and robust presence in the mission²⁴⁹.

Spain's participation in Operation Active Fence transcends mere military involvement; it embodies a commitment to NATO's core values of collective security, solidarity, and shared responsibility. The defensive nature of the mission aligns with Spain's broader dedication to regional stability and peacekeeping efforts.

²⁴³ NATO FactSheet, Augmentation of Turkey's Air Defence, (2017)

²⁴⁴ NATO Official Site, "Spain joins Patriot missile defence mission in Turkey" (2015)

²⁴⁵ European Parliament, "Anatolian Protector: Missile Defence in Action" (2013)

²⁴⁶ U.S. Air Forces in Europe & Air Forces Africa, "Dutch Relinquishes NATO Mission to Spanish Allies."

²⁴⁷ NATO Official Site, "Spain joins Patriot missile defence mission in Turkey" (2015)

²⁴⁸ Aurora Mejía, "Spain's contribution to Euro-Atlantic security", p. 4, (2017)

²⁴⁹ JEME, "Active Fence II - Spanish Army."

In conclusion, Spain's integral role in NATO Operation Active Fence reflects not only its commitment to Turkey's security but also its broader dedication to NATO's collective security goals. The smooth operational transitions, continuous presence, and seamless integration within the alliance underscore Spain's unwavering resolve to contribute to regional stability and international peacekeeping efforts.

3.2.2. Diplomatic Initiatives and Alliances

During the 2000s, Spain actively participated in diplomatic initiatives and forged alliances within the NATO framework, underscoring its unwavering commitment to collective defense, international security, and collaborative endeavors. A pivotal facet of Spain's diplomatic engagement in NATO during this epoch encompassed its proactive involvement in the decision-making processes integral to the alliance's strategic formulations, policies, and operational considerations. Spanish diplomats played a pivotal role in various NATO forums²⁵⁰, including summits and ministerial meetings, where critical decisions pertaining to the alliance's overarching objectives were deliberated and shaped²⁵¹. Notably, Spain hosted two NATO summits during this period, the first of which transpired in Madrid in 1997 and the subsequent in 2022.

The 1997 summit, convened on 8–9 July, marked the 15th NATO summit²⁵² and the second of that particular year, following the earlier assembly in Paris²⁵³. A salient feature of the 1997 summit was the invitation extended to three new members—Hungary, Poland, and the

²⁵⁰ NATO summit meetings provide periodic opportunities for Heads of State and Government of member countries to evaluate and provide strategic direction for Alliance activities - "NATO Topics - NATO Summit Meetings."

²⁵¹ "Spain Celebrates 40 Years as a Member of NATO."

²⁵² El Pais, "Spain will dedicate 1.3 billion to the NATO summit in Madrid". (in Spanish)

²⁵³ "NATO Ministerial Meetings - Paris, 27 May 1997". www.nato.int.

Czech Republic—to join the alliance, thereby amplifying NATO's regional reach and influence²⁵⁴.

Fast forward four decades from Spain's accession to NATO, the 2022 NATO Summit convened in Madrid from 29 to 30 June²⁵⁵. During this summit, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg articulated key focal areas, which included the fortification of deterrence and defense capabilities, unequivocal support for Ukraine and other partners facing imminent risks, the formulation of a new NATO Strategic Concept²⁵⁶, equitable burden-sharing and resource allocation, and the historic applications for membership from Finland and Sweden. This underscores Spain's enduring and multifaceted engagement within the NATO framework, contributing substantively to the alliance's strategic evolution and cooperative endeavors in contemporary geopolitical dynamics²⁵⁷.

Spain, during this period of time, consistently reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to NATO's foundational principle of collective defense articulated in Article 5 of the NATO Treaty²⁵⁸. Demonstrating this commitment, Spain strategically employed diplomatic initiatives aimed at enhancing the alliance's preparedness to effectively counteract any aggression directed towards its member states. A pivotal aspect of Spain's diplomatic endeavors involved active participation in discussions on defense planning and capabilities, thereby reinforcing NATO's collective defense posture.

²⁵⁴ Official text: 1997 Madrid Summit Declaration, Press Release M-1(97) 08. Issued on 08 Jul. 1997

²⁵⁵ "NATO Summit - Madrid, Spain - 29 and 30 June 2022". NATO.int. NATO. 29 April 2022.

²⁵⁶ "NATO 2030: Towards a New Strategic Concept and Beyond."

²⁵⁷ "NATO Defence Ministers lay the ground for the Madrid Summit". NATO. 16 June 2022.

²⁵⁸ "Roughly two-thirds or more in Italy, the UK, Spain, Canada, the Netherlands and Greece say the U.S. would defend a NATO ally", Greenwood, "NATO Viewed Favorably Across Member States | Pew Research Center."

In parallel, Spain strategically worked to fortify regional cooperation and partnerships within the NATO framework ²⁵⁹ . This comprehensive approach entailed diplomatic engagements with neighboring countries²⁶⁰, coupled with contributions to initiatives fostering stability and security in the Mediterranean region. Spain's diplomatic outreach extended beyond NATO member states to encompass non-NATO countries in the broader Euro-Atlantic sphere, emphasizing the nation's commitment to broader international stability, i.e. Argentina²⁶¹, Peru²⁶², and others²⁶³.

Integral to Spain's diplomatic strategy was its alignment with NATO-led operations, exemplified by its proactive involvement in missions such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Through these engagements, Spain substantiated its dedication to cooperative security measures. Diplomatic channels were effectively utilized to coordinate objectives with fellow NATO member states, thus enhancing the overall efficacy of these missions. The engagement extended beyond military operations, incorporating discussions with partner nations to address shared challenges, promote regional stability, and contribute to global security through diplomatic means.

Furthermore, Spain actively participated in crisis response efforts within NATO, engaging in discussions concerning crisis management strategies, humanitarian interventions, and collaborative approaches to address emerging security challenges. During this period, Spain's diplomats played a crucial role in shaping the alliance's responses to various crises,

²⁵⁹ NATO experts and researchers from across Spain gathered in Madrid on 13 September 2023 to explore opportunities for scientific cooperation under the Alliance's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme. - Nato, "NATO and Spain Engage in Practical Cooperation on Science."

²⁶⁰ Joaquín Roy, "*Spain: Foreign Relations and Policy*"(2012)

²⁶¹ "Argentina-España: Relaciones Económicas Y Oportunidades De Negocio."

²⁶² "Relación bilateral entre Perú y España" (2022)

²⁶³ "Ficha de países y territorios"

contributing to the formulation of effective and adaptable crisis management strategies.

In response to the evolving nature of security threats, Spain diplomatically contributed to the adaptation of NATO's strategies and policies. Discussions centered on emerging threats such as terrorism and cyber threats, with diplomatic initiatives aimed at enhancing the alliance's capabilities to effectively counter these dynamic challenges.

In conclusion, the overall theme of Spain's diplomatic endeavors during the 2000s within NATO was one of active and collaborative engagement. The nation consistently aligned its diplomatic efforts with the alliance's objectives, contributing significantly to the broader goals of collective security and defense.

Spain in the Mediterranean

As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and possessing an extensive coastline along both the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, Spain assumes a pivotal role in the context of maritime security²⁶⁴ within the alliance²⁶⁵. The nation actively engages in diverse avenues to bolster NATO's initiatives aimed at fortifying the security and stability of maritime domains. One notable avenue through which Spain contributes is its active participation in NATO's maritime operations. Spain stands out as one of the most steadfast Allies, demonstrating unwavering commitment to NATO operations and initiatives. Notably, its Maritime command plays a pivotal role by deploying naval assets and personnel,

²⁶⁴ “Objective: to promote a security policy in maritime space in order to preserve freedom of navigation and protect maritime traffic and critical maritime infrastructures; to protect human life at sea; to prevent and respond to criminal activities and acts of terrorism carried out in this environment; to protect and preserve the coastline, marine resources, the marine environment and underwater archaeological heritage; and to prevent and respond to disasters or accidents in the marine environment.” – Extract from Spanish Government Document, *The National Security Strategy (2013)*

²⁶⁵ JOPLING REPORT, *Maritime Security NATO-EU (2010)*

engaging in a spectrum of activities encompassing maritime patrols, surveillance, and interdiction operations. These endeavors are strategically designed to counteract illicit activities at sea, thereby contributing to the overarching goals of NATO.

In a noteworthy demonstration of leadership, Spain assumed command of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG 2) during the initial half of 2017²⁶⁶. Furthermore, in the year 2023, the incorporation of the Spanish supply ship ESPS Patio has markedly augmented SNMG 2's sustainability at sea. This significant enhancement complements the already robust support provided by the German supply ship FGS Frankfurt am Main²⁶⁷. The synergistic collaboration between these maritime assets not only underscores Spain's proactive involvement but also exemplifies the nation's commitment to reinforcing NATO's operational capabilities.

NATO, as an organization steadfastly dedicated to ensuring the security and stability of maritime environments, strategically conducts a diverse array of maritime operations aimed at deterring potential threats and fostering collective defense and crisis response²⁶⁸. The pivotal decision to bolster NATO's involvement in promoting regional stability was undertaken during the Brussels Summit in January 1994, where the heads of state and government collectively directed the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session to continually assess the overall situation and formulate apt measures in pursuit of this objective²⁶⁹. A seminal moment in the Alliance's approach to the Mediterranean region occurred during the December 1994 Brussels meeting of the North Atlantic Council. This gathering marked a significant turning point, laying the groundwork for subsequent developments. Following this momentous decision, on 8

²⁶⁶ Aurora Mejía, "*Spain's contribution to Euro-Atlantic security*" (2017)

²⁶⁷ "Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 Reintegrates in Eastern Mediterranean."

²⁶⁸ In 1991, NATO expressed its desire to improve relations with countries in the southern Mediterranean region in its Strategic Concept, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding and cooperation.

²⁶⁹ "NATO Ministerial Communiqué" - Press Communiqué - M-1(94)3., par 22

February 1995, the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session extended invitations to Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia to participate in the inaugural round of the Mediterranean Dialogue. The inclusivity of this initiative was further underscored in November 1995, when Jordan received an invitation to join the Dialogue. Subsequently, in 2000, Algeria acceded to the Dialogue, solidifying NATO's commitment to fostering cooperative relations with Mediterranean non-member countries and thereby contributing meaningfully to the fortification of regional stability²⁷⁰. Although Spain is not currently part of the Mediterranean Dialogue, has shown significant support ²⁷¹ , and consistently partakes in NATO operations.

Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) stands out as an illustrative example. Initiated in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, OAE concentrates on maritime situational awareness, counter-terrorism, and the enhancement of maritime security in the Mediterranean Sea²⁷². Spain has historically contributed naval assets to OAE²⁷³, engaging in patrols and surveillance endeavors aimed at detecting and deterring potential threats within the region.

Furthermore, Spain actively contributes to NATO-led counter-piracy operations, particularly in the waters off the coast of Somalia²⁷⁴—a region historically fraught with significant piracy concerns. In this context, Spain deploys naval forces²⁷⁵ to participate in patrols and escort missions, safeguarding shipping lanes from pirate attacks²⁷⁶.

²⁷⁰ "NATO Mini. Comm. M-NAC-2(94)116 - 1 Dec. 1994."

²⁷¹ Aurora Mejía, "*Spain's contribution to Euro-Atlantic security*" (2017)

²⁷² "Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) - Marina Militare."

²⁷³ Nato, "Operation Active Endeavour (2001-2016)."

²⁷⁴ Nato, "NATO Concludes Successful Counter-Piracy Mission."

²⁷⁵ Nato, "NATO Defence Ministers Decide to Extend NATO's Counter-Piracy Mission Until 2016."

²⁷⁶ Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Brookings Institution (2014)

Operation Sea Guardian, another noteworthy NATO maritime security operation, addresses diverse maritime security challenges, including counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, and the promotion of regional stability²⁷⁷. Spain's potential contribution to Operation Sea Guardian²⁷⁸ involves deploying naval assets and personnel to augment maritime situational awareness and respond effectively to security threats in the Mediterranean²⁷⁹.

Beyond its engagement in active operations, Spain demonstrates active involvement in NATO-led maritime exercises, constituting a pivotal dimension of the nation's commitment to collective defense efforts²⁸⁰. These exercises are intricately crafted to meticulously refine the interoperability among member navies, fostering a nuanced understanding of coordinated responses to diverse maritime scenarios, and augmenting the overall maritime capabilities within the alliance. Spain's unwavering and consistent participation in these meticulously designed exercises serves as a cornerstone in fortifying the alliance's state of readiness and preparedness, thereby contributing substantively to its operational effectiveness.

A noteworthy illustration of such commitment transpired on 24 April 2023, as NATO undertook a mobilization effort involving 1,800 personnel and 12 vessels, including the deployment of the Alvaro de Bazan frigate²⁸¹. This collective endeavor was orchestrated to engage in "intense and

²⁷⁷ 2016 Warsaw Summit Communiqué – Operation Sea Guardian (para. 91), Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016

²⁷⁸ Joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the Minister of Defence of Spain, María Dolores de Cospedal García (2018)

²⁷⁹ "NATO OPERATION SEA GUARDIAN RESUMES PATROLS IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN."

²⁸⁰ Imane Rachidi, "El Alvaro Bazán Esta Preparado Para Proteger a La OTAN, Según Su Capitán."

²⁸¹ "The Frigate F-101 'Álvaro De Bazán' Completes Its Deployment in Operation Brilliant Shield - EMAD."

challenging training" meticulously situated across a sprawling 200,000 square-mile expanse in the North Atlantic²⁸². Such dedicated and expansive initiatives not only underscore Spain's commitment to the broader alliance but also exemplify its proactive role in enhancing the collective proficiency and operational efficacy of NATO forces in the maritime domain.

Spain's contributions, spanning naval vessels, aircraft, and personnel, align cohesively with NATO's overarching goals of cultivating a secure and stable maritime environment across diverse regions. Spain's contributions, spanning naval vessels, aircraft, and personnel, align cohesively with NATO's overarching goals of cultivating a secure and stable maritime environment across diverse regions. Another example is FLOTEX-23²⁸³, a Spanish Navy-led maritime exercise designed to provide joint warfare interoperability training in a Crisis Response Operation, in a medium-intensity environment with high-intensity peaks, multi-domain operations and a hybrid-threat fictitious geopolitical scenario. The Spanish Navy performs an annual exercise known as FLOTEX-23²⁸⁴ to evaluate the operational and tactical proficiency of its naval force. This exercise is not confined to national participation, as it involves NATO Allied members working in the staff and Allied units from various NATO nations. Furthermore, participation in regional organizations dedicated to Mediterranean affairs, such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the Western Mediterranean Forum²⁸⁵, emphasizes Spain's commitment to collaborative diplomatic efforts beyond the NATO framework. This multilateral approach is crucial in addressing regional challenges.

²⁸² Brzozowski and Rachidi, "NATO Exercises to Defend Against Threats to Critical Underwater Infrastructure."

²⁸³ "SNMG2 Prepares for Spanish Navy-Led Exercise During Port Visit to Alicante."

²⁸⁴ "NATO Task Group SNMG2 Concludes FLOTEX-23 With Port Visit to Palma De Mallorca."

²⁸⁵ Spanish' Government Document, *The National Security Strategy (2013)*

In summary, Spain's diplomatic and maritime involvements in the Mediterranean transcend the NATO framework, comprising a spectrum of initiatives aimed at regional stability, cooperation, and diplomatic problem-solving. By engaging in diverse diplomatic channels and contributing to maritime security, Spain actively navigates the intricate dynamics of the Mediterranean region, showcasing a commitment to collaborative approaches and diplomatic efficacy.

Conclusions

This study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Spain's integration into the NATO framework, with a specific focus on historical antecedents, transformative events, and contemporary contributions. The study aimed to unravel the complexities of Spain's historical isolation, pinpointing the factors contributing to its unique standing in Europe. Subsequently, it examined the transformative impact of the 1953 U.S.-Spanish defense arrangements leading to NATO integration.

Throughout the study, we explored Spain's actual entry into NATO, dissecting opposition dynamics, mutual benefits, and the pivotal role of the 1986 referendum. We analyzed Spain's multifaceted role within NATO, covering military engagements and diplomatic contributions, thereby providing a nuanced narrative of Spain's journey within the Western Alliance.

The study successfully illuminated the multifaceted reasons behind Spain's historical isolation and carefully analyzed the transformative events, such as the signing of the U.S.-Spanish defense arrangements, that led to its integration into the Western Alliance. We combined historical context with contemporary analysis, which is a strength of this study. The exploration of both opposition and support for Spain's NATO integration provided a balanced perspective, offering a thorough understanding of the diplomatic, ideological, and psychological dimensions at play. Additionally, the study's focus on the 1986 referendum added a crucial layer to the narrative, emphasizing the decisive role of public opinion in shaping Spain's future within NATO.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this study, particularly in terms of potential gaps in historical records and the complexity of analyzing diplomatic nuances. Future studies could delve

deeper into specific aspects, such as the nuanced diplomatic negotiations during the 1953 Madrid Agreements or the long-term impacts of Spain's NATO integration on its foreign policy and security posture.

It is essential to recognize the dynamic nature of international relations and the evolving role of Spain within NATO, which opens avenues for future research. Subsequent studies could explore the ongoing contributions of Spain, assess the impact of evolving geopolitical landscapes, and analyze the intricate web of diplomatic relationships within the alliance. As global dynamics continue to shift, further research will undoubtedly contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Spain's role within NATO and its broader implications for international security.

Annex

Annex I

Resolution 32 of the United Nations General Assembly:

“1. The General Assembly recalls that the San Francisco Conference adopted a resolution according to which paragraph 2 of Article 4 of chapter II of the United Nations Charter “cannot apply to States whose regimes have been installed with the help of armed forces of countries which have fought against the United Nations so long as these regimes are in power.”

2. The General Assembly recalls that at the Potsdam Conference the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Soviet Union stated that they would not support a request for admission to the United Nations of the present Spanish Government “which, having been founded with the support of the Axis powers, in view of its origins, its nature, its record and its close association with the aggressor States, does not possess the necessary qualifications to justify its admission.”

3. The General Assembly, in endorsing these two statements, recommends that the Members of the United Nations should act in accordance with the letter and the spirit of these statements in the conduct of their future relations with Spain.

Twenty-sixth plenary meeting, 9 February 1946.”²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ UNGA Document A/RES/32(I) (1946)

Annex II

Resolution 4 of the UN Security Council:

“The attention of the Security Council has been drawn to the situation in Spain by a Member of the United Nations acting in accordance with Article 35 of the Charter and the Security Council has been asked to declare that this situation has led to international friction and endangers international peace and security;

[...] Hereby resolves to make further studies in order to determine whether the situation in Spain has led to international friction and does endanger international peace and security, and if it so finds, then to determine what practical measures the United Nations may take;

To this end, the Security Council appoints a sub-committee of five of its members and instructs this sub-committee to examine the statements made before the Security Council concerning Spain, to receive further statements and documents, and to conduct such inquiries as it may deem necessary, and to report to the Security Council before the end of May.

Adopted at the 39th meeting by 10 votes to none, with 1 abstention (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).”²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ UN Security Council Official Documents S/RES/4 (1946)

Annex III

Resolution 39(I) of the UN General Assembly:

"The peoples of the United Nations, at San Francisco, Potsdam and London, condemned the Franco regime in Spain and decided that, as long as that regime remains, Spain may not be admitted to the United Nations.

The General Assembly, in its resolution of 9 February 1946, recommended that the Members of the United Nations should act in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the declarations of San Francisco and Potsdam. The peoples of the United Nations assure the Spanish people of their enduring sympathy and of the cordial welcome awaiting them when circumstances enable them to be admitted to the United Nations. The General Assembly recalls that, in May and June 1946, the Security Council conducted an investigation of the possible further action to be taken by the United Nations. The Sub-Committee of the Security Council charged with the investigation found unanimously:

"(a) In origin, nature, structure and general conduct, the Franco regime is a fascist regime patterned on, and established largely as a result of aid received from, Hitler's Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Fascist Italy."

"(b) During the long struggle of the United Nations against Hitler and Mussolini, Franco, despite continued Allied protests, gave very substantial aid to the enemy Powers. First, for example, from 1941 to 1945, the Blue Infantry Division, the Spanish Legion of Volunteers and the Salvador Air Squadron fought against Soviet Russia on the Eastern front. Second, in the summer of 1940, Spain seized Tangier in breach of international statute, and as a result of Spain maintaining a large army in Spanish Morocco large numbers of Allied troops were immobilized in North Africa."

"(c) Incontrovertible documentary evidence establishes that Franco was a guilty party with Hitler and Mussolini in the conspiracy to wage war against those countries which eventually in the course of the world war became banded together as the United Nations. It was part of the conspiracy that

Franco's full belligerency should be postponed until a time to be mutually agreed upon."

The General Assembly,

Convinced that the Franco Fascist Government of Spain, which was imposed by force upon the Spanish people with the aid of the Axis Powers and which gave material assistance to the Axis Powers in the war, does not represent the Spanish people, and by its continued control of Spain is making impossible the participation of the Spanish people with the peoples of the United Nations in international affairs;

Recommends that the Franco Government of Spain be debarred from membership in international agencies established by or brought into relationship with the United Nations, and from participation in conferences or other activities which may be arranged by the United Nations or by these agencies, until a new and acceptable government is formed in Spain.

The General Assembly,

Further, desiring to secure the participation of all peace-loving peoples, including the people of Spain, in the community of nations,

Recommends that if, within a reasonable time, there is not established a government which derives its authority from the consent of the governed, committed to respect freedom of speech, religion and assembly and to the prompt holding of an election in which the Spanish people, free from force and intimidation and regardless of party, may express their will, the Security Council consider the adequate measures to be taken in order to remedy the situation;

Recommends that all Members of the United Nations immediately recall from Madrid their Ambassadors and Ministers plenipotentiary accredited there. The General Assembly further recommends that the States Members of the Organization report to the Secretary-General and to the

*next session of the Assembly what action they have taken in accordance
with this recommendation.*

Fifty-ninth plenary meeting, 12 December 1946.”²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ General Assembly, United Nations. “Res. 39 (1), Relations of Members of the United Nations with Spain.” United Nations, December 12, 1946.

Annex IV

Extract²⁸⁹ of a Press Conference, dated 30 September 1953, of the President Dwight D. Eisenhower:

“Q. Carroll H. Kenworthy, United Press: I want to ask about the bases agreement signed with Spain last Saturday; are you pleased with that agreement and what is the significance of it?”

THE PRESIDENT. What is what?

Q. Mr. Kenworthy: What is the significance of the agreement?

*THE PRESIDENT. Well, **the significance of the agreement is that it is a quid pro quo**; they had certain things that we need and are valuable to us, and we made certain arrangements in order to get those things.*

I might say that this thing has been in the mill for a long time, has been thoroughly discussed with congressional leaders, and we believe it is something that will work to the benefit of the United States.”

²⁸⁹ “The President’s News Conference | the American Presidency Project.”.

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