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Spain-NATO: Coming to Grips With Membership



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An Intelligence Assessment

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*EUR 84-10012
February 1984*

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Spain-NATO: Coming to Grips With Membership



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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by 
 Office of European Analysis. It was
coordinated with the Directorate of Operations.
Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Iberia-Aegean Branch,
EURA, 

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 31 December 1983
was used in this report.*

We believe that Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez has become convinced during his 13 months in power that Spain must remain in NATO. Gonzalez will, we think, make good on his promise to consult the public on this issue—either through a referendum or through some less direct means—before making any definitive commitment to the Alliance. This consultation could take place as early as mid-1985.

Chances are slightly better than even, in our view, that Gonzalez will be able to persuade his party and the Spanish public to agree with him on NATO. The Socialist Party—though unenthusiastic about the Alliance—is unlikely, we think, to balk if Gonzalez insists. Opinion polls show that much of the public is now opposed to NATO membership, but they also show that most Spaniards are not firmly wedded to their views. We suspect the public would be receptive to a united effort by all the democratic parties to publicize the benefits of NATO membership.

Lack of progress on at least one of two other issues—the bid by Spain to join the European Community and its efforts to repatriate Gibraltar—would pose the most serious threat to Gonzalez's attempts to win approval for NATO membership. Of these, the EC question clearly carries the greater weight. A delay in entry, tentatively set for 1986, could sour the Spaniards' positive attitude toward the EC and would, we believe, subvert efforts by the government to change popular opinion on NATO. In view of recent statements by French and EC officials, we are moderately optimistic that accession negotiations can be completed by the end of the year, but problems within the Community could delay enlargement.

Even if the Spanish public sanctions continued membership in the Alliance, full Spanish integration into NATO's military wing is unlikely before 1986. Clearing the membership hurdle will use up much of Gonzalez's political capital, and, with parliamentary elections facing him in 1986—if not sooner—the Prime Minister would be likely—once continued membership is assured—to put the question of NATO integration aside for a time and concentrate on issues that offer a better rate of political return.



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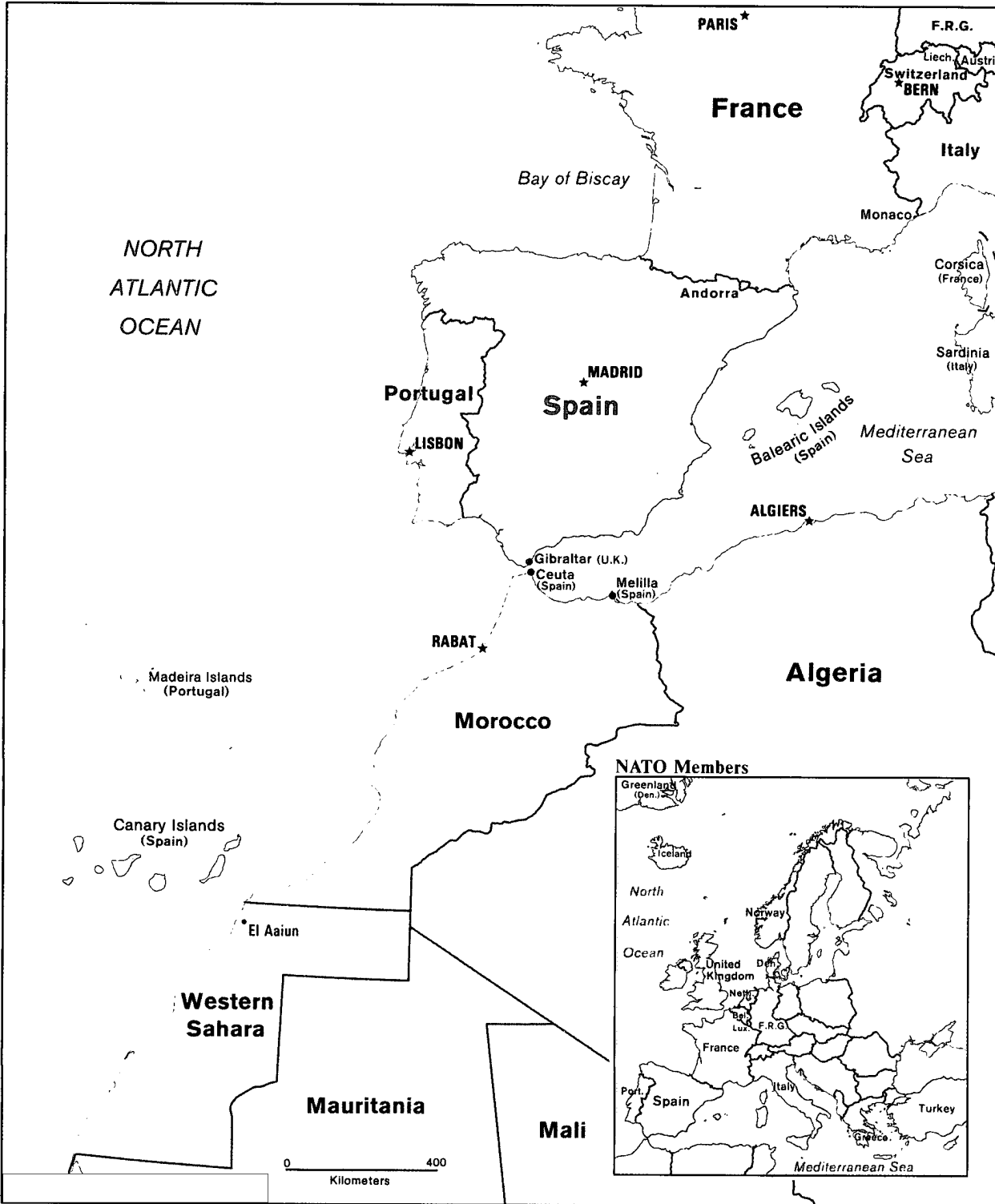
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Figure 1
Spain's Strategic Location



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**Spain-NATO:
Coming to Grips
With Membership** [Redacted]

Spain's continued participation in NATO remains a major foreign policy preoccupation of the Socialist government of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez. A decision to pull out would have ramifications beyond Spanish politics. Spanish withdrawal from NATO would hand the Soviet Union a propaganda plum and would be a sharp psychological blow at a time when the Alliance is already strained by disputes over defense spending, INF deployment, and continuing tensions between Greece and Turkey. In wartime, the unavailability to NATO commanders of Spanish forces and facilities would complicate resupply missions and efforts to control strategic sea lanes off Spain's coasts. In order to win broad support for his election, Gonzalez campaigned in 1982 on a platform of opposition to Spanish membership in NATO. Since then, he has, we believe, concluded that the benefits of remaining in the Alliance outweigh the costs. Now he must convince the Spaniards, most of whom remain chary of NATO membership. [Redacted]

It soon became apparent, however, that the new government's position on NATO was far more complex than the public statements indicated. By the end of January 1983, Madrid had nearly finished hooking up to NATO's integrated communications system, had dispatched an officer to the NATO Defense College, and had promised to participate in meetings of NATO's Special Consultative and High Level Groups in February. Despite the public freeze on integration, Madrid showed every sign, according to the US Embassy, of increasing its participation where it was possible to do so quietly. [Redacted]

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Gonzalez Changes his Mind. Signs that Gonzalez was taking a more favorable view of NATO membership began to appear last winter. Since then, Gonzalez has confirmed his change of opinion in private conversations with European leaders and the former US Ambassador to Spain. To date, Gonzalez has been unwilling to take this position publicly, although in recent statements he has come close:

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**After the Socialist Victory—
A Freeze and Quick Thaw**

In December 1982, shortly after taking office, Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez established as a policy credo the Socialists' election campaign charge that the former government had not adequately consulted the public before deciding to join NATO seven months earlier. He froze Spanish integration into NATO's military structure, saying that further integration would depend upon receiving security guarantees from the Allies for Spain's North African exclaves, Ceuta and Melilla, and upon progress toward the repatriation of Gibraltar and membership in the European Community. Following the Prime Minister's lead, other ranking government officials stressed publicly the need for a thorough study of the country's defense requirements and for a referendum on NATO before integration could resume. Spanish diplomats suggested to their foreign counterparts that Madrid might follow the French example on NATO. [Redacted]

- During a press conference in March, Gonzalez put off the referendum promised during the election campaign until some unspecified date, pointing to a desire not to damage or weaken Western solidarity at a time of serious East-West tension.

- When he visited West Germany in May, the Prime Minister publicly supported NATO's INF decision

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[Redacted]

Gonzalez's public statement apparently took his ministers and party by surprise—the Socialist government had previously ignored the INF issue—and may nearly have caused the resignation of Foreign Minister Fernando Moran, an outspoken opponent of NATO participation.¹

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¹ In October Gonzalez endorsed the missile deployment decision even more firmly when responding to a letter from President Reagan to the heads of all NATO governments. [Redacted]

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Historical Perspective on Spain and Europe

Throughout much of recent history, Spain has not been a significant international political force. Neutral in two world wars, shunned by European democracies for pro-Axis sympathies, and only grudgingly accepted by the West in the later years of the Franco government, Spain retains, in our view, a sense of isolationism and separation from Europe. This legacy is evident in the ambivalence of many Spaniards toward the Alliance and the outright opposition of most Spanish Socialists to NATO membership [redacted]

Under Franco, the government argued that geography and history made Spain a bridge to North Africa, the Arab world, and Latin America. The view flourished on both left and right that Spanish interests were best served by an "independent" foreign policy. Limited European receptivity to Spain forced Spanish attention inward, while concern for Spanish exclaves in North Africa focused security interest southward, away from Central Europe. [redacted]

The later years of the Franco era saw heightened Spanish interest in closer ties—particularly commercial relations—with Madrid's northern neighbors. In 1970 Spain signed a limited commercial agreement with the EC, but only with Franco's death in 1975 was the way clear for a more vigorous "Europeanization" of Spain. Spain applied for membership in the EC in 1977, but Spanish concern about Western defense lagged its interest in improved economic ties with Western Europe. In 1981, convinced that full participation in West European institutions was necessary for both the consolidation of democracy and Spain's defense, the Center Democratic Union government of then Prime Minister Calvo-Sotelo decided to join NATO. Spain formally joined the Alliance in May 1982 over strong Socialist opposition. During the subsequent national election campaign, the Socialists argued that the public had been "insufficiently consulted" on the decision and promised, if elected, to suspend military integration, pending a review of Spanish defense requirements and a popular referendum on NATO membership [redacted]

• [redacted] the Prime Minister had decided that eventually Spain should integrate fully into the military structure of NATO.

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• In August the Prime Minister again confirmed his changed attitude in private talks with US Ambassador Todman. [redacted]

We believe Gonzalez's change of mind is rooted largely in his longtime conviction that Spain, as a Western nation, must establish the fullest possible ties with Europe. Gonzalez's experience as Prime Minister has, in our view, led him to see membership in NATO as a part of the package. Three ancillary influences have no doubt helped shape his views:

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• Although we have no evidence that any of the West European nations have exerted strong political pressure on Madrid to decide about NATO, the Allies continue to stress the importance of Spain's membership.

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• Gonzalez is publicly on record as favoring the modernization of Spain's armed forces. We suspect that his thinking on NATO has been influenced by the belief that NATO membership could accelerate the process of modernization. Embassy reporting noted that Gonzalez did not agree with the generally accepted view that membership in NATO will necessarily turn the military's attention away from domestic political affairs. As evidence, he pointed to Greece and Turkey.

• King Juan Carlos meets weekly with the Prime Minister, and their discussions focus largely on substantive matters of government. We believe he has subtly attempted to steer the Prime Minister in the direction of remaining in NATO and toward eventual military integration. [redacted]

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Origins of Spanish Opposition to NATO

The Military. Spain's political isolation bred in the military an inward-looking perspective. The Spanish armed forces traditionally have been more attuned to internal security and the perceived threat from the south than to any European threat. Through the end of the Franco era, military officers were somewhat indifferent to multilateral defense issues and forums; some even viewed NATO as a potential political threat to Spain's authoritarian form of government.

Since Franco's death, however, anti-NATO sentiment within the military has been undermined by ingrained anti-Communism and a belief that membership would speed military modernization. At the time of the vote in the Cortes on NATO membership in October 1981, senior military officers strongly and publicly supported membership and hailed the government's decision as both a challenge and an opportunity to professionalize the armed forces.

The Public. Popular antipathy toward NATO has been shaped both by the quasi-neutralist rhetoric of the Franco regime and—since 1975—by the leftwing parties. The Spanish view of NATO is an emotional one, based more on fear and misperception than on knowledge of the Alliance or understanding of international political and security factors. Polls taken over the last few years suggest that over half the population opposes Spanish membership. At the same time, the polls also indicate that the public does not feel strongly about the issue and considers itself ill informed on the subject.

The Communists. Although the Communist Party is not slavishly tied to the Soviet Union, it makes little pretense of evenhandedness in foreign policy and focuses its enmity squarely on the United States. The Communists, who also protest the US bases in Spain, argue that NATO is a US creation designed to facilitate US domination of Europe. Such Communist rhetoric will increase as Spain moves toward the referendum, and it may get a sympathetic hearing in the nascent peace movement.

The Socialists. There is among Socialists a strong preference for an "autonomous" foreign policy that sometimes smacks of neutralism. In contrast to the Center Democratic Union's view that Spain's destiny lies in close integration and alliance with Western Europe, many Socialists argue that Spain's ties to Latin America and the Arab world have an equal claim on the country's attention. As opposition leader, Gonzalez advocated an "active neutralist" stance in which Spain would seek close economic ties to Western Europe—eventually joining the European Community—but would remain politically neutral and outside NATO. Socialist criticism of the UCD government's decision to join NATO emphasized that NATO neither guaranteed the return of Gibraltar nor ensured the security of Spain's North African ex-claves in the event of war with Morocco.

The Military. Change has also been evident in the military's attitude toward NATO integration. As recently as the late 1970s, there was skepticism concerning the practical benefit of NATO participation and even a degree of military opposition to NATO membership. According to defense attache reporting, some officers, especially in the Army, argued that NATO membership would do little to bolster Spanish national security. In their view, the real danger lay not in Central Europe and the prospect of a Warsaw Pact attack, but in the threat of an attack from North Africa. By contrast, during an official review of Spanish defense policy in April 1983, senior Spanish military officers concluded that Spain must be prepared to resist a direct attack from Soviet-led forces. [redacted]

According to the US defense attache, the military hierarchy now has generally accepted association with NATO. It has tended, however, to view the issue of membership as a political question and has apparently not pressured the government. Rather, the armed forces is focusing on nuts-and-bolts military issues associated with membership. Military leaders, for example, have in recent months expressed satisfaction with the flow of technical information from NATO, and the Ministry of Defense has ordered Spanish attendance at meetings where such information is available. Moreover, the US defense attache has reported an apparent increase over the past several months in military-to-military contacts between Spain and other NATO members for training and other purposes. [redacted]

Central to the change in the military's attitude toward NATO were Franco's death and the subsequent flowering of democracy in Spain. These two developments freed the military from its vague fears that NATO membership might challenge or compromise Spain's political institutions and spawned a redefinition of the military's role. Whereas under Franco the military saw its job almost exclusively as protecting the regime from internal subversion, now the way was open for the military to find a role for itself more in keeping with the West European norm. [redacted]

Not far into the process of defining a new mission, Spain's military leaders concluded that the country's armed forces would require fundamental reorganizing



Figure 1. Raising the Spanish flag at NATO Headquarters, 5 June 1982. [redacted]

and modernizing before they would be capable of defending Spain from a serious foreign threat. Even before joining NATO, the Spanish military had contacts with US and West European military establishments, and NATO standards and structures served as a model for and influenced Spanish military thinking about potential modernization of their own forces. And there is little doubt in our minds that the shift in military thinking about NATO was bolstered by the hope that Spain would receive substantial modernization assistance were Madrid to join NATO. [redacted]

Favorable Signs in the Government. The military's increasingly pro-NATO outlook is mirrored in a study that was apparently prepared under the previous



Figure 2. Foreign Minister Fernando Moran during press conference after his attendance for the first time at a NATO ministerial meeting. [redacted]

government but leaked to the press in June 1983 as the findings of an interministerial group—comprising senior officials from the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs—set up by Gonzalez to study Spain's defense needs.² According to the press, the report argues that neither neutrality nor bilateral assistance pacts can fully meet the country's security requirements. It also concludes that membership in a multinational alliance would enhance national security and yield significant technical and military assistance. The press has noted that the study calls on the government to begin educating the public about

² We speculate that Defense Ministry officials, most of whom generally support the conclusions of the report, may have leaked it either to garner public reaction before preparing the Ministry's own report or to begin conditioning the public to accept pro-NATO views. [redacted]



Figure 3. Alfonso Guerra. How strong an opponent of NATO membership? [redacted]

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Spain's defense needs. When queried about the press report by US Embassy officials, government officials denied that the study was done by the interministerial group. The officials did not quarrel with the study's thesis, however, leaving the impression that at least some in the government agree with it. [redacted]

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Another indication of the growing acceptance in some government circles of membership in NATO is the level of official Spanish representation at NATO meetings since December 1982. In early June Defense Minister Narciso Serra attended for the first time a meeting of the NATO Defense Planning Council. While he—like Moran at the NATO Foreign Ministers' meetings in December and June—declined to sign the communique, the Spanish described his mere presence as a significant step toward integration into NATO's military structure. More importantly, after the meeting Serra announced that Spain would participate in future NATO exercises. [redacted]

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A House Divided?

The positive view of NATO is still not universal in the government. Two key figures—Deputy Prime Minister Alfonso Guerra and Foreign Minister Moran—continue to have reservations. Shortly after Gonzalez's statements in Bonn about INF, Guerra announced during a campaign swing through Cordoba prior to the municipal elections in May that the government would indeed hold the referendum and that the Socialist Party would campaign for a "no" vote. In early June at the congress of the Socialist labor confederation, Guerra stated that the opposition

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of most Spaniards to NATO almost guaranteed a negative vote on the referendum. In late July he publicly reiterated his disapproval of membership and challenged those Socialists who disagreed with the party's anti-NATO stance to make their views public. This sparked debate in the press about a rift between Guerra and Prime Minister Gonzalez.³ [redacted]

Guerra's statements contrast sharply with Gonzalez's position, but how seriously the two men differ is unclear. It is possible, [redacted]

[redacted] the two leaders were orchestrating their public differences to maintain control of the left wing of the party. Often in the past, Gonzalez has used Guerra as a buffer and balance in dealing with leftwing critics. When they have denounced the government as too moderate, Guerra has channeled their complaints and publicly enunciated their views. We believe that Gonzalez is counting on Guerra again lining up behind him at the appropriate time—as he has in similar situations in the past—perhaps bringing the party with him. [redacted]

For his part, Moran, as foreign minister, has had the most to say publicly on NATO questions. Although he stresses Spain's Western orientation, he has publicly declared his intent to increase Spain's "margin of autonomy" in foreign affairs and has questioned whether membership in the Alliance will limit Spain's ability to defend its vital interests—such as Gibraltar and the exclaves. Shortly after taking office, Moran expressed a preference for a "French solution" for Spain—continued political ties with NATO but no military integration. He has also suggested that Spain's bilateral agreement with the United States obviates any need for NATO membership. Moran is not, in our opinion, the chief decisionmaker on NATO matters; Gonzalez appears to hold that position. The Embassy reports that Gonzalez chose Moran primarily because of his expertise in matters concerning the Mediterranean and North Africa. [redacted]

On the surface, Guerra appears more firmly opposed to membership than Moran, whose ideological opposition to NATO may be giving way to a practical appreciation of the difficulties of achieving Spain's

³ Gonzalez apparently silenced his ministers shortly after the public debate began. Since then, Guerra and other government leaders have had little to say publicly. [redacted]

international goals. Nevertheless, both men have publicly noted that withdrawing from the Alliance could damage other Spanish interests—such as progress on EC integration and bilateral relations with the United States. Such concerns, plus what we suspect is a desire on the part of both men to stay in Gonzalez's good graces, suggest to us that they probably will gradually soften their opposition. [redacted]

The Party

The Socialist Party is officially opposed to NATO membership. As is the case with the government, however, the party is in fact divided on the issue. In our opinion, a small but influential group—including Defense Minister Serra, Economics Minister Miguel Boyer, and seven members of the party's executive committee—believes it is in Spain's long-term interest to be in NATO. Much of the rest of the party is, we think, opposed to NATO membership, holding to the traditional party tenet that military blocs perpetuate international tension and still resenting the support some Alliance members—principally the United States—lent the Franco regime. According to the Embassy, some of those opposed also fear that endorsing NATO membership could cost the party a second term in office or force it into an unstable coalition. [redacted]

Only a handful of those opposed are, in our view, adamantly against participation in NATO under any circumstances. Embassy and press reports suggest to us that most of the rest, including seven members of the executive committee—among them Education and Science Minister Jose Maravall, Labor and Social Security Minister Jose Almunia, and Culture Minister Javier Solana—probably could accept a decision to stay in NATO, particularly if the negotiations on EC entry were moving along. [redacted]

Public Opinion Problem

The concerns in the Socialist Party about the impact of staying in NATO on the party's future electoral chances have some basis in reality. Public opposition to NATO has grown steadily since 1978 as the issue has become more politicized (see inset). During the same period, however, many of those polled have admitted to the pollsters that their opinions are not

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Figure 4. "Neither NATO nor Bases—Referendum Yes" Slogan of anti-NATO demonstration



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strongly held. This leads us to conclude that public opinion on NATO could be reshaped by a concerted campaign.

The only group seeking to exploit existing anti-NATO sentiment is the Spanish Communist Party. According to Embassy and press reports, the Communists view NATO membership as an issue on which to rebuild some of the support they lost in the last election. Thus far, however, the party has had little success. Public support for the Communists remains small (less than 10 percent of the vote), and the largely Communist-directed peace movement is tiny and ineffective. Both facts reflect the party's internal disarray.

The peace movement also suffers from the absence of a sense of immediacy. Spain's geographic position and history of isolation have kept it on the sidelines of the arms control debate in Europe. Only recently has the basing of nuclear arms in Europe been raised, and only as a secondary issue. The movement also lacks significant Socialist support. At its inception in 1978, the peace movement appealed to many Socialists. Since coming to power, however, the Socialist Party has refused to participate in peace demonstrations,

and the movement has stopped growing. In our view, without Socialist backing, neither the peace movement nor the Communists will be able to play a significant role in influencing public opinion on NATO.

Key Issues

Holding far more potential than the Communists or the peace movement for influencing the outcome of the NATO debate are two other foreign policy issues: Madrid's bid for membership in the European Community and the question of sovereignty over Gibraltar. Both issues have become inextricably bound up in the NATO equation. In the popular mind, staying in NATO costs Spain more than it returns. Spain's vulnerability in the event of an East-West conflict is often cited in this regard. The tradeoff must come on Gibraltar and the EC. Gonzalez's ability to move the country on the NATO issue will hinge on manipulating the three variables in such a way as to convince the Spanish public that Spain is getting about as much on the three issues as it is giving.

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The European Community. The negotiations for Spanish EC membership have been arduous, and Spain is pressing EC leaders to accelerate the pace of preaccession discussions. Based on Embassy reporting and public and private statements of EC members, we believe the political will still exists within the EC to find a way to bring Spain in. The Ten, however, have become enmeshed in debates over future finances in the Community and the reform of agricultural policies. Some EC members—France in particular—hold that agreement on these issues must precede enlargement. Spain had hoped that the Community would make progress on resolving its agricultural and budget problems at its summit in Athens in December, but there was no break in the deadlock over how to limit runaway farm spending and relieve Britain's budget burden. Although the members failed to issue a communique, which might have contained some mention of commitment to enlargement, the presidency's paper did call for the completion of negotiations by 30 September 1984. Embassy reporting has suggested that France will try to wrap up negotiations during its six-month presidency of the EC, which ends in June. We believe that France's EC partners probably convinced Mitterrand in Athens that his concerns about the impact of enlargement on French farmers could best be dealt with through bilateral discussions with Madrid. Bilateral discussions have already begun.

Gibraltar. The Socialists argued that the Calvo-Sotelo government undermined Spain's negotiating position by joining NATO before securing a formal guarantee from Britain of an acceptable timetable for restoring Spanish sovereignty over Gibraltar. Immediately after coming to power, the Socialists pointedly tied full military integration into NATO to the recovery of Gibraltar. By linking the two, Gonzalez apparently hoped that other NATO members—primarily the United States—would press Britain to return to the negotiating table. Having failed in this, the government has since muted public talk of linkage. The notion, nonetheless, persists in the public mind and is raised periodically by some government officials.

British Prime Minister Thatcher has said she will veto Spain's bid for EC membership if the border between Spain and Gibraltar remains closed. Spain refuses to open it completely before Britain agrees to discuss all issues, including sovereignty.

Poll Results on Attitudes Toward NATO Participation

Seven polls conducted between 1976 and 1983 show that public opposition to Spanish membership has grown from 17 to 56 percent, while clear support has fallen from 40 to 17 percent and the number of nonrespondents has fallen from 43 to 27 percent. We believe that the 40-percent pro-NATO figure in 1976 was an aberration, reflecting an almost impulsive desire on the part of many Spaniards to reach out to the West after the isolation of the Franco years. As the post-Franco euphoria faded and other options for establishing Spain's European credentials gained currency, NATO lost much of its appeal. Significantly, 77 percent of those questioned in March 1983 indicated they felt insufficiently informed on the issue (see table 1). A poll published in *Tiempo* in June 1983 found that 49 percent of the respondents either admitted or subsequently revealed ignorance about NATO. Of those knowledgeable about NATO, 53 percent favored total withdrawal, 27 percent were against military integration, and only 8 percent favored staying in the Alliance.

In an effort to break the current impasse, Moran and British Foreign Secretary Howe agreed in September to set up commissions of experts to study all problems related to Gibraltar. The meetings are unlikely to satisfy Madrid, but they may provide a means for the Socialist government to reopen the border while appearing to be getting something in return.

Gonzalez's Strategy: Buying Time

Given the differences of opinion on the Alliance within the government and the party and the degree of anti-NATO sentiment in Spain, it is no accident, in our view, that Gonzalez has avoided committing himself publicly to a clearly pro-NATO line. We believe he can have little doubt about the political risks or the difficulty of trying to create a consensus in favor of continued membership. Convincing the party faithful that membership is the right course for Spain is in some ways as great a challenge for Gonzalez as the one he faced in 1979, when with great effort he persuaded a reluctant Socialist Party to renounce Marxism as its ideological foundation. The test of

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Table 1
Poll Results on Attitudes Toward NATO Participation

Percent

	January 1976	October 1978	July 1979	July 1981	September 1982 ^a	March 1983 ^b	June 1983
Favorable	40	27	28	20	13	13	17
Unfavorable	17	15	26	35	43	57	56
Did not know/no response	43	58	46	45	44	30	27

^a A Spanish Gallup affiliate poll conducted in September 1982, prior to the legislative election, found 58 percent of the population opposed to any ties with NATO; only 15 percent of the respondents supported full membership, and 15 percent supported "French style" political association. Over a third of those questioned on the subject had no opinion. Among Socialist voters, 68 percent favored no ties to NATO. The results of this poll differed from those of the government's poll. The one found that almost two-thirds of those who voted for the Popular Alliance and Center Democratic Union favored some ties, whereas the other found 38 percent "for" and 36 percent "opposed" in the AP, and 36 percent "against" and 22 percent "for" in the UCD.

^b Within the Socialist Party, by March 1983, opponents outnumbered advocates by 67 to 9 percent.

[Redacted]

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Gonzalez's ability to produce another fundamental shift in the party's orientation may come at the Socialist congress next October.

[Redacted]

of that position. Asked about rumors that the government was planning an information campaign on NATO before holding the referendum, Gonzalez said the government would do little more than schedule the referendum, letting the party assume responsibility for educating the public. [Redacted]

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Setting a Date. While he works out tactics to bring the party and the rest of the country along, Gonzalez will, in our view, continue to hide behind vague public expressions of fealty to the Socialist Party's line on NATO. Gonzalez first revealed this strategy during his visit to Washington in June, when he announced plans to hold the referendum on NATO membership in late 1984 or early 1985. We believe the Prime Minister stayed on the same tack in a subsequent meeting in Madrid with Socialist members of parliament. Gonzalez held the meeting to inform the deputies about the government's policies; they particularly wanted to know if Spanish policy on NATO had changed following Gonzalez's visit to Washington. According to the press, Gonzalez said that the party remained opposed to NATO and that he did not foresee any developments that would force a revision

We believe that Gonzalez's Washington announcement and his later statements were prompted by the need to maintain the cohesion of the Socialist Party in the short run. By setting a date for the referendum, he, in our view, temporarily deflected criticism from party leftists who were pressing for a date to consult the public. He may also have drastically reduced his options, however. Gonzalez has not repeated the date he announced during his visit to Washington—in fact he seems to have backed away from it recently. If the referendum is held in 1985, Gonzalez has only a relatively short time to achieve the successes in other areas that might help him blunt or modify public opposition to NATO. [Redacted]

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Figure 5. Felipe Gonzalez. Pondering NATO membership?

There is a slight possibility that Gonzalez could postpone the referendum until after the legislative election that must be held no later than October 1986. Managing the political flak this would draw would, we believe, be difficult but not impossible. Pressure to hold the referendum comes mainly from the Communists and from the left wing of the Socialist Party. Both groups want the government to clarify its stand on the issue. Both groups would be very vocal about a decision to postpone, but neither, in our view, could bring enough pressure to bear to change Gonzalez's mind.

Influencing the Outcome. Alternatively, Gonzalez could, in our view, try to fulfill his campaign pledge to hold a referendum on NATO by billing the legislative election as a referendum on all his policies—staying in NATO included. This might appeal to Gonzalez as a way of deemphasizing the NATO issue. But it could backfire and cost the Socialists votes. Moreover, if he had not yet turned his party around, he could be vulnerable to efforts by the Communists to drive a wedge between him and the Socialist left wing.

Should Gonzalez decide to go ahead with a straightforward referendum, he would first face the problem

of how to pose the question. We believe the government is still undecided about wording.⁴ In mid-April 1983 [redacted] Moran and Presidency Secretary Julio Feo—a close confidant of Gonzalez—were responsible for drafting the referendum and that they intended to present voters a choice between partial or full NATO membership. Guerra told reporters in July that the question would be: "should Spain remain in or withdraw from the Alliance," but his comments probably reflect his own views rather than those of the government.

Regardless of the method he chooses, Gonzalez is unlikely to consult the people on NATO before conducting a campaign to educate a poorly informed public. Indeed, we believe that Madrid already is finding ways to influence opinion from behind the scenes. In late August the government-owned television network broadcast a program on NATO and Norway that pointed out the benefits of the "Allied security umbrella" as well as the lower defense costs derived from membership. *El Pais*, the widely read independent, liberal newspaper, has in the last few months presented some balanced discussions of the pros and cons of NATO membership, stressing the need for an objective approach to Spain's ties to the Alliance. [redacted] he government may be behind these and other positive articles about NATO. [redacted] the government, through press secretary Eduardo Sotillos, was encouraging publication of articles that stress both the impossibility of neutralism given the international situation and the isolation Spain would suffer if it left NATO.

⁴ The referendum could be worded in such a way as to "legitimize" a fait accompli. It might in effect ask voters if they want to risk damaging Spain's interests and exacerbating international tensions by choosing to leave the Alliance. The government could also choose to bill NATO membership as just the military element of a broader political and economic association with Europe. If the government is not confident that it can avoid a vote that implies opposition to Alliance membership, the referendum could give the public only two options—retain the present status or militarily integrate. Such a formulation, depending on the voters' wish, could leave a future government—perhaps Socialist—with the problem of figuring out how to overcome the restrictions such a vote places on it.

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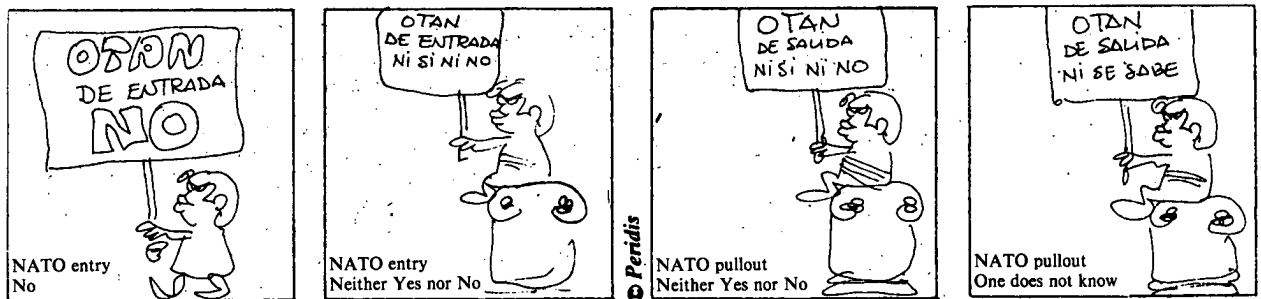


Figure 6. Cartoon mocking Felipe Gonzalez's flip-flops on NATO.

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Figure 7. The European Community door slammed on Gonzalez.

conclude that something less—perhaps completed negotiations on the agriculture dossier—is enough to make his case for NATO. Since the Gibraltar issue is more intractable, Gonzalez will, we believe, try to finesse it, perhaps by arguing that NATO membership offers the only possible way to resolve the centuries-old problem.

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If the EC talks stalled, Gonzalez, in our view, would almost surely lack the political muscle to firm up Spanish ties to NATO. His first reaction would, we suspect, be to look—and probably find—some way to buy more time before making good on his pledge to consult the public on NATO. As time wore on with no sign of progress on the EC, however, Gonzalez would come under increasing pressure to withdraw Spain's application for membership. In the unlikely event of an outright collapse of talks on the EC, Gonzalez might be forced—for reasons of political survival—to take Spain out of the Alliance altogether.

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Balancing the Equation

We believe that Gonzalez is determined to keep Spain in the Alliance and probably will succeed in doing so. He will, in our view, spend the next year or so laying the groundwork for persuading the rest of the country of the merits of this course. We believe that Gonzalez will not seek public endorsement of NATO membership until he thinks the odds are more in his favor. At a minimum, in our view, Gonzalez will need some visible progress on EC accession in order to push ahead on NATO. In our opinion, Gonzalez would like to have a date for accession set before the Socialist congress. That is unlikely, and we believe he will

In the coming months Gonzalez will almost certainly cover his political bets on NATO carefully enough that, if this worst case scenario came about, he would not face any imminent political danger. His majority in Parliament would still be strong, and he would no doubt have worked assiduously enough with the military officers as the situation deteriorated to keep the military in his corner, consulting with key leaders on alternative strategies for guaranteeing Spain's security. No doubt high on this list would be a greater emphasis on bilateral ties with Washington. Over the longer term, however, Gonzalez would have to defend the failure of his European policy in the next parliamentary election.

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Even if Gonzalez persuades the Spanish public to say "yes" sometime next year to continued association with NATO, he would not be free of the NATO issue altogether. Still unresolved would be the question of military integration into the Alliance. Despite the plaudits he could probably expect from NATO capitals if he forged ahead, he might, we suspect, choose to stand pat for a time. Turning the party and public around on the issue of association will take considerable political capital. And we believe Gonzalez, who will by next year be thinking seriously about his campaign strategy for the 1986 election, might well choose to turn his attention to issues that promise greater political dividends. This could mean that the integration question would not be settled until after the election.

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Table 2
Attitudes of Key Leaders on Spanish Membership in NATO

Date	Gonzalez	Guerra	Moran	Serra	Military Hierarchy	Communist Party
Pre-1980	Echoes the Socialist line, opposes "bloc politics" and—until 1978—US bases in Spain. Argues that Spain should play a role in Western defense, but not in NATO. Believes bilateral defense arrangements can better meet Spanish security needs.	Along with other Socialists leaders, believes Spain is tied to the West, but prefers an ill-defined "third way" between superpower blocs. Predisposed to believe Spain will have greater independence and more latitude internationally if it remains out of NATO.	Champion of independent Spanish foreign policy. Suggests Spanish membership in NATO would upset existing balance of forces in Europe, curtail Spanish freedom to pursue special role in Latin America and Arab world, and would not meet Spanish security needs. Believes Spain—while part of the West—should seek autonomy within it.	(No information)	Evidence in officer corps of reserve toward and even some opposition to Alliance membership; sentiments largely based on Spanish isolationist/centrist tradition.	Consistent strong public opposition to NATO and US bases in Spain.
1981	At the time of then UCD* government decision to join NATO, suggests that NATO membership subordinates European interests to East-West competition. Argues UCD neither sufficiently consulted public nor used issue to recover Gibraltar, advance Spanish interests in EC, and ensure security of exiles. Promises a referendum on NATO if his party wins 1982 elections and states that his party will actively campaign for negative vote on NATO. Privately says will not have to carry through if election results in coalition government.	Architect and chief proponent of Socialists' anti-NATO campaign during parliamentary debate on NATO accession.	Strong opponent of membership during parliamentary debate; argues that membership is neither necessary nor desirable. Suggests freeze on integration is needed to prepare Allies for possible Spanish withdrawal. Continues to argue that NATO will reduce Spanish autonomy.	(No information)	By time of government decision in 1981, military notes benefits of joining NATO, including aid in modernization of Spanish forces.	Votes against UCD government decision to join NATO.
1982	Campaigns for legislative election on opposition to NATO membership. Upon accession to power, promptly freezes military integration pending referendum, progress on EEC membership, and movement on Gibraltar.	(No information)	(No information)	(No information)	Army less sure than Navy and Air Force of benefits of NATO, but majority support integration; remain silent publicly, believing the decision is a political one.	No change in strong opposition to NATO.
1983	Gradually moves toward recognition that Spanish interests are best served by membership, publicly supports INF decision, gives private assurances that Spain will not pull out of Alliance. Says national debate will be structured to build popular support for Spanish membership; debate will focus more on general question of membership than on specific issue of military integration.	Argues that the majority of Spaniards disapprove of NATO membership; strongly supports referendum. Professes personal view that Spain should leave the Alliance, maintains Socialists will campaign against NATO prior to referendum, and challenges cabinet members who feel differently to state their views publicly. At the same time, leaves open the possibility that he may change his position.	Says Spain is unequivocally Western and will contribute to Western defense but believes this can be done outside NATO. Argues Spanish public wants to leave NATO and strongly supports referendum. In NATO councils suggests Spain might adopt "French solution." Also says bilateral agreements cancel need for multilateral defense arrangements. Public statements also suggest growing awareness of possible damage to other Spanish interests if Spain withdraws.	Formerly mayor of Barcelona and an important figure in regional politics; no experience in international security issues prior to assuming present job. Serra's radical "bark" worse than "bite"; as mayor, always friendly to US military officers and amenable to visits to Barcelona by US Fifth Fleet. As Defense Minister, remains generally reluctant to express public opinion on NATO matters. He is, however, a strong supporter of NATO integration in government councils and intends to push for military exercises with other NATO members.	Military focusing on nuts-and-bolts issues associated with membership and generally satisfied with integration process. Pleased with flow of technical information from NATO. Increasing contacts with other NATO military services for training and other purposes.	Party pins hope of recovery on exploiting anti-NATO sentiment of loose coalition of peace campaigners, ecologist groups, and activists of left-wing parties.

* Union of the Democratic Center.

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