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During his two periods of government (1996-2004), Aznar progressively modified the position of Spain in relation to the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which progressively became an instrument for the self projection of Spain in the international scene and for the internationalisation of its domestic problems. This position intensified in the last three years, and very specially in 2003, when Spain led, within the European Union, an alternative movement to that of the franco-german axis which had, as its only referent, the United States of America.

In spite of becoming the leader of the "new Europe" defined by Rumsfeld, Spain never showed itself contrary to the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Which were, then, the reasons that led Spain to search an alternative to the model proposed by France and Germany in relation to the ESDP? One of the reasons, as we analyse below, is very much related to its need to demonstrate that, in spite of having been continuously excluded from the directory of countries of the Union whose military capacity is essential for the effective development of the ESDP, Spain still remained a leader as far as defence was concerned.

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In spite of the change experienced during his eight years of government in relation to foreign policy, in his first period (1996-2000) Aznar's attention in relation to the CFSP focussed, basically, in the areas that had traditionally been linked to the Spanish foreign policy: Latin America and the Mediterranean, to which he added a new and more intensified dimension of the transatlantic relations. In a first evaluation of the CFSP, due to the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference, Aznar's government considered that the transatlantic relations or the 1995 Barcelona Conference were proves that important achievements could be reach under the "present dispositions" of the Treaty of the European Union that should allow the EU to become an actor in the international scene, "conscious as we are, though, of its limitations"<sup>1</sup>.

In the same period, and as far as defence is concerned, Aznar was in favour of a progressive development of a European Identity in Security and Defence that allowed the Union to carry out military operations in response to a crisis. This is why the Spanish position to the 1996 IGC supported the integration of the Western European Union (WEU) to the EU parallel to the development of a EU's operative capability. It is important to point out that the socialist government, in a document presented in March 1995, had been in favour of keeping the status quo in relation to the WEU by preserving the autonomous but interrelated character of both organisations<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, the Spanish will to integrate the WEU to the EU was not included in the Treaty of Amsterdam (which rather preferred to respect the wishes of the neutral countries, some of them

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<sup>1</sup> Elementos para una posición española en la Conferencia Intergubernamental de 1996, March 1996, <http://europa.eu.int/en/agenda/igc-home/ms-doc/state-es/espana.htm#ch4>

<sup>2</sup> The 1996 Intergovernmental Conference: Bases for Discussion<sup>1</sup>, Spanish position, March 6, 1995. <http://europa.eu.int/en/agenda/igc-home/ms-doc/state-es/discussn.html>

new Members at the Union). However, the Treaty included, among others, the wish expressed by Spain that the new European Identity of Security and Defence served to reinforce the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance, the preservation of consensus in relation to defence issues and the introduction of the constructive abstention.

But the real push to the development of the ESDP was given at the franco-british summit at Saint Maló, the results of which were supported by Spain, in spite of not having been invited to the summit, at the European Councils of Cologne and Helsinki (June and December 1999). In both Councils, Spain also made clear its will to be part of the hard core of countries ready to develop a European defence with the final objective of increasing the credibility and capacity of action of the Union. In the same direction, one year later, Spain supported the decision of the WEU council celebrated in Marsella (November 2000) to integrate, from the 1 of July 2001, the operative crisis management organisation of the WEU to the EU.

Since it started its second mandate (2000-2004), Spain carried out an important change in its foreign policy agenda and developed a new strategy in relation to the ESDP with a double characteristic: the introduction of Spanish domestic issues in the European agenda (fight against terrorism, transatlantic relations); and the need to demonstrate that Spain was able to speak its own voice in the international scene by leading an alternative directory to the franco-german one.

The 11 September terrorist attacks allowed Spain to internationalise one of its main domestic problems, the fight against terrorism and Aznar led the Union's reaction against the attacks towards the United States. Aznar took advantage of the Spanish Presidency of the Union, first semester of 2002, to intensify this task and succeeded in including the fight against terrorism as a field of action in the framework of the second pillar of the Union. In this sense, in the Seville European Council, 21 and 22 June 2002, the Spanish Presidency adopted a declaration that established that both the ESDP and the CFSP were to play an important role to fight against "this menace for the security of Europe"<sup>3</sup>.

During the European Convention, the Spanish government persevered in the internationalisation of terrorism by presenting a contribution in which required the need of putting into practice the security and defence aspects of the Seville mandate<sup>4</sup>, as well as the possibility of developing a military concept on defence against terrorism and other new threats. Besides, the Spanish contribution also made reference to the need of establishing a broader definition of the Petersberg tasks that included other tasks that implied the use of military means as it is the case of terrorism.

In the same document, Spain was in favour of increasing the capacity of the Union to contribute to the peace and international security by progressively being able to assume more demanding military operations of crisis management, reinforcing the command and control assets and capabilities available for EU operations, and establishing a flexible framework for different mechanisms of closer co-operation open to all Member States willing and able to move forward.

In spite of his will to contribute to the development of a unified ESDP, always on the basis of unanimity, Aznar searched alliances among EU Member States and candidate countries in order to present alternative to the French and German positions in relation to the ESDP and the European Union's position towards international conflicts (as it has been the case during the Iraq crisis). The Spanish behaviour responds to a feeling of exclusion for being considered a country of inferior category as far as military capabilities is concerned (in Ghant, for example, France, United Kingdom and Germany met some hours before the celebration of the European Council of 19 October 2001 in order to co-ordinate its military action in Afghanistan).

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<sup>3</sup> Declaración del Consejo Europeo sobre la contribución de la PESD, incluida la PESD, en la lucha contra el terrorismo, Anexo V de las Conclusiones de la Presidencia, SN200/02, Sevilla, 21 y 22 de junio de 2002

<sup>4</sup> Contribution submitted by Ms Ana Palacio, alternate member of the Convention: "European Security and Defence Policy", CONTRIB 314, CONV 706/03, Brussels, 29 April 2003.

This exclusion lead Spain to search alliances outside the Union and, more concretely, in the United States of America and the Candidate countries. Consequence of it was the letter signed by Spain in support of the USA attack in Iraq (which was also signed by the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary), and which later found the support of some more Eastern European countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia).

During the attacks and the immediate aftermath of the war, Spain counted with the support of the United Kingdom, which equilibrated, to a certain extent, the European forces in favour and against the attack. However, with the return of the United Kingdom to the project of European defence (in the 2003 winter European Council the United Kingdom supported the development of a hard core of countries for the development of a European defence), Spain was left alone leading a group of countries without enough military capability. France and Germany welcomed the United Kingdom back to the European project, conscious that no European military force is possible if it excludes one of these three countries. Spain, again, is not essential.

To conclude: in spite of the fact that in his first years of government Aznar leaded a humble Spanish foreign policy, his second period has been characterised by an attempt to lead a European foreign policy independent from Berlin and Paris and more reliable in other alliances such as the main partner of the United States in Europe, the United Kingdom, or the future Member States, what has lead to an important division of the EU. However, after more than one year of attempts, Spain has not succeeded and continues occupying a second position in the European military scene. In other words, Aznar has been able to go to the Azores to declare a war but he is still lacking the necessary military assets to being an indispensable actor in any of the operations that take place.