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**Blair's Doppelganger:  
Zapatero and the New Spanish Left**

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## About the Author

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## CONTENTS

A FAREWELL TO AZNAR .....	1
THE ARRIVISTE .....	3
COMMON PROBLEMS – SHARED SOLUTIONS?.....	6
EUROPE – SPAIN'S ILLUSION, BRITAIN'S INFERNO.....	11
SPAIN: AL-ANDALUS AND THE ARAB WORLD.....	15
INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND GLOBAL SECURITY .....	18
SPAIN AND THE AMERICAS .....	20
CONCLUSION.....	23

‘There also stands a man  
and stares into the height...  
I shudder when I see his face  
The moon shows me my own form’

**The Doppelganger<sup>1</sup>**  
Hienrich Heine

## A Farewell to Aznar

As the election results came rolling in from around Spain on the evening of the 14 March it became clear that the socialist party (PSOE) was being swept to a spectacular and unpredicted victory. Whilst the fiesta began to swing at the party's headquarters in the centre of Madrid, Tony Blair's advisers in London scrambled desperately to find a direct line number for the new President-elect José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.<sup>2</sup> It was not a number which came easily to hand because it was not one which they were expecting to use. The immediate logistical problem, however, betrayed a far more serious policy problem. The election of Zapatero, pro-Europe anti-Bush, presaged a radical change in Spanish foreign policy which would enhance the perception of British isolation in Europe.

For the past seven years the British-Hispanic relationship had been the cornerstone of British European policy and one which London was confidently relying upon to continue into the foreseeable future. Elected within months of each other, then centre-right President Aznar and Tony Blair had worked well together in Europe from the start.

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<sup>1</sup> *Doppelganger* means 'double walker'. It is a term for a para-normal phenomenon, a shadow-self that is believed by some to accompany every person. Only the owner of a doppelganger can see it, otherwise it is invisible to human eyes. Providing sympathetic company, a doppelganger almost always stands behind a person, but casts no reflection in a mirror. Doppelgangers can be mischievous and malicious.

<sup>2</sup> The President of the Government of Spain (*Presidente del Gobierno*) is the head of government of Spain. Since Spain is a constitutional monarchy, this post is usually referred to in English as Prime Minister. In Spain, the person in this post is often called simply *Presidente* and Spaniards often translate his title in English to *President*.

At the Lisbon summit of 1998 they drove forward a joint agenda to revitalise the European economy - a package of supply side reforms including a boost to research and development, labour mobility and greater competition. As the relationship matured at both a personal and political level, London came to see Madrid as a sound ally and important counterweight to the Paris-Berlin axis within the European Union (EU). By 2003, Blair was easily able to persuade the willing Aznar to participate in the American led coalition on Iraq. When Aznar confirmed his decision not to seek re-election, he personally appointed his successor, Mariano Rajoy, with whom London expected to continue a relationship on the same terms. That loss is a significant challenge to the UK's European policy.

It is a task made more acute by problems affecting governments important to the UK - the resignation of Poland's Miller (a key ally in the most important of the new member states), the continued weakness of Italy's Silvio Berlusconi and the repeated failure of the UK to triangulate the Paris-Berlin axis are among areas which need to be addressed by UK policy-makers.

The most pressing issue, however, is the need to find a new basis on which to build a relationship with Spain. This pamphlet will argue that, with the right approach, this can be done. It will argue that the relationship between Blair and Zapatero is, for historical and political reasons, complex but potentially rewarding. The possibility exists for an alliance to be built which will enhance not just Britain and Spain, but the European left. Far from seeking to eclipse each other or becoming polarised, there is scope for the two to work together within the framework of shared values that will strengthen both countries and help the renewal of social democracy in Europe.

The pamphlet will describe some of the continuing policy developments taking place in the new Spanish government. It will outline some of the ways in which, after withdrawal from Iraq, Spain can enhance its international authority and avoid the danger of being marginalised in international forums. Finally, it will assess the contribution Spain can make to the international community and how effective this might be.

## The Arriviste

When Tony Blair welcomed the new president of Spain on his first official visit to London in June 2004, the Prime Minister commented that his Spanish counterpart was 'younger and better looking than me'. Blair could, in fact, have been musing to himself about his doppelganger of seven years ago. Physical appearance apart, other striking similarities between the two men could lead to a close political understanding and even personal friendship.

Both became the unexpected leaders of their parties – tragically in the case of Blair, and Zapatero by beating the senior and more expected candidate in an election. They both became leaders at a young age - Blair at 40 and Zapatero a few days short of his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday – and with young families. Both are lawyers - and sons of lawyers – from a comfortable middle class background. Zapatero and Blair have similar personalities and share the same easy, self-confident, slightly ironic style. Where Blair used to be thought of as 'cool', Zapatero is known as 'el hombre tranquilo' – the quiet man. Both picked up parties bruised from humiliating election defeats and took them into government at the first attempt. Neither, however, had any personal experience of government before becoming Prime Minister of their country.

Both have been able to dominate their parties and offer a highly personal appeal to the electorate. In the same way that the confidence that Blair inspired in voters was essential to the landslide of 1997, PSOE used Zapatero's personality rather than ideological discourse to win in 2004. This has allowed them both to transcend the boundaries defined by party politics. The letters ZP (Zapatero Presidente) replaced the party logo and the campaign posters consisted of a photograph of Zapatero cropped to focus on his eyes. The 'Trust me, I'm Tony' feeling could easily have become 'Trust me, I'm Jose Luis'. This was the 'Demon Eyes' campaign in reverse.

There is even a neat symmetry in some of the issues that divide them. Zapatero swept to power in Spain for largely the same reason that Blair has been given a beating in the polls: Iraq. And where Blair renounced the foreign policy of his predecessor with a pledge to put 'Britain at the heart of Europe' he now finds himself at odds with his Spanish counterpart who has similarly renounced the foreign policy of his predecessor and pledged to put Spain back in the heart of Europe.

As is often the case with alter-egos, Blair has had a slightly uncomfortable co-existence with his. Initially, Blair seemed unwilling to meet Zapatero at all. In the spring of 2002, Zapatero met Robin Cook at a meeting of the Party of International Socialists in Seville and complained that in the two years since his election as leader of the PSOE, he had been unable to secure a meeting with Blair in Number 10. This prompted Cook to lament 'Tony is only really interested in Socialists who are in power'.

Zapatero then returned the snub last year when he failed to show up at the progressive government conference in London, hosted by Blair and attended by other left leaders from Lula to Clinton. This churlishness earned him an editorial reprimand from the left-leaning and normally ultra-loyal *El Pais* newspaper. Most recently, Zapatero was galled to find his opponent Mariano Rajoy visiting Blair earlier this year – within weeks of the Spanish general election. As the pictures of the beaming Rajoy in Downing Street were beamed around Spain, PSOE displeasure was curtly summed up by one party leader who described Blair as 'a complete prat'.

The more serious issue for Blair, outlined above, is Zapatero's re-orientation of Spanish foreign policy. By withdrawing Spanish troops from Iraq and demonstrating a renewed commitment to the European Union, he has forced a sharp reappraisal of foreign policy in London. But the 'what now, where next' questions are not only being asked by diplomats in London.

Spain is now at a cross roads in the history of its foreign and diplomatic relations. One path could lead to a form of post-Iraq isolationism in which Spain merely enjoys the benefits of its status as

a member of the European Union, but without any decisive influence on the policies of the EU and without any significant role in global affairs.

The other path will lead to Spain – like Britain – punching above its weight in international forums by developing its geopolitical influence in different regions. By using various natural advantages, Spain could enhance its role in Europe and, suggests the French economist Alain Minc, even become Europe's leader. It can also have an extensive role in Latin America, around the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The success of this strategy will depend on the skills of Spanish politicians and diplomats in using what Joseph Nye has described as 'soft' power– i.e. public diplomacy and influence rather than 'hard' power of coercion and military force. This, in turn, will depend heavily on the persuasive skills of Zapatero himself and he will need to work with all potential allies, including Blair.

Zapatero will also be looking for domestic policy ideas which work in government. The fact that PSOE were not expecting to win the general election meant that they had not prepared a thorough program. As Rafael Calduch, Professor of International Relations at Madrid's Complutense University observed 'the PSOE manifesto was very much a program for opposition - which is where they expected to be at least until 2008. It is certainly not a blue-print for government'. Calduch insists, however, that this will not be a problem as 'one of Zapatero's strengths is that he is, like Blair, highly pragmatic.' For that reason alone it is likely that PSOE will welcome constructive debate which will help them firm up their program.

Blair and Brown now have more than seven years of experience testing social democratic policies in government. And whilst other socialist parties in Europe are struggling to define a coherent domestic agenda, the Labour Government in the UK appears to be more advanced than most. Equally unusually, it is odds-on to win the next General Election (and would be a racing certainty were it not for Iraq). PSOE might usefully ask themselves what lies behind the relative success of Blair's domestic agenda and if there are any

policies which they can borrow for the development of their own agenda.

## Common Problems – Shared Solutions?

In the two meetings between Zapatero and Blair since March, media attention – predictably - has tended to focus on the possible conflict rather than co-operation between them. The differences are evident and undeniable. There are, however, equally good reasons to suggest a coincidence of outlook on other important respects. Many of the domestic political issues on which they need to focus are similar if not identical. Both Zapatero and Blair are searching for social democratic answers to big questions, some of which are being asked around Europe and beyond.

Economic stability, the drive for greater competitiveness and productivity, immigration, the provision and funding of high quality public services, the modernisation of government and investment in education are just a few of the shared themes being tackled by policy-makers in both countries. There is ample scope to debate policy options and discuss alternatives. Working together, Blair and Zapatero have the chance to provide a series of models which can be tested by the left in government.

Creative answers should be arrived at more easily because both Blair and Zapatero travel light – they are driven by values and a personal credo rather than an elaborate ideology. It was flattery by imitation when the close circle of young politicians and advisers who propelled Zapatero to the leadership in 2000 called themselves the 'New Way' at the height of the debate about Blair's 'Third Way'. Both leaders have adopted a highly flexible approach to policy-making - something which has attracted suspicious glances from parts of the left (and latterly, in the case of Blair, open revolt) but which also attracts votes from the pragmatic centre. This common flexibility is manifest in similar responses to a number of policy questions and on others it should facilitate fruitful debate.

First, there is a marked convergence between New Labour and PSOE on the importance of a tight fiscal framework, borrowing only for investment without raising taxes. Both leaders recognised early on, for example, that the drive for equality can only be sustained within a disciplined budget. In very New Labour style, the PSOE programme promised that there would be no increase in income tax, although there would be a reform of the system to make it fairer for those on lower incomes. Borrowing from Gordon Brown's 'Golden Rule', Zapatero also plans for deficits over the course of the cycle only to finance investment.

Both have chosen a finance minister who values market confidence more than plaudits from the left. Zapatero persuaded Pedro Solbes, the experienced European Commissioner pressing for sanctions against the overspending French and Germans, to return from Brussels and take up the post of finance minister. Solbes has already taken the opportunity to publicly slap down tentative spending suggestions from cabinet colleagues. If you had to sum up the socialist economic strategy in a word it would have to be 'prudence'.

The broadest debate, however, will be that around the future of the European social model and the differences – both perceived and real – between Britain and the other EU states. It is not a static model – Schroeder, Chirac and Berlusconi have all attempted to introduce major reforms into their pension and welfare systems with mixed results. PSOE have argued that they seek 'full employment and preservation intact of the European social model' without specifying exactly what is to be preserved. This slight confusion is not clarified because the program follows immediately by saying '(the model's) values will be our guide for its modernization and reform which can only be done with the agreement and participation of the social partners'. With similar debate taking place in Britain, there is considerable scope for exchanging ideas.

There is, for example, common agreement on the need for supply-side reforms as an essential step in making the European economy more competitive. PSOE seek further progress on the Lisbon

agenda – an agenda promoted by Blair and agreed at a time when a majority of EU member states were governed by parties of the left. PSOE cite Lisbon with approval and have pledged, for example, to double the proportion of the GDP devoted to research and development.

In contrast to Blair, however, Zapatero argues that Lisbon 'requires more confidence in European integration...'. Exactly what is meant by integration in these terms is again not spelt out in detail. Clearly fiscal harmonisation, for example, would be unacceptable to the British whereas further competition and the completion of the single market would be welcome. What is clear is that there is considerable scope for discussion between Blair and Zapatero about the future shape of Europe.

Disagreement is foreseeable on labour market reform. In contrast to the British, PSOE have emphasized the investment aspects of Lisbon rather than reforms. At their first meeting in Madrid, Zapatero told Blair that the problem with a flexible labour market is that it is 'the workers who get flexed, not the companies'.

This neat repost to Blair has now been repeated several times, with approval, by other party leaders around Madrid. It is not, however, a policy. Unemployment remains a serious problem in Spain and PSOE should not allow their prejudices and name-calling to obscure their judgment. British employment policy has been relatively successful and Zapatero should ask himself why this is and if there are any lessons to be learned. Too often the UK achievement of getting unemployment down to around 5 per cent and eliminating youth unemployment (a massive problem in Spain) is overlooked not just in Spain but also in continental Europe.

For his part, Tony Blair needs to avoid unnecessary hubris. Blair earned credit when, as shadow employment spokesman, he announced that he would not repeal many of the Trade Union and labour reforms carried out in the 1980s. This is not the same as having made the reforms in the first place. The reforms to the British labour market in the 1980s were made by Mrs Thatcher. This 'shock therapy' was painful and opposed by the Labour Party. The

British economy is almost certainly better off because of them and Blair's government is the beneficiary. But he did not have to make the initial tough choices.

Zapatero can be forgiven if, looking at Schroeder for example, he decides that the electoral consequences of labour market reform are such that it is an issue which can wait. It would be a mistake, however, to put it off indefinitely. The Spanish labour market is in some instances hopelessly over centralised – for example each sector has its own centrally negotiated contract (*convenio*). Some workers – especially in the state bureaucracy - are overprotected by lifelong contracts, yet many others - some 30 per cent - have temporary contracts that offer virtually no protection. It is encouraging that Zapatero has made early progress by signing a joint statement of intent with the Labour Unions about the need for reform. It would be a useful step if not only British ministers but British Union leaders were now ready to discuss the British experience with their Spanish counterparts.

Finally, there is significant overlap on the priorities for the domestic agenda too. Zapatero has never actually said 'education, education, education' but he has made it clear that this is his priority. Both governments are looking for ways to drive up standards and increase funding. One in four Spanish students drops out of education before the age of 16 – a problem which the government wants to tackle, and one of Zapatero's first announcements was an increase in the number of student grants. In addition, the manifesto promises an expansion of nursery school places for the under 3s, school reform, IT systems in every classroom, increased access to university and a massive boost in research and development grants; the list is a mantra which is familiar to New Labour policy makers.

Against conservative opposition, Zapatero wants a new constitutional settlement between the centre and Spain's powerful regions (*'autonomías'*). He wants to reform the upper house of parliament (the Senate) to better reflect the regions and the highly devolved character of the Spanish state. In a series of proposals – from the creation of a new independent structure for state broadcasting (used shamelessly by past governments for partisan

ends) to greater transparency in the funding of political parties – Zapatero plans a 'second transition' to make the Spanish polity more responsive. The new President has, in summary, a 'project' to modernise Spain.

On key policy questions there is scope for an active debate between PSOE and New Labour. Continued discussion about the development of a competitive economy with a robust welfare state in particular is essential to the success of the left. Both Britain and Spain must now provide models to demonstrate that economic efficiency and social justice are inexorably linked. The consequence of failure will not be confined to either country, but will lead to a perception that, in practice, social democracy cannot rise to the challenges facing modern government.

Felipe Sayoun, a columnist of the *El Mundo* newspaper, argues that on central questions about the role of the state in the economy and society, New Labour thought can have an important role to play in the development of the left in Spain. Some of this policy in the UK arises from the agenda developed after discussion with the Clinton Democrats in the 1990s, but direct translation could be difficult for continental European socialists. 'As with other parties of the European left the cultural gap between PSOE and the US Democrats, for example, makes debate difficult. The British, however, share some of the American approach but mix it with a distinctly European view. It is much easier to talk to them'. Sure start, welfare to work and tax credits, for example, are all evolving policies which have proved successful in practice and PSOE may well find much of the Blair/Brown social policy package attractive.

There is, however, a problem of perception which has to be overcome. Whilst the British have some very positive policy proposals, their credibility has been, in many Spanish minds, diminished by the involvement in Iraq. Too often British contributions are dismissed by commentators in Spain as being 'neo-liberal' - a charge which is made easier by Tony Blair's closeness to neo-conservatives in Washington. It will require an enormous effort on the part of the British, and the Spanish, to get beyond this perception and engage in real and necessary debate.

## Europe – Spain's illusion, Britain's inferno

Much attention on the relationship between Blair and Zapatero has tended to focus on their divergent views about the future shape of European institutions and the pace of integration. Some of these disagreements are of long standing – the correct level of EU agricultural subsidies, for example, is a disagreement which has survived changes of government in London and Madrid for more than two decades.

Zapatero's decision to distance himself from Washington and embrace Europe, however, falls into a different category. Europe had been the sheet anchor of Spanish foreign policy during the 1980s and 1990s with cross party consensus. Encouraged by Blair, Aznar broke with this consensus and took an Atlanticist turn in support of Washington during 2003. Zapatero quickly reverted to the former policy. In his first major speech to the Spanish parliament after the election Zapatero stated bluntly 'what is good for Europe is good for Spain'. It is the most basic formulation of the new government's thinking which was confirmed by early visits to Paris and Berlin ahead of London.

The immediate withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq was as dramatic as it was unexpected. A complimentary proposal was, however, equally radical. Two weeks after being sworn in as president, Zapatero announced that Spain would be willing to reconsider the terms of the Nice Treaty. This move unblocked months of deadlocked negotiations to agree on the European Constitution – a high priority for the new Premier who describes it in Jeffersonian terms as 'a milestone in the pursuit of peace, liberty, progress and well-being'.

*El Pais* commented approvingly, 'No less drastic (than troop withdrawal) is the fulfilment of the other half of his promise...that Europe should replace the USA in the list of Spanish priorities and return Spain to the heart of the process of EU construction. A

country cannot change in two weeks – but its international position can'.

This policy has led some in London, and elsewhere, to accuse Spain of retreating into parochialism. Spain, they argue, in the post-Aznar world has less global influence than ever - 'Madrid has shrunk'. Opponents in Madrid, meanwhile, allege that Zapatero's willingness to compromise in Europe is endangering vital national interests. Zapatero will need to show that his instinct to compromise on specific issues in the short-term actually leads to increased authority and respect for Spain in the long-term. The risk is that a series of compromises could lead to the impression that Spain is weak or that Zapatero lacks authority on the international stage.

Far from diminishing their international profile, PSOE leaders argue that the return to Europe has released Spain from the crippling effects of Aznar's Atlanticism. PSOE counter that when Aznar blocked progress on the European constitution, it was further evidence of the extent to which he had damaged relations with traditional European partners and made traditional European compromises more difficult. The Parliamentary spokesman on European affairs, Rafael Estrella, complains 'The outcome of Aznar's Atlanticist approach was that Spain ended up with nothing. We never had any influence over US policy – it was simply a case of following without questions. We also lost all influence with our European partners. It has been a disaster'.

The director of the prestigious Madrid-based foreign affairs think-tank FRIDE Jose Luis Herrero takes a slightly more sympathetic view of Aznar's motives – if not the outcome.

In some ways Aznar's approach could be seen as a maturing of Spanish foreign policy. In the 1980s and 1990s there was a bi-partisan consensus that Spain should simply immerse itself in Europe ... With a stable democracy and entrenched institutions Aznar wanted to move on. Unfortunately he chose to do so by tying himself to one of the most right wing administrations in American history engaged in an action which has turned out to be about as

popular as Vietnam. Aznar's motives may have been laudable but he chose the wrong time and the wrong issue to pursue his aim.

Aznar's approach to North America and his attempt to move Spain on from a psychological dependency on the EU was similar to Tom Paine's appeal to the American colonists for the 'boy to become a man'. Paine, however, gave brilliant expression to an already widespread thought. Aznar had an altogether more sceptical audience and his Atlanticism contributed to his downfall.

In the UK, public criticism of British participation in Iraq has been mitigated to some extent precisely because Britain is the senior partner in a US-led coalition. The criticism would have been immeasurably greater had Blair been participating in a disastrous foreign policy venture as part of a European coalition. Atlanticism is the default position of British foreign policy.

The reverse proposition is true in Spain. Europeanism is the default position of Spanish foreign policy. Aznar's decision to engage with the US may be seen as a bold attempt to broaden Spanish policy but the Spanish have never shared the generally positive image of the USA to the same extent as the British. This inherent coolness turned rapidly into open hostility as the diplomatic preparation and military execution of the war in Iraq unfolded.

Different views of the US are now mirrored in other policy differences between London and Madrid on the content of the constitution. Whilst Tony Blair successfully defended the British 'red lines' at the second Brussels summit on the constitution, Zapatero was with Chirac and Schroeder on the other side of the dividing line and supported measures toward greater fiscal harmonization (including a hypothesised EU tax) and the extended use of qualified majority voting – anathema to the UK.

There are disagreements with the UK both over the level and methods of funding within the Union – in particular the cohesion funds and the agricultural budget. Spanish enthusiasm for the EU is not based on an entirely altruistic, disinterested approach to the

future well-being of the Union. Whilst the country has made rapid economic progress since membership in 1986, PSOE argue strongly that Spain will continue to require a significant share of EU cohesion funds and agricultural subsidies in the future.

Support for agriculture and fishing will continue to be a dividing line between Britain and Spain – as it has been for the last 20 years. Only half joking, one Spanish journalist described the new government's European policy aims as 'more CAP, more CAP' – a further anathema to the British.

In their electoral program, PSOE made the point with rather greater elegance, even if, in substance it was largely the same. This will lead to further divisions with the UK, and other allies such as Berlin. Zapatero is determined that the overall level of EU spending will not be reduced. PSOE support the Commission proposal for the overall EU budget to maintain at 1.24 per cent of the total aggregate income of member states. Net contributors, however, such as the UK, are insistent that this figure will have to be reduced to 1 per cent. A compromise will certainly have to be found but it will not be quick or easy.

There is general agreement between Zapatero and Blair on the need to continue with the enlargement process, though the Spanish appear to be somewhat more tepid than the British about the possibility of concluding successful negotiations with Turkey.

The biggest constraint on greater co-operation between Blair and Zapatero within the institutions will come from the different political cultures of the two countries. In Spain, for example, both main political parties and around 85 per cent of the population are in favour of the proposed constitution.

A flavour of the differing environment was provided recently in the European elections when PSOE kicked off their campaign with a slogan and logo which borrowed the style of the 'I love NY' bumper stickers and projected the simple message of 'España loves EU'. What makes the publicity more unusual is the PSOE logo did not appear, leaving the impression that PSOE is now so closely

identified with Europe that it was unnecessary to repeat the message and the party logo. In the same way that right-wing parties around Europe have adopted national flags and symbols for their own ends, PSOE are wrapping themselves in the European flag. It is a campaign which is as audacious as it would be unthinkable in Britain. It is even more unthinkable that, on the basis of this campaign, PSOE emerged as the comfortable winners.

Spanish enthusiasm for Europe is based on past experience as a net recipient of EU funding (around €8bn in 2003). But when the new budget kicks in from 2007, most of this money will be diverted to the new accession countries. Europe will be looking to Spain to become a contributor – both financially and politically – and Zapatero will need to explain what this contribution will be.

## Spain – Al-Andalus and the Arab world

An area in which Spain can demonstrate that its influence and authority have been enhanced by the withdrawal of troops from Iraq is the relationship with the Arab world. If Spanish influence in Washington has diminished as a result of troop withdrawal, there has been a corresponding improvement in the perception of Spain around many parts of the Arab world. Zapatero has set out a policy to capitalise on this development and his first official visit as President was to Morocco.

Geography alone dictates that the two countries should have a close relationship. Separated by just 8 miles of water, the distance is half that between Britain and France. The physical proximity is confirmed by common elements in history and culture. Spain was once conquered by 'the Moors' whose influence is still prominent – especially in Andalusia – in language culture and architecture. One of the Al-Qaeda demands is that Spain should be returned to the Muslim world.

Despite this, under Aznar, relations between Madrid and Rabat deteriorated badly as tensions grew over disputes about fishing and border controls. The Moroccans withdrew their ambassador from

Madrid in 2002 and then 'invaded' Parsley Island - an uninhabitable outcrop of rock just off the coast of Morocco and claimed by Spain. Only intervention by Colin Powell prevented the farcical dispute escalating further.

Maurico Sanchez, international affairs editor of the right wing *La Razon* newspaper, describes Aznar's neglect of the Madrid-Rabat relationship as 'inexplicable'. He argues the relationship is of 'fundamental importance' for a number of reasons, and in particular two recent phenomena have converted common sense into a necessity not just for Spain but for Europe – immigration and terrorism.

The terrorist threat from Muslim fundamentalists, which became most gruesomely apparent with the 11/3 bombings in Madrid, was directly connected with Morocco. In the detentions which followed, several of the suspects held were Moroccan. In addition, Spanish-owned property in Morocco had already been attacked in the spring of 2003. The future fight against terrorism, if it is to be successful, will require close collaboration between Rabat and Madrid. Zapatero argues that shared intelligence is an essential factor in the war on terrorism. This alone demands that Spanish, and European, security forces should work in close cooperation with Morocco. The recent dispatch of a small Spanish-Moroccan joint peace-keeping contingent to Haiti is an unprecedented and very welcome indication that the new relationship can work.

There is another theme of equal magnitude which requires a close working relationship – immigration. Mass immigration is a phenomenon new to Spain but it is one which is transforming the major cities such as Madrid and Barcelona and regions such as Andalusia. Just a decade ago immigrants comprised 1 per cent of the Spanish population (40m) – they are now over 6 per cent. More than 300,000 of the new Spaniards are from Morocco. Many more Moroccans pass through on their way to find new lives in northern Europe - in addition to the immigrants from war-torn states of West Africa.

It is self-evidently impossible to quantify with precision the numbers of illegal immigrants who come up through North Africa into Spain. It is equally evident that many people are willing to risk everything to get to Europe – including their own lives. With a sickening frequency Spanish TV emits ghastly images of Moroccan or West African corpses washed up on the beaches of southern Spain or the Canary Islands.

The co-operation of countries like Morocco will be essential if Europe is to be successful in tackling illegal immigration. Spain and Morocco must work closely together, and not just in the narrowly defined terms of their bi-lateral relationship – important as it is. There is a much wider European interest to be considered. As Rafael Estrella, the PSOE European affairs spokesman and Andalusian MP commented 'these immigrants don't think that they have arrived in Algeciras or a beach in Andalusia. They think they have arrived in Europe – many of them do not want to stay in Spain'.

The attempt to construct a better relationship with Morocco is also a bridgehead to something far bigger in Spanish foreign policy. Zapatero has said that he wants to develop the European-Mediterranean dialogue initiated in the Barcelona conference of 1995. This will be undertaken with enthusiasm by his foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, a career diplomat, who drafted the subsequent Mediterranean Charter in 1997.

The object is to draw in all the countries around the Mediterranean rim and their near neighbours - a forum for dialogue between three continents and three of the world's greatest religions. Little specific progress has been made in the last 7 years but if the process can be reinvigorated it may yet have a contribution to make in renewing dialogue between parts of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish worlds.

The Euro-Med dialogue is bold and imaginative if somewhat vacuous. The diversity of the countries involved and the astonishingly broad scope of the aims has created an architecture which appears difficult to sustain. The Charter of 1997 which talks airily about 'the intercultural Mediterranean society...conceived as an open space in which the diverse cultural identities co-exist...' It

outlines a series of (largely undefined) objectives such as peace and security, economic development, trade and debt reduction, environment, population and education.

The most obvious subtext of the process is that it provides a forum for the EU to bolster progressive Arab thought in the promotion of open government and economic liberalism. In a more subtle form, the Charter shares the aims of the Bush 'Great Democracy' project. Where Washington seeks to impose, however, Barcelona seeks to encourage.

The British have signalled renewed interest in Barcelona and have already put it on the agenda for discussion during the British presidency in 2005. It is an area where Britain and Spain should work well together. In particular it is essential that the 'open government' part of the agenda should not be lost but made central to the process. Equality for women, democracy and transparency are the key to progress across North Africa and the Middle East. Although he is perceived to have snubbed Washington, Zapatero shares Bush and Blair's desire to open up North Africa and the Middle East to democracy. He must not be afraid to use his new status to deliver some unpopular messages across the region.

## Spain – International Terrorism and Global Security

George Bush and, to some extent, Tony Blair have defined the commitment to fighting terror by the willingness to participate in the Iraq coalition. Zapatero's withdrawal from this coalition has led to a perception that he is somehow running away from the fight. This is unfair but there are legitimate questions to be asked. It is now clear what Spain will not do. It is less evident what Spain will do – diplomatically or militarily – in the war on terror and how this coincides, if at all, with the British position.

Terrorism is an issue which preoccupies Spaniards not simply because of the recent, brutal arrival of Al-Qaeda. For more than 30

years, Spain has been combating ETA and is possibly the only European country today which still faces a domestic terrorist threat. Zapatero does not dispute the gravity of the threat posed by terrorism which marked his arrival to office but, unlike Blair, he rejects the principle of unilateral pre-emptive strikes which he regards as counterproductive. Zapatero argues that 'the fight against terrorism must be faced on very clear principles – large scale co-operation and political unity...using the Rule of Law, international legality both in the European Union and the United Nations...'.

In the short-term, Zapatero insists that shared intelligence and better coordinated security forces will be the more effective way of countering the terrorist threat and has proposed an EU summit to discuss the topic. In the long-term he argues that development is a key to 'eliminating the breeding grounds which feed international terrorism' and has promised to dedicate 0.5 per cent of the GDP to development spending by 2008 and the UN target of 0.7 per cent by 2012. (Blair has promised to achieve this by 2013.)

Whilst there are essential differences between Blair and Zapatero, the case for a rules-based, multilateral approach to terrorism is one that is being made in Britain too. It is possible Blair will need to rethink his strategy. Domestic critics like Robin Cook have questioned the use of the pre-emptive strike and demanded that the Prime Minister rule out 'another Iraq'. It may well be that, in the approach to the 2005 election, the Prime Minister will decide to soften his language on the question of the use of force without a UN mandate. Only if Blair accedes to his critics demands in Britain will there be a coincidence of view with his opposite number in Spain. If not, Zapatero may, in any event, be dealing with another British Prime Minister.

Zapatero too will need to develop his policies on the ability of the new government to take action even where there is international agreement. What can Spain offer to agreed projects for peace-keeping or nation-building? Spain is illustrative of the general European inability to make itself count in international affairs. An economic giant maybe, but a political pygmy. Spanish defence

spending stands at a paltry 1.2 per cent of GDP – less than half the NATO average spending.

Jose Luis Buihigas, a defence expert and former aid to Javier Solana notes that 'it is very difficult to get an accurate picture of the defence budget. For political reasons much of it is hidden under different budget heads'. It was, perhaps, for these 'political reasons' that Zapatero promised to freeze defence spending at its current levels during the election campaign. It is a promise which commentators, like Professor Calduch, believe will have to be broken. 'Spain is the 9 or 10 largest economy but lags behind politically and militarily. If we are going to participate fully in European projects such as Galileo or development of long reach transport defence spending will have to rise'.

There is a clear application of social democratic values and convergence of views between Blair and Zapatero on the need for an increased proportion of GDP to be devoted to development spending as a means of alleviating the causes of terrorism. There is far less consensus on the need for increased military spending even for peace-keeping and nation-building. Pacifism is a more common position in Spain than in the UK – which is why Zapatero made his election promise to freeze the defence budget. Yet this position is not sustainable even in the medium-term. President Zapatero will need to explain to the electorate, as Felipe Gonzalez did when he took Spain into NATO in 1986, that the time has now come for Spain to play a fuller role in the international community and this means contributing more to the national and European defence capability.

## Spain and the Americas

At the recent EU/Latin America summit in June 2004, only two European leaders were absent – Blair and Berlusconi. It would have been as unthinkable for Zapatero to miss the event as for Blair to refuse an invitation to the White House. Where the British have historic ties north of the Rio Grande, Spain's immediate interests lie to the South.

One of the areas where Nye's 'soft diplomacy' should yield most rewards for Zapatero is in Latin America. The historic, political, economic and cultural ties between Spain and South America are equal to the ties between Britain and the USA. The strength of the relationship will depend on particular administrations and the level of investment on the economic cycle – Spain currently has some \$87bn invested in Latin America – but the ties are enduring. Zapatero is particularly in step with Ricardo Lagos and Vicente Fox who, as members of the current UN Security Council, resisted US pressure to sign up to the second resolution on Iraq.

Zapatero will find it more difficult to assert Spanish influence north of the Rio Grande. Whereas the 'Special Relationship' has been a cornerstone of British foreign policy since 1945, there is a far more sceptical view of the USA in Spain. Few of the factors which bind the USA and the UK - language, history, culture, etc - apply to Spain. The more distant approach to the USA to be found in other European countries – notably France - can also be observed in Spain.

The extent to which this constitutes anti-Americanism as such is debatable and needs to be distinguished from a 'anti-Bush' sentiment. It seems to be true that the generally positive image of the USA which exists in Britain has seldom been shared to the same extent in Spain. Research by the Pew Research Center in 2003 revealed that in 1999 83 per cent of Britons had a positive image of the USA compared to just 50 per cent of Spaniards. By the first half of 2003, during the approach to war in Iraq this positive perception had dropped in both countries – but in Spain to just 14 per cent. (Washington will be far more worried about the Pew data from Muslim countries which shows that the popular perception of the USA has hit rock bottom).

Whilst it is difficult to quantify the Spanish scepticism it is equally difficult to identify the causes. Amongst older people and those on the left, however, there are almost folkloric memories of the extent to which US foreign policy in the 1950s was directed to supporting General Franco. As the Cold War developed American foreign

policy was orientated to support Franco as a bulwark against communism on Europe's southern flank. Spain's dire economic position in the years following the civil war was alleviated in 1952 when President Eisenhower extended Marshall aid to Franco. The tottering regime was thus able to consolidate itself and survive for another 2 decades. The extent to which the Americans were responsible for Franco's survival – or whether Spain would really have made the democratic leap in the 1950s – is questionable.

A more proximate cause might be American foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s in Latin America which was directed to supporting right-wing insurgents from Nicaragua to Chile. These policies are understood by a far larger number of people in Spain today and continue to provoke widespread debate. It was, after all, an arrest warrant from a Spanish judge – Garzon – which led to General Pinochet being detained in London for more than a year in 1999. Whatever the actual facts of individual cases and historical events, the outcome has been largely the same. An important swathe of Spanish public opinion is less than confident that the USA will always act in a disinterested way to support democracy and human rights.

Does this amount to anti-Americanism? José Luis Herrero, of the FRIDE think tank, concedes that it might. 'The complexity of these issues is not always appreciated by everyone. The principles of the Founding Fathers – individual liberty and democracy – and the cases where the USA has sought to defend those rights throughout its history are not always prominent'.

Professor Antonio Estella, from the University Carlos III in Madrid, thinks that the phenomena are far more subtle than simple anti-Americanism, especially amongst young people. 'I see my students wearing American brand clothes, listening to American music and watching American films. It seems a strange protest against America. They may be anti-Bush or particular policies but Anti-American, no'.

It is possible that demographic changes within the USA itself may lead to a shift in opinion. Professor Samuel Huntington argues that

there is a 'Hispanic threat to the United States'. Huntingdon conjures up the possibility of a USA fractured into two culturally and linguistically different communities – like Belgium or Canada. Whilst the current English-speaking Anglo-Saxon community will continue, he suggests that the rapid growth and low assimilation of the Spanish-speaking Latino/Hispanic group may lead to the eventual formation of a parallel state.

It would not, however, be wise to base a foreign policy on this thesis or the expectation that the USA is about to go 'Spanish'. Many of the parameters of the international debate will continue to be set in Washington, regardless of who wins the November election. Zapatero needs to demonstrate that Iraq is a particular policy disagreement and resist any latent tendencies towards a general anti-Americanism. In the absence of any coherent European alternative, Zapatero has no realistic alternative to work with Washington where he can – and hope for the election of a president who is more willing to work with the international community.

## Conclusion

The arrival of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero onto the world stage was in many ways as sensational as the election of Tony Blair in 1997. Yet it does not follow that Zapatero will be – or wants to be – 'the new Blair'. The difference cannot be found in personality or ideology - which in many respects is more similar than commonly assumed. Rather it arises from the distinct political cultures and world roles of Britain and Spain. Britain is a member of the G8 and the UN Security Council. It is a founding member of NATO with one of the most professional armies in the western hemisphere and its own nuclear capacity. The cornerstone of British foreign policy continues to be, as it has been for the last half century, a special relationship with the most powerful nation on earth.

These conditions do not apply to Spain and Zapatero is playing a different hand. His predecessor started from the honourable premise that Spain is now ready to play a more important role in international politics and sought a higher profile by aligning Madrid

with Washington. No nation can enter into an equal partnership with the USA; nevertheless the idea of partnership implies some influence. But if Tony Blair can claim some marginal impact on President Bush, José María Aznar was exposed as having none. Madrid, like many in London, will be praying for a Kerry victory to ease transatlantic relations.

In any event, Zapatero has chosen to make the EU Madrid's reference point once again, but will need to ensure that he does not become as ineffectual in Paris or Berlin as Mr Aznar was in Washington. By withdrawing Spanish troops from Iraq, Zapatero has shown what Spain is not willing to do. He must now show with equal force what Spain can do and demonstrate how Spain can make a difference.

This is not an impossible project. Iraq may have been a military success but subsequent events have exposed, as many in Washington now realize, the limits of US power. To use Robert Kaman's analogy the US cannot simply rely on Mars but needs rather more Venus. Zapatero should be ready to exploit this. He should not be afraid to find ways of participating in the reconstruction of Iraq as Spain is doing in Afghanistan and the Balkans. It may be a difficult message to sell to the Spanish electorate but it is a necessary one. The reorientation of Spanish foreign policy towards building Europe is essential for the future and Spain should be preparing to take on much more responsibility for European defence. Current problems, however, have to be dealt with now and Spain should not look to 'opt-out' from the search for solutions.

In Britain, Blair should seize the opportunity offered by Zapatero's election. He has demonstrated with commendable agility that he is able to work well with partners from Bush to Berlusconi. He now has the chance to show that he can work equally well with a modern European social democrat. The benefit of this would not be limited to re-establishing the relationship between Spain and the UK. In the approach to the 2005 elections, Blair needs to reposition himself within the Labour Party and emphasise his social democratic, redistributionist credentials. A strong working relationship with an attractive fellow European social democrat would be an effective

answer to critics who suggest that Blair can only really work with governments of the right.

Despite the important foreign policy differences, Zapatero can work well with Blair (and in all probability with Blair's successor). Neither London nor Madrid should let their prejudices blind them to the possibilities. PSOE is not a continental version of 'Old Labour' and Blair is not a neo-liberal stalking horse. Zapatero will be the President of Spain until 2008 and Labour looks set to win the next General Election in the UK. Both have the chance to prove that Social Democracy can work in Europe and that European social democrats can work together.

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