

SPAIN IN THE NEXT 50 YEARS: CHALLENGES AHEAD



A. A. MARCOS,
Prof. University CEU San Pablo (Madrid)

Spain is an old nation but a young democracy with a 35 years old Constitution. For this century Spain will face some challenges like ageing population, independentism and territorial integrity. In the other hand, Spain is a strong democracy inside the European Union and has a deep commitment with international community to foster freedom, democracy and human rights around the world, especially around the Mediterranean Sea.

Keywords: Spain, challenges, population, territorial integrity, political stability, the European Union, democracy, human rights, international policy, community.

I. INTRODUCTION

The first lesson from History is that we cannot gamble with the past. It is not possible to deduce a plausible answer from a question like "What would happen if...?". We can learn from History because, as classic said, *Historia est magistra vitae* (History is the teacher of life). The second lesson from History is that we cannot guess what is going to befall in the next years, due to the fact we are not soothsayer or witches connected to some "divinities" who can oversee our destiny. We don't have that crystal ball to see the future. Nevertheless, we can offer some possible scenarios and then we can choose one of them or mix some of them, or even discard all of them.

Even if you are a very well informed man, you can fail your predictions. The best example of this is the interview made to François Mitterrand in July 1989, where he was asked about the fall of communism and he answered something like "we will not see that, maybe our grandchildren will see it"; that year fell the Berlin wall and the iron curtain and in 1991 fell the Soviet Union.

The SWOT analysis is based on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and shows how Spain will face the near future, offering some possible scenarios.

II. CHALLENGES, WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

The main challenge for Spain is its territorial integrity. Century by century, Spain has lost some parts of its territory. Of course, from our extremely short perspective of 20-30 years, the society of knowledge and interconnectivity, has forgotten what happened some centuries ago. Spain was in the XVIth century the biggest empire of the world, stretching from America (from California to Chile and Argentina) to Philippines (whose name come from the king Philip II), crossing through Africa and Europe. Since then, every generation has lost some

part of land, most of it during the independences of the American colonies in the beginning of the XIXth century. Nowadays, there are two kind questions on the table. First: some disputed enclaves. Second: independent movements and territorial framework.

The disputed enclaves are Gibraltar, Ceuta and Melilla. Gibraltar is a Britain colony in Spanish territory since thanks to the Treaty of Utrecht (1713). Ceuta and Melilla are two Spanish cities in North Africa surrounded by Moroccan lands. Properly speaking, Gibraltar is a British Overseas Territory, which means that after Second World War, during the fall of colonial empires, British Empire was transformed into a Commonwealth with other independent states. But fourteen territories decided not to be nor independent nor part of United Kingdom. So, although the legal status is called "overseas territory", Gibraltar is in fact a colony. This conflict has been studied by United Nations for decades and now is an impasse between United Kingdom and Spain. Ceuta and Melilla is a problem connected to the previous one¹ because, according to a general mind, one state cannot have the two coasts of the Strait of Gibraltar. This has been reminded by Moroccan authorities since the independence of Morocco (1956)².

What about independence movements? The Spanish Constitution (1978) states that "National sovereignty belongs to the Spanish people, from whom all State powers emanate" (section 1.2). This is very clear. Not so clear is the Second Section: "The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation, the common and indivisible homeland of all Spaniards; it recognizes and guarantees the right to self-government of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed and the solidarity among them all". According to this section, the Constitution states that Spain is "indissoluble" but, at the same paragraph, it "recognizes and guarantees the right to self-government of the nationalities and regions". So, here there is a big problem; a problem that for years has been silenced by general society because it is better to go further and not to think about other scenarios because those "other scenarios", in the '70s and '80s could mean to return to Franco's dictatorship or even worse to a new civil war—one more in the centuries of civil wars in Spain, three in the XIXth century and one

¹See Schumacher, Spanish Eyes Turn to a Second Pillar of Hercules // The New York Times, 18th February 1985, at <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/02/18/world/spanish-eyes-turn-to-a-second-pillar-of-hercules.html>, (25th September 2013).

²"«Por ello», dijo, «pido a Dios que permita a España recuperar Gibraltar del Reino Unido en el más breve espacio de tiempo, a fin de que nosotros podamos recuperar Ceuta y Melilla también en el más breve espacio posible». See "Hassan II vincula la solución de Ceuta y Melilla a Gibraltar", El País, 26th March 1986, http://elpais.com/diario/1986/03/26/portada/512175602_850215.html (25th September 2013).

another in the XXth—. So Spanish politicians decided to agree in this difficult point and they started to build the new "state of autonomous regions" (Estado de las autonomías, in Spanish). But this was a quick solution for a very big important open-ended problem. Since then, every one of the seventeen regions that integrate Spain started to reproduce the State structure (government, Parliament, Police etc.) in their territories. More than 30 years after the Constitution, the Spanish landscape is very different and Spain in tact a unitary centralized State but a quasi-federal one. And the main problem is that some of these regions—Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia and Canary Islands— want to be a different State detached from Spain itself.

Here there are some plausible scenarios. First of them could be a reintegration in a more centralized State. Second, a return to the old Feudal Reigns where there were many little kingdoms in the Hispanic Peninsula—Castile, Galicia, Valencia, Aragon, Navarra, etc—. Third, a new scenario where under the kingdom of Spain these territories see their traditions—language, culture, History, etc— respected, even more than now³. The fourth scenario should be one with new independent States. Here, in the last scenario, there are more possibilities depending on the relationship in the next future with Spain and the European Union.

The second challenge for Spain in this century is the economic situation. This issue depends many on the political environment, on how the territorial question will be resolved. Nowadays, with political stability, thanks to the People Party (PP) overwhelming majority until 2015, the economic situation is improving. But Spain has based its model of economic growing on the real state building sector; that must be changed. In a globalized economy, Spain cannot be competitive with other countries or enterprises if is based on that sector. Spain must offer new perspectives for foreign investment. Although it seems very difficult the economic recovery with a rate of 26% of unemployment, which means six million people without working and more than 1.300.000 families where no one of their members is working or perceiving subsidy, 2014 will be a very good year for macroeconomic figures; for the families, it is necessary to wait for another two years more.

The next challenges for Spain were well described by the National Security Strategy 2013⁴. It identifies twelve main threats and other accelerators or precipitators named "risk multipliers" by Spanish Government. The threats for Spanish security are the proliferation of armed conflicts especially in the nearer area, North Africa and Mediterranean Sea, terrorism, cyberthreats, organized crime, economic and financial instability, energy vulnerability, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, irregular migratory flows, espionage, emergencies and disasters, the vulnerability of maritime space, the vulnerability of critical infrastructures and essential services. Those are the main threats. The risk multipliers are, among others: "climate change, poverty, inequality, ideological extremism, demographic imbalances and the spread of the misuse of new technology which, although not risks

³It is necessary to remind that many people suffer discrimination penalties and fines in Catalonia for speaking in Spanish and not in Catalanian. See "Artur Mas multa a 97 comercios por no rotular en catalán en Barcelona", La Gaceta, 16th April 2012, at <http://www.intereconomia.com/noticias-gaceta/cataluna/artur-mas-multa-97-comercios-por-no-rotular-catalan-2011-20120416>, retrieved on 26th September 2013. See also Garat, Ketty: "Duran Lleida niega la realidad: «Es posible escolarizar en castellano», Es Radio, 13th September 2011, at <http://www.libertaddigital.com/sociedad/2011-09-13/duran-lleida-niega-la-realidad-es-posible-escolarizar-en-castellano-1276435193/> (26th September 2013).

⁴See The National Security Strategy: Sharing a Common Project, at http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/NR/rdonlyres/9EE78C07-C971-440B-B297-3ABDD6394454/0/EstrategiaSeguri-dad_BAJA_julio.pdf (28th September 2013).

or threats in themselves, may trigger or worsen them"⁵. All of those threats are very important for the security of the state, and there is no hierarchy among them; energy security, food security or economic instability is as important as terrorism or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Terrorism was the main threat during the 80s and 90s because of ETA separatist movement. They were very cruel terrorists, very sanguinary, with 3 people dead per week during the worst years of their activity. Almost one thousand people have been killed by those criminals. Many milliards were extorted by the criminal band. But the main focus for Spanish Security Services is no more ETA although they have not surrendered, they decided stop killing in 2009⁶, but Islamist terrorist groups, among them Al Qaeda and their branch offices or outsourced partners, especially in the North of Africa. Many Islamist movements are operating in Spanish land; from there, they send new members to training camps in Asia and North Africa, they work as fundraisers, they facilitate the acquiring of material for the "fight" weapons but also books, CDs, DVDs, etc. Spanish government is fighting against those criminal groups but this struggle is not easy and the counterpart is very insistent and pressing because they have other conception about what time is while for western culture yesterday is very far away, one century is very close for Arab culture. The nature of separatist terrorist groups is very clear for Spanish authorities or even for academicians, but this is not the case for Islamist terrorism.

Besides, there is another threat, following the National Security Strategy, which is the irregular migratory flows. For Spain this has been an issue of big concern, at least since the 90s. For more than decades many people has tried to arrive to the Spanish coast because once they are in the territory they are in the European Union and they thought this was enough to have a palace and a good car. Their dreams were transformed in a nightmare when they realize that they could be deported, returned to their nation of precedence; or even worse, many of them died in the Sahara desert, or in the sea in front of the coasts of the Canary Islands or of Andalusia. It is not difficult to see nowadays many sub-Saharan people trying to jump the border between Spain and Morocco in Ceuta or Melilla. Their desperation reflects the economic distance between their incomes and the average wage salary in Spain: the GDP of Spain is fourteen times higher than the Moroccan one.

Linked to this issue, there is another problem. According to UN Population Division, "In 2050, Spain will be the country with the highest percentage of old people in the world"⁷. The Spanish population will decrease by 9.4 million in the next 50 years. The replacement rate is 2,1 children per woman, but Spain will maintain—in the best expectancies—that rate below 1,8. Since the 70s, the tendency in Spain has been decreasing and in 2011 it was 1,36. This is a problem of big concern for some sociologists in Spain but not for authorities.

III. STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the other hand, Spain has been growing in many aspects in the last four decades, since the Stabilization Plan (1959) which set the basis for

⁵Ibidem, p. 3.

⁶See Tremlett, Giles and Davies, Lizzy: "ETA blamed for death of French policeman in shoot-out near Paris", The Guardian, 17th March 2010, at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/17/france-police-death-eta-blamed>, retrieved on 28th September 2013. See also "Timeline: ETA campaign", BBC News, 20th October 2011, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11181982>, (28th September 2013).

⁷Ver Bosch. Spain faces massive decline in population // BMJ, 1st April 2000.

Years	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	2040-2045	2045-2050
Total fertility (children per woman)	1,50	1,57	1,62	1,67	1,71	1,74	1,77	1,79

economic growth during the 60s and the political change during the 70s. In 1978, Spanish people voted and passed a new Constitution in referendum, which is the current Constitution. That legal framework was yielded amid a big consensus among all political, social and economic forces. According to that “the political form of the Spanish State is the Parliamentary Monarchy” (Section 1.3). So Spain is not nowadays a Republic, and if someone wants to change that, has to gather a huge majority of the population and political and social forces. This means that there is a very stable political system; of course, it needs some changes to avoid corruption economic inefficiency, duplicity in the Administrations and other problems. The electoral system is based in an imperfect bipartidism with two strong parties – Socialist Party (PSOE) at the center-left and People Party (PP) at the center-right and some others smaller Communist Party (IU), Unity Progress and Democracy (UPyD) many of them nationalist – catalanist like CiU or ERC, basquist like PNV, and only one pro-terrorist – Amaiur, derived from ETA.

So, following the General Systems Theory of David Easton, we can say that almost all the political sensibilities of the society are represented in the Parliament, and in consequence, all the demands and complaints can be heard by the Government, who is obliged to answer somehow to all of them if they are legitimate and they are inside the constitutional framework. If a part of the society doesn't like one governmental decision, they can express that in the mass media, on the streets, constitute associations to fight legally, without violence against that decision, make demonstrations or strikes, etcetera. This has yielded a kind of society not divided into two parts but a very cohesive one.

The weather is another good factor for Spanish economic growth. Thanks to our Mediterranean diet and our coasts and beaches we received the visit of many tourists, almost 58 million⁸. Thanks to that “industry” Spanish economy is recovering slowly.

⁸See Barreira España registró en 2012 el tercer mejor año de la historia en llegada de turistas, El País, 16th January 2013, at http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2013/01/16/actualidad/1358336183_202730.html (30th October 2013).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

As stated in the beginning of the article, it is possible to offer some plausible scenarios for Spain in this XXIst century. The most probable is that with one Spain united and integrated in a strong European Union. War is out the horizon of Europe for this century for the first time ever in History. Of course, Spain, inside the EU, will have to tackle its relationship with other world powers USA, Russia, China and India, among others, but the problems and conflicts will arise must be managed through peaceful means – mainly diplomacy and not violence or wars.

Spanish political stability is also well assured, for first time in decades. Spain has lived for two centuries a big political instability, with many civil wars and coup d'état; since the first Constitution (1812) to the last one (1978), Spain has adopted eight constitutions: 1812, 1834, 1837, 1845, 1869, 1876, 1931 and 1978⁹.

The 1978 Constitution has yielded the highest and the best and longest era of prosperity to our country.

A. A. Маркос: Испания 50 жылдан кейін: уақыт сыни-қатері алда.

Испания – бұл ежелгі ұлты бар, бірақ жас демократиялық және 35-жылдық Конституциясы бар ел. Испания бұл ғасырда ұлттың қартаюуы, индентентизм және аймақтық тұтастық сияқты уақыт сыни-қатерлермен бетпе-бет келеді. Бір жағынан, Испания – бұл Еуропалық Одақтың ішінде күшті демократиялық ел, дүние жүзі бойынша әсіресе, Жерорта теңізі ауданында бостандыққа, демократия мен адам құқықтарына ықпал етуде халықаралық бірлестікте салмақты орны бар ел.

Түйінді сөздер: Испания, шақырулар, халық, аймақтық тұтастық, саяси тұрақтылық, Еуропалық одақ, демократия, адам құқығы, халықаралық саясат, қоғам.

A. Маркос: Испания через 50 лет: вызовы будущего.

Испания – это страна со старой нацией, но с относительно молодой демократией и 35-летней Конституцией. В этом веке Испании предстоит столкнуться с такими вызовами как: старение нации, индентентизм и территориальная целостность. С другой стороны, Испания – это страна с сильной демократией внутри Европейского Союза, которая имеет глубокую приверженность международному сообществу в его содействии свободе, демократии и правам человека по всему миру, особенно района Средиземного моря.

Ключевые слова: Испания, вызовы, население, территориальная целостность, политическая стабильность, Европейский союз, демократия, права человека, международная политика, общество.

⁹See “Constituciones Españolas 1812 – 1978”, at http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/Hist_Normas/ConstEsp1812_1978 (30th October 2013).