



Real
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de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos

**SPAIN AND LATIN AMERICA: GLOBAL VS.
BILATERAL RELATIONS¹**

Carlos Malamud

Working Paper (WP) 58/2004

1/12/2004



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Carlos Malamud *

Summary: Traditionally, Spanish foreign policy on Latin America has put global relations before bilateral ones, especially with the most important countries in the region. This bias in our diplomacy has affected bilateral relations which, though not inexistent, have not been developed systematically. Preference has been given to good, acceptable relations with Iberoamerican nations as a group, rather than stable ties with the main Latin American countries.

Traditionally, Spanish foreign policy on Latin America has put global relations¹ before bilateral ones, especially with the most important countries in the region. The philosophy behind this is that we are part of the Ibero-American Community of Nations, a theoretically supranational body made up of fraternal and equal nations². The Instituto de Cultura Hispánica and its successor, the Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, were both clear exponents of this thinking, which most notably materialized in 1990 in the form of the Ibero-American Summits system. This bias in our diplomacy has affected bilateral relations which, though not inexistent, have not been developed systematically. Preference has been given to good, acceptable relations with Ibero-American nations as a group, rather than stable ties with the main Latin American countries. Thus, the main purpose of the following pages will be to look more closely at the tension between global and bilateral concerns, in an attempt to determine which is the better option for Spanish policy on Latin America.

These comments must be considered in light of the change of government in Spain, which once again raises the question of the nature of our relations with Latin America, as well as the “obscurity” into which Latin America has fallen since the 9-11 attacks, not only for the United States, but also for the EU. Latin America today is the region of the world with the least strategic priority for Washington, despite the growing role of Hispanics on the US social and political scene. It is noteworthy that in the first televised debate between candidates George Bush and John Kerry, held in Miami and devoted to defense issues and international relations, neither of the candidates for the presidency mentioned Latin America even once, despite Miami’s significance in relations with the region and the growing weight of the Hispanic electorate. As for the new Spanish government, the greatest possible political harmonization can be expected with certain countries in the region, such as Brazil and Chile, as well as a possible shift to the left in certain countries

* Senior Analyst, Latin America, Elcano Royal Institut

¹ “Global” in the sense of the first entry in the *Diccionario de la Real Academia*, “taken as a whole”, rather than as a synonym for “multilateral”.

² This idea was initially meant to definitively abandon the concept of Spain as the *mother country* of Latin American nations, which would suggest the existence of certain politically incorrect imbalances between the old metropolis and its former colonies, rooted in a Eurocentric understanding of the relationship.

including Uruguay. Both factors, if used appropriately, could work significantly to strengthen Spain's role in Latin America.

The weight of the global approach

It is often said that Latin America is neither a conceptual, nor historic, nor social, nor political, nor economic unit and that diversity is the hallmark of its reality. We hear that Brazil cannot be compared with Nicaragua, Mexico with Paraguay or Argentina with Panama, to give only a few examples. If this was true thirty or fifty years ago, it is even truer today, as the different countries have tended to take increasingly divergent roads. If we accept this as a valid premise for this analysis, it is clear that the design of our Latin American policy must take this divergence into consideration, despite the weight of the Ibero-American community, with its common language, history and culture³. The other premise on which this work is based is that Latin America is important to Spanish foreign policy and not only as a tool for raising Spain's profile in the world – though many would question this. It is therefore essential that we now ask if the best option would be a global policy for the region, along the lines that all the governments of Spain's modern democratic period have pursued, or if stronger bilateral relations should be established with some countries, especially the major ones and those that could act as solid allies on international issues, as a way of supporting global policy.

One of the main virtues of Spanish policy on Latin America to date is that it has conceived of the region as a whole. Although this is now insufficient, there is no reason to abandon the gains made. However, the claim can no longer be made that Spanish interests in Latin America are best defended by supporting the consolidation of democratic institutions, strengthening social cohesion and promoting development and a higher standard of living. Emerging around this issue are the contradictions between principles and interests, between rhetoric and reality, making this the necessary starting point of our analysis. This is where we must begin developing a policy for Latin America, since in present circumstances there is a growing need for greater emphasis on a bilateral approach.

A global policy on Latin America is not, nor has ever been, exclusive to Spanish governments. When political parties refer to the region (which is not always the case) they often take the same approach. During the parliamentary election campaign of March 2004, the two main national parties, the PSOE and the PP, insisted on this the very few times they dealt with international issues. Also, at the conference on foreign policy and security organized by PSOE in Madrid on November 22, 2003, which focused on preparing their electoral program, there was continued insistence that the Ibero-American community of nations should be the focal point of socialist foreign policy and that the EU and Latin America should be strategic allies⁴.

During the program of speeches on the foreign policy proposals of the different Spanish political parties, leading up to the parliamentary elections of March 14, 2004, organized by the Elcano Royal Institute, both Jorge Moragas, representing PP, and Miguel Ángel Moratinos, of PSOE, made similar assessments. While Jorge Moragas said that "our entire foreign policy is imbued with Ibero-America", Miguel Ángel Moratinos affirmed that

³ See Celestino del Arenal, *La política exterior de España hacia Iberoamérica*, Madrid, 1994, and Celestino del Arenal and Alfonso Nájera, *La comunidad iberoamericana de naciones: pasado, presente y futuro de la política iberoamericana de España*, Madrid, 1992.

⁴ In this occasion, the European Parliament member Luis Yáñez said that Latin Americans themselves must decide on their integration policy.

“Ibero-America... will continue to be the natural realm of our foreign policy” and that we must recover Ibero-America as a strategic reference point for our action abroad, complementing but differentiated from, and where possible, independent of our other options”. Perhaps the most significant difference between the two proposals is that one favors greater economic liberalization, while the other encourages our companies in the region to act with greater social responsibility⁵.

A visit to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAE)⁶ in October 2004 was quite revealing. On the home page it is apparently significant that MAE distinguishes between “Foreign Policy” and “Ibero-America” as separate areas. However, while under “Foreign Policy” there is a space reserved for bilateral policies, there is none under “Ibero-America”, where areas are listed according to the subregional integration projects underway, such as Mercosur, Central America and the Andean Community of Nations (see Appendix 1), without mentioning relations between countries. This does not accurately reflect reality. Greater attention should certainly be given to the explaining the bilateral relations that now exist.

The problem is that globality is not only taking over the design of Spanish foreign policy, but is also imposing itself in political and academic circles, the latter generally tending more to study groups rather than look deeply into bilateral relations. This is clear, for example, from the following statement by Celestino del Arenal, one Spain’s foremost specialists on the Ibero-American Summits system, who also focuses on global issues, for example in his recent analysis the Latin American policy of the Aznar government. However, we must point out that his position involves not only a question of focus, but also the very nature of the reality under study: “Spain’s new Latin American policy, put in practice by the Popular government, of alignment and coordination of action with the line followed by Bush, has introduced confusion in the region regarding Spain’s role and has led to a loss of independence, and an erosion of image and prestige, as well as of the distinguishing features of our Latin American policy, especially at the Ibero-American summits, with negative effects on Spanish interests and on Spain’s influence in the region”⁷. In general, all of us who discuss this issue have done so taking Latin America as a whole, without detailing what was happening in each country, despite the fact that there were significant differences among some of them (not all countries sent troops to Iraq or took a stance against the war).

Alliances and strategic alliances

Closely related to this issue of globality is the concept of alliance or “strategic” association, which is quite often alluded to when insisting on the importance of our relationship with Latin America. In fact, desires aside, our strategic association with the region should not be with the region as a whole⁸ but with specific countries. This is true

⁵ Working document of the Elcano Royal Institute nº 10/2004 (15/III/2004), VVAA, “Elecciones generales 14-m: propuestas de política exterior”, at http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos_e/moragas.pdf and http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos_e/moratinos.pdf

⁶ <http://www.mae.es>

⁷ Celestino del Arenal, “La política exterior del gobierno socialista”, in *Política Exterior*, nº 100 (2004).

⁸ José Deniz says that in the declarations and documents issued at EU – Latin American summits and at Ibero-American summits, “we detect the existence, at least nominally and formally, of values, principles, language and shared ideas that lead us to believe that there is a desire to coordinate action on the international scene. This is how the need for a **strategic association** is defended, an association that should include economic association, political dialogue and cooperation, all based on principles of equality and alliance”, in *Las relaciones económicas entre España y América Latina: propuestas de acción*, a preparatory

for several reasons. First of all, for lack of a supranational Latin American authority to coordinate the different foreign policies of the all the countries in the region. For example, in reference to the EU – Latin America and Caribbean summit held in May 2004 in Guadalajara, Mexico, Andrés Oppenheimer commented that “while the European Union spoke through a civil servant who represented the 25 members of the EU, there were diplomats for each of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, each speaking on behalf of their countries and often arguing with each other”⁹. This point is all the more relevant when we consider certain recent disputes among Latin American countries, such as one between Cuban diplomats and their peers from Mexico, Peru and Panama, which resulted in the temporary withdrawal of ambassadors.

Oppenheimer’s comments are also pertinent to the idea of “Bi-regional Strategic Association” between the EU and Latin America. This idea was first suggested at the first EU – Latin America and Caribbean summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in late June 1999. Later, in relation to the second summit, held in Madrid, the European Parliament passed a resolution on global association, based on the report “Global association and a common strategy for relations between the EU and Latin America”, also known as the Salafranca report, in reference to its author, the member of the European Parliament representing the Popular Party, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra.

The lack of global coordination can also be seen at the subregional level, where there are great impediments and obstacles to negotiations between the EU and Mercosur, the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and the Central American countries; rivalries both old and new (such as those between Argentina and Brazil despite the efforts of their presidents)¹⁰; ideological objections to increased free trade (especially visible in the case of the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, although this is not the only case); persistence of certain protectionist barriers or *tics*; and contradictions between populist agendas and others more focused on the development of democracy and the market. Also worth keeping in mind is Argentina’s whimsical desire, especially clear at the beginning of the government of president Kirchner, of including Cuba in Mercosur, ignoring the fact that this regional association has a democratic clause which the Castro dictatorship obviously does not meet. Added to this is the tenacious resistance of almost all Latin America countries to giving up any amount of sovereignty, no matter how tiny – something necessary for any subregional integration process to advance.

document for the working meeting “Spain and Latin America: where are we headed?”, organized by the Secretariat for Ibero-American Cooperation (SECIB) and the Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset, 29/VI/2004. The question that comes up once again is how to determine clearly who the equals are: all the countries that make up the Ibero-American community, the theoretical partner in the strategic association, or the two countries that sign a bilateral agreement?

⁹ Andrés Oppenheimer, “La hora de la diplomacia multinacional”, *El Nuevo Herald*, 25/VII/2004.

¹⁰ It is well known that presidents Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva and Néstor Kirchner made great efforts to strengthen Mercosur after the crisis resulting from the devaluation of the real and the attitude of Carlos Menem. These efforts have given rise to several initiatives, including the so-called Buenos Aires Consensus, signed by both leaders in October 2003. However, this ambitious document, which attempted to go beyond the so-called Washington Consensus, very quickly came to nothing. At the same time, and despite rhetorical efforts, reality has proven to be complicated, as can be seen in the recent, profound disagreements between Argentina and Brazil over household appliances. At a deeper level, the problem is worsened by the difficult personal relationship between the two leaders. See Enrique Alberola, “Lula, Argentina y el futuro de las reformas en América Latina”, ARI nº 137/2004 (3/IX/2004), <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/568.asp>

This is why we must choose clearly between our main partners and allies in the hemisphere, since neither Chile, Colombia, Mexico or Brazil is like Cuba or Venezuela, nor do they represent the same things. Their attitude at international forums and the positions they defend in terms of the Spanish diplomatic line of respect for democracy and human rights reveals the latter two to be notoriously unreliable, in contrast to the more reliable and, above all, predictable, attitude of the other four countries. The attitudes of the different governments to Spanish policy on the terrorism of ETA are very revealing in this regard¹¹. Carlos Solchaga recently spoke in favor of a more bilateral focus, in which the Spanish government, in its regional policy would “discriminate” against countries that adopt erroneous economic policies¹². It must be pointed out that this is, in fact, the position of the current government, which insists on “establishing... strategic associations with the largest countries that have the greatest capacity for regional leadership –Brazil and Mexico–, as well as Argentina... and with Chile, because it is the success story of the region and likely the country with which we have the greatest affinities”¹³. This policy was initiated by the former administration, which fomented a strategic alliance with Brazil. All in all, the problem is not so much the strategic alliances but rather the content given to each one, plus the fact that if strategic alliances are finally signed with each and every member country in today’s Ibero-American system, they will cease to be strategic.

Emphasis on bilateral relations

If strategic associations are not with all countries at once, but rather are separate arrangements with specific countries, this requires a clear definition of our foreign policy goals for the region as a whole in order to choose our most privileged interlocutors. We must therefore work harder on establishing bilateral agendas with the main countries in the area (such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela). This work has already been largely completed¹⁴ and it would not be necessary to start from scratch, although it was felt there was no need to advance further, given the lack of significant conflicts that would have necessitated taking important steps. We must also keep in mind the changes that are occurring in the region which already affect relations with the Ibero-American Community. On one hand, Mexico is more focused on its relations with the United States and Canada in the context of the FTA and its involvement in Central America (Plan Puebla-Panamá), despite its recent efforts to rebalance its relations with South America¹⁵. On the other, Brazil is playing an increasingly decisive role in South American regional leadership and is starting to become an important international player¹⁶. Then there are the Caricom countries, which have their own agenda but influence some Ibero-American countries such as Cuba and Venezuela. This could be seen during the Haitian crisis in early 2004, which led to the Bertrand Aristide’s fall from

¹¹ Carlos Malamud, “Las relaciones bilaterales hispano-argentinas y el terrorismo etarra”, ARI n. 116/2004 (30/VI/2004), <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/543.asp>

¹² At the 3rd Conference on Europe and America, Fundación EuroAmérica and ABC, ABC, 18/IX/2004.

¹³ Appearance of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for Ibero-America, Bernardino León Gross, on September 13, 2004, before the Senate Commission on Ibero-American Affairs; *Cortes Generales, Diario de Sesiones del Senado*, VIII Legislatura, Comisiones, n. 44 (2004), pp. 4 and 5.

¹⁴ This is the case, for example, of the Peace and Cooperation treaties signed by the Latin American countries. Between 1988 and 1995, 16 bilateral treaties were signed.

¹⁵ Many South Americans, especially Brazilians, say that Mexico has now left Latin America, which is quite an arguable claim.

¹⁶ Brazil is clearly in favor of expanding Mercosur and establishing a South American community of nations. Its leadership in the peace operation in Haiti, as well as president Lula’s initiative against hunger reveal a will to go even further.

power. It is clear that greater Spanish involvement in the region is not irrelevant to the plans of any of these countries and that this, in turn, could affect bilateral relations.

This concern for bilateral issues has begun to affect US Latin American policy, since the increasingly heterogeneous nature of Latin America is complicating the implementation of global policies. As Rosendo Fraga said, the Bush administration's policy on Latin America is prioritizing bilateral relations over multilateral ones. This can be seen both in security and defense issues and in trade. The new defense policy announced by Washington in 2002 set out to establish tactical coalitions appropriate to the circumstances with four countries: Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Colombia, while deceleration of the FTAA negotiations has encouraged bilateral trade negotiations with certain countries, such as Colombia, Peru and Ecuador¹⁷.

Given the legacy of "egalitarian relations" with the Latin American countries as a group, any movement in another direction could cause a series of undesired effects or lead to endless affronts to governments or societies that may feel affected. This occurred, for example, in late October 2003, when the president at the time, José María Aznar, visited president Luis Inácio "Lula" da Silva in Brasilia, to inform him of the strategic alliance that from then on would guide Spanish-Brazilian relations. President Aznar took advantage of this occasion to express Spain's understanding of Brazil's long-standing demand to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council¹⁸. Beyond any use the Brazilian ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaratí) could make of the announcement (i.e. reference to "support" for its demand, rather than "understanding"), the news was clearly disconcerting and somewhat irritating for Argentina and Mexico, two countries that also aspire to a presence on the Security Council and which felt abandoned by Spain's new strategic alliance with Brazil¹⁹.

The repercussion of undesired effects involves the perception that some Latin American countries have of their relations with Spain, which could be characterized as "coffee for all". A common idea is that these relations, more global than bilateral in nature, are a "free ride". By this, I mean that the dominant idea is that Spain moves in consonance with the very existence of the Ibero-American community, a reality that it wants to encourage at any price in order to raise its own international profile. This leads to claims that "the [Ibero-American] summits... are essentially a privileged instrument for developing our relations with Ibero-America"²⁰. This reasoning suggests that maintaining relations with Spain is a favor some of these countries are doing us, and that they are totally free from giving anything in return. In other words, since Spain is the party interested in boosting the Community, Spain is the one who must garner the favor of the Latin American countries – very often paying for it – and not vice versa. For this reason, our Latin American policy should focus much more on including bilateral policies, in order to develop better relations with Ibero-America and improve our participation in the summits.

¹⁷ Personal message from Rosendo Fraga.

¹⁸ Luis Felipe Seixas Correa (ed.), *La palabra del Brasil en las Naciones Unidas 1946-1995*, Brasilia, FUNAG, 1995.

¹⁹ Carlos Malamud, "América Latina y España. Relaciones manifiestamente mejorables", *Nueva Revista de Política, Cultura y Arte*, nº 92 (March/April 2004).

²⁰ Appearance of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for Ibero-America, Bernardino León Gross, on September 13, 2004, before the Senate Commission on Ibero-American Affairs; *Cortes Generales, Diario de Sesiones del Senado*, VIII Legislatura, Comisiones, nº 44 (2004), p. 17.

The “coffee for all” policy has led certain Latin American governments and political and social sectors to apply pressure or practices that sometimes come very close to blackmail, because they are, and always have been, backed by high expectations of equality. This is the case, for example, of the request by Bolivian *cocalero* leader Evo Morales to the governments of Spain and Brazil, asking them to support the oil sector reform promoted by his party, MAS (Movement to Socialism), which would increase taxes on the sector by up to 50%²¹. The breakdown of the legal framework undoubtedly affects Repsol-YPF, one of the main companies in the country. A similar situation is that of the recent meeting that president Chávez demanded to have with Spanish Defense minister, José Bono, at which the Venezuelan leader apparently asked for boats, computer equipment and security collaboration²², despite Venezuela’s opposition to the sale of Spanish tanks to Colombia.

Defining bilateral agendas better and monitoring them more closely would lead to greater commitment by the parties involved and would help avoid problems and undesired effects. This happened when president Aznar visited Mexico on February 21, 2003, before war broke out in Iraq, to win the Mexican vote in what was supposed to be one of the crucial Security Council votes on the continuation of inspections. Although responsibility for the design of the visit fell to the Moncloa, with little or no participation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, things could have been done differently. The visit was badly designed, badly planned and badly presented to the Mexicans. It was conditioned in such a way that it did not, and never could have, obtained the desired results. The trip was made late (it should not have been left to the last moment) and with a poorly chosen itinerary. Mexico should have been the final destination or part of a voyage that included a visit to president Lagos in Santiago de Chile. Under no circumstances should it have been a mere stop on the way to Texas, which, to make things worse, was once part of Mexico. The symbolic implications of this attitude, in a country like Mexico, so receptive to magical realism, are manifold. To top it off, the anti-Americanism of a good part of the country’s population is legendary – far greater than in Spain. The photo of president Vicente Fox dressed in sportswear, receiving president Aznar in a suit and tie, neatly summed up the displeasure the Mexicans wanted to make clear²³. Greater emphasis on multilateral concerns should lead to greater coordination between Spain and Latin American countries in international bodies, specifically the Security Council. Something similar can be said of the interview held at the last moment between Defense Minister José Bono and president Chávez. Although the meeting got much less public exposure than the one in Mexico, it clearly gave a degree of legitimacy to the Bolivian government that did not necessarily coincide with the Spanish government’s objectives.

²¹ Morales said that MAS is developing “an international strategy” to be able to meet with the presidents of Spain and Brazil, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, and to ask for their understanding of the new scenario in the sector. Having received the backing of his traditional ally, the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, Morales wants Chávez to convince Lula to accept the change of rules of the game in Bolivia, and for Lula to do the same with Rodríguez Zapatero. “There are main, underlying issues that we must discuss, especially with Spain, if we go back 500 years”, he commented ironically. According to Morales, MAS is not after “the expulsion, confiscation or expropriation of the transnationals. We are saying that the contracts must be based on the principles of justice and equality. (The companies) must not pillage”. (EFE news agency release, La Paz, September 28, 2004.

²² *El País*, 25/IX/2004.

²³ Carlos Malamud, ARI (21/IV/2003), “España y América Latina tras la crisis iraquí”, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/269.asp>

The Ibero-American Summit system

In theory, the state of the Ibero-American community is nearly ideal. As Yago Pico de Coaña correctly points out: “There are no border wars, the continent is denuclearized, through the Ibero-American summits principles have been established that tend to oblige heads of state and government leaders to comply with, and enforce compliance with, standards that are very much in line with the international agenda. Among many other things, Ibero-America gives its unreserved backing to free trade, debt reduction, an end to export barriers to developing countries, enabling better market access, the International Criminal Court, the abolition of anti-personnel mines, sustainable development, the environment, shared responsibility for drug-related issues, including the fight against money laundering, production, trafficking, consumption and the exportation of precursors, the fight against terrorism and trans-national delinquency in all its forms, cultural diversity and the principles of the United Nations Charter”. This author adds, however, that “The Ibero-American community must work together in a dignified way to successfully deal with our problems of: corruption, impunity, governability, competitiveness, fairness and injustice resulting from the lack of a minimally effective use of the justice system”²⁴. The huge gap between the declarations and the reality has led more than one observer to question the efficiency and validity of the system.

The reform of the Ibero-American Summits system is a priority issue. The creation of the General Secretariat has raised the question of the system’s contents. What function should the General Secretariat serve? What issues can and should be discussed there? Having decided that the first person to head the General Secretariat must be a Latin American, the thorny question remains as to the Secretariat’s political mission. Can the summits and the General Secretariat be used to advance toward greater political harmonization among all the member countries of the community, as the government wishes²⁵? Will we stick to the politically correct, dealing with issues easily accepted by any government, regardless of their political hue, such as social inequality, poverty, hunger and education in the region? Or will we move on to more sensitive questions, such as the existence of authoritarian practices, the emergence of populist proposals and a deeper discussion of participative and representative democracy? Making headway on specific policies and situations leads us, once again, into the realm of the bilateral.

Another question, which on this occasion warrants less attention than in the past, and which is not in any way a priority, is how often the summits should be held. A certain consensus has developed that a yearly summit would be best, enabling each country, especially the small ones, to hold their own event. However, it would seem that for the moment a biannual summit would be more appropriate, because of the effort involved in organizing them and the scarce results obtained at many of the ministerial meetings leading up to these events²⁶. This is a matter the new General Secretary must deal with as a priority, because with new and relevant content, the summits could clearly become an annual event.

²⁴ Yago Pico de Coaña, “El valor de los principios en la comunidad Iberoamericana”, mimeo, p. 11. A critical overview of the summits can be found in Raúl Sanhueza, “El sistema de Cumbres iberoamericanas”, in Tomás Mallo and L. Ruiz Jiménez (coords.), *El sistema de Cumbres iberoamericanas. Balance de una década y estrategias de consolidación*, Madrid, 2002.

²⁵ Celestino del Arenal, “El papel de España en las Cumbres”, working document of the Elcano Royal Institute, DT nº 37/2004 (28/VI/2004), <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/124.asp>

²⁶ Many ministers do not attend the meetings. They often send even third-level civil servants.

Notwithstanding all the above, the underlying issue remains: Though it appears to be a paradox, the summits will be useful to Spain only if the Latin American countries start to adopt them as their own. If, on the contrary, they continue to appear to be simply an instrument of our policy toward the region, they will be very short-lived, whether or not they have a General Secretariat or hold annual meetings. In this regard, the precedent set by the Secretariat for Ibero-American Cooperation (SECIB) is cause for alarm. Of the SECIB budget for 2004 (US\$2,264,756) Spain contributed 80%, (US\$1,811,804.80). By September 30, 2004, only US\$1,876,348.20 (82.85% of total dues) had been paid, or an extra US\$64,543.40 – a ridiculous amount by any standard. Only Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Portugal had paid. It is worth noting the contribution of different countries as percentages: Argentina, 3.13%; Brazil, 5.45%; Mexico, 4.23%; and Portugal a tiny 1.47% (see Appendix 2). How will the financing of the General Secretariat and all its administrative structure be worked out? Will it continue functioning in the future as it has up to now?

What policy do we want for Latin America?

In fact, as we will see throughout this text, it is becoming necessary first to define a clear strategy for our policy on Latin America. This has been lacking since the beginning of Spain's transition to democracy, obscured by Ibero-Americanist policy and the rhetoric of privileged relations. Increasing differentiated bilateral agendas will make it possible to identify the factors that most clearly indicate the region's diversity. But this should be done while also developing a Latin American agenda that flexibly combines the global and the bilateral, clearly taking advantage of the competitive advantage of a common language and culture, and that also takes into consideration certain political factors associated with the Ibero-American summits. This would help ensure that no one feels left out.

The bias in favor of global concerns has repeated itself with all Spanish governments since the transition, regardless of their ideology. Among the many aspects of continuity in our policy on Latin America, one of the most significant is the solemn declaration by the president of each new government that relations with Latin America will be a priority – practically the highest priority – without making it very clear what this means. This idea is not shared by Spanish public opinion, which considers Europe to be the geographical or geopolitical area that Spain must consider in its international relations. According to the Barometer of the Elcano Royal Institute (BRIE), of November 2002, 62% of those interviewed consider Europe to be the priority, while 73% consider it to be one of the top two priorities. Latin America is a distant second with 11% considering it the top priority and 39% putting it in the top two²⁷.

The priorities of Spain's foreign policy must be clarified, along with what role Latin America plays in it, since there is a clear contradiction between the rhetoric on the "Ibero-American" priority and reality. For obvious reason, the EU and the United States play a more important role than Latin America, but so does North Africa, where economic and migratory issues mix. We must also consider the role of the Far East, including China and India, two countries fully immersed in accelerated growth. One of the many paradoxes of the Latin or Ibero-American priority is the fact that the only parliamentary commission that deals with these affairs is in the Senate – the Commission on Ibero-American Affairs – and not in the Congress, which means that the latter lacks an appropriate place to deal with issues that theoretically are among the most important in our foreign policy.

²⁷ Barometer of the Elcano Royal Institute, XI/2002, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/200211brie.asp>

It is essential that we dispel any doubts regarding our strategy, which must necessarily consider not only Spanish interests in the region, but also a detailed analysis of what Latin Americans want (this, too, varies significantly from country to country) from Europe in general and from Spain in particular. On this point, it would not be a bad thing to be sincere about the real importance of Latin America within Spanish foreign policy as a whole. This would begin by acknowledging that Latin America is in fact a priority, but not the highest one for our diplomacy, as was plain to see on the issue of sending troops to Haiti. Despite the special petition by the presidents of Chile, Ricardo Lagos, and of Brazil, Luis Inácio “Lula” da Silva, the initial decision was to send a “decaffeinated” contingent to join the multinational force, without direct subordination to Brazilian command. However, the profile and size of our contingent increased significantly when it was reported that a Spanish-Moroccan combat group would be sent under Spanish control. The point is not to question the existence of a joint Spanish-Moroccan force, which could be useful for other Spanish foreign policy objectives, but simply to point out that responded in a much better way to the requests of our Latin American partners. This obviously relates to the issue of our foreign policy priorities, as well as a clear definition of our goals.

Keeping in mind the statements made by the president of the government to the effect that relations with Latin America must not be limited to economic investment, we must begin by establishing our policy toward Latin America within a clear and decisive framework of support for democracy. This must not be limited to institutional reforms (governability and growth) and must make it clear that the democracy to be defended is representative democracy. And we would have to include the defense of human rights on the agenda. Although this is an issue that in the short run weakens the government’s autonomy, since it depends on the reactions of the governments called into question, in the long run there would undoubtedly be advantages in focusing on a coherent line of action. However, one thing is to focus relations with Latin America on economic investment and the performance of our companies and quite another thing to strike them off the bilateral agenda. This is something felt daily in Argentina, given the insistence of president Kirchner’s government on putting off a negotiated solution with the Spanish service companies. On these issues and others, the problem is the scope of our action, especially in *de facto* situations or *faits accomplis*. Opposing a coup d’état or a government that emerges from one is quite a different thing than dealing with the Cuban problem²⁸ or with the anti-democratic path of the government of Hugo Chávez.

In a speech he gave in mid-September, president Rodríguez Zapatero emphasized the political importance of Latin America for his government and suggested there could be a “second wave” of Spanish investment in the region. For the president, “conditions are right in business circles for a second wave of investment, this time led by medium-size and small companies”. The first one was led by banks and big companies like Repsol, Endesa

²⁸ An interesting debate, with which there has not been much progress, has to do with Cuba’s participation in the Ibero-American summits system. There are two opposing stances regarding this. On one side are those who see one of the great achievements of the summits system to be Cuba’s participation in a unique forum, unlike the OAS (Organization of American States) or the Summits of the Americas, from which the Castro dictatorship has been excluded. This argument, particularly in use since the early nineties, when the summits began, affirms that this is a way of encouraging Cuba to move toward democracy. In light of the few advances, if any, in this direction, we can consider the opposing stance, the one favoring Cuba’s exclusion from the system. This is, however, impossible to bring about immediately, since it would mean risking the eventual collapse and demise of the summits, given the predictable opposition of those directly involved, as well as Venezuela, Argentina and then other countries such as Mexico and Brazil.

and Telefónica. This undertaking would require the development of “coordinating mechanisms to enable companies to work with a stable horizon, legal security and transparency, and contribute to the modernization of the different countries”. To make this happen, the Spanish government is willing to make significant investments of money, cooperation and diplomacy to strengthen existing relations and pave the way for SMEs to do business in Latin America²⁹. Certainly, to support greater participation of a higher quality by Spanish companies in the region, especially SMEs, very clear messages of support must be sent out to the business sector. To do the contrary would lend itself to misinterpretations that could only harm the Spanish position in bilateral relations.

Defining our Latin American policy should help determine if the resources now available for Spanish action for the region and in the region are the most appropriate. In terms of the commonly-stated goal of exercising a kind of regional leadership, or at least having a relevant presence in the continent, it is obvious that these resources are insufficient, though the perception may be otherwise in some cases. Spain has a clear advantage over most EU countries, with working embassies in every Spanish-speaking Latin American country, plus Brazil. Things look quite different, however, if instead of our European partners we compare ourselves with the United States, especially in terms of the size of the embassies in each Latin American country. Bolivia and Colombia may be two extreme cases, but it could be argued that given the importance the US administration attributes to fighting narco-traffic, the comparison is irrelevant. However, in any other country in the region, the difference between the number of workers in one embassy and the other is simply staggering.

The issue of economic and human resources must not be limited to the size and number of staff at our embassies, but also which agencies in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation should deal with it. Is the existence of a Secretariat of State for Foreign and Ibero-American Policy sufficient or should there be a Latin America Secretariat that could be developed from the General Office for Ibero-America? Another change that would be the best proof that Latin America really is a priority for the new government would be to encourage a name change for the General Office, which should be for “Latin America”. This would demonstrate Spain’s commitment to the region and, above all, calling Latin Americans by the name that they use to refer to themselves would be a gesture of respect and appreciation³⁰.

As I have already pointed out, it paradoxical that a country like Spain, which has no problem saying “Girona”, rather than “Gerona”, “Araba”, instead of “Alava” or “A Coruña”, rather than “La Coruña”, can be so reluctant to systematically use “Latin America”, instead of “Ibero-America”. At the same time, we must keep in mind that the other European partner in the Ibero-American system uses the concept of Latin America with no problem of kind. The problem with the term Ibero-America is that it refers to two different realities, causing considerable confusion. On one hand, Ibero-America is the sum of the Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking Latin American countries, plus Spain and Portugal (thus the Ibero-American summits), and on the other, it is the expression used in

²⁹ Speech given by president José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero at closing session of ABC’s international conference on Europe and America, Madrid, 17/IX/2004, at <http://www.la-moncloa.es/>

³⁰ Only the Brazilians prefer South America. The use of Ibero-America as the politically correct term, has not been adopted by any political current or ideological sector, though it is true that there is more resistance to the concept of “Latin America” in the Popular Party and its circles.

Spain, rather than Latin America.³¹ It is true that many Latin Americans use the term Ibero-America when they visit Spain, but this is mostly a matter of visitor's politeness. The concept is actually used very little on the other side of the Atlantic³².

The tools available to strengthen our presence in Latin America are not limited to diplomacy or business. In recent years, Ibero-American societies of all kinds have proliferated and this should be systematically supported, as is the case in the university world³³. Less attention is given to the audio-visual media, both public and private, that broadcast to the region from Spain. Reviewers and critics usually focus on Televisión Española (TVE) and its international channel, although Antena 3 also has its own programming for Latin America. It would be very useful to adjust some of the content of TVE's programming – within the framework appropriate to a television network that provides open broadcasts to a mass audience – to Spanish policy objectives in Latin America. Although Radio Exterior receives less attention, it would be very useful to take better advantage of its enormous potential, since it already plays a very important role in all Latin American countries.

An old academic controversy raises the question of the differences between Pan-Americanism and Hispano-Americanism or Ibero-Americanism. The great difference between the two is the presence – or absence – of the United States. In recent years, as a result of the Aznar government's strong bid for cross-Atlantic ties, this dispute reached our country, although it has all but vanished in recent months. The underlying question is whether closer ties with the United States favors Spanish interests in Latin America. As is the case with all issues that involve Iraq in any way, there are two possible conflicting answers: yes and no. However, a still deeper question that has been debated very little is that of acting in Latin America through possible alliances with countries from outside the region. The United States is a likely partner and it clear that this would be a useful alliance in many ways, despite the fact that Latin American governments do not need any intermediary to negotiate with Washington³⁴. But the United States is not the only option available. Canada is another and, like the United States, it is a member of the Organization of American States (OAS), where Spain is an observer. Then there are the other Pan-

³¹ Ibero-America and Latin America are widely used as synonyms. See, for example, the appearance of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for Ibero-America, Bernardino León Gross, on Sept. 13, 2004, before the Commission on the Senate committee on Ibero-American Affairs; *Cortes Generales, Diario de Sesiones del Senado*, VIII Legislatura, Comisiones, nº 44 (2004), pp. 15 and 16. This can also be seen in the title of the "Instituto Interuniversitario de Iberoamérica y Portugal" of the universities of Salamanca and Valladolid.

³² Carlos Malamud, "América Latina y España. Relaciones manifiestamente mejorables", *Nueva Revista de Política, Cultura y Arte*, nº 92 (March/April 2004), pp. 18-27. Along the same lines, I would point out the numerous Spanish public and private institutions that insist on writing "Méjico", despite wanting to have more or less privileged relations with "México". A recent article in the Mexican newspaper *La Crónica de Hoy* says: "It's just no use. No matter how much we insist, the Spanish continue to write "Méjico" instead of "México" and we "mejicanos" are "sudacas" (*Translator's note: a highly pejorative term*) or, with luck, "sudamericanos" or "centroamericanos", but never "norteamericanos", September 20, 2004, <http://www.cronica.com.mx>

³³ An example of this is Universia, <http://www.universia.net/>, sponsored by the Santander Central Hispano bank. This project works in ten countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico and Venezuela), "with 724 universities participating as stakeholders in the portal, which is being developed in each country to foment the dissemination of university-related information, the development of new technologies applicable to education, educational and technological innovation and educational and inter-university communications platforms throughout the Ibero-American space".

³⁴ On more than one occasion, direct intervention by José María Aznar unblocked negotiations between the Bush administration and a Latin American country.

American institutions. It is true that the OAS is held in very low esteem by regional public opinion, but it continues to be a venue for Pan-American negotiations and coordination in which we should have a greater presence. Within Europe, Portugal and the United Kingdom are two immediate reference points.

Latin America's disappearance from the US agenda after 9-11, and also from the European agenda, presents the best possible opportunity for Spain to increase its presence in the region. For the Bush administration, the strategic importance of Latin America is minimal and for some European countries, the priority is the ACP countries, through the Lomé Convention, not Latin America. This could lead to the conclusion that greater Spanish presence in the region would not be compete with, but rather would complement US interests, which now have many open fronts in the rest of the world. This would enable the government to increase its cooperation with the United States – which can be more difficult in other areas of today's complex international situation. Greater involvement in Haiti could be a first step. There are, and there will continue to be, other issues, such as human rights in Cuba (Chile's position when the United Nations voted is worth considering)³⁵, the defects of Venezuela's democracy, the violence in Colombia, the ingovernability of some Andean countries and the tensions between Chile and Bolivia, etc. In all these areas, the United States would welcome greater involvement by Spain.

The question of alliances also affects other aspects of Spanish activity and Spanish presence in the American continent. How interested would we be, for example, to join Mexico in spreading the use of Spanish in the United States³⁶? On this point, however, we should consider Mexico's interest in the matter and whether or not Mexico and Spain have common interests in the United States. We could also consider joining Argentina in a similar plan for Brazil, given the lack of Spanish teachers in that country. It is clear that the alliances should not be limited to the American continent and that linguistic and cultural cooperation could be increased in areas where there are no potential conflicts between Spain and Latin American countries, such as Eastern Europe or Asia.

Spain, the EU and Latin America

A fundamental aspect of our policy toward Latin America involves the EU, especially considering the "Europeanization" of our foreign policy priorities, even if these increasingly are internal problems, rather external ones. Spain has generally been seen as a bridge between Europe and Latin America. However, Spain must accept its dual identity: a European identity that no one questions, as well as its Ibero-American identity. The two identities are obviously not mutually exclusive; rather, they support one another: the European identity (and membership) strengthens Spain's role in Latin America, while the Ibero-American identity (and membership) strengthens Spain's role in Europe. For quite some time, especially when Manuel Marín and Abel Matutes were European commissioners, Spain took good advantage of the EU's Latin American policy. In recent years, however, several opportunities have been missed that would have enabled Spain to raise its profile in the region. Among these: Spain's participation in the group of countries

³⁵ Carlos Malamud, "América Latina y los derechos humanos en Cuba", ARI nº 75/2004 (26/IV/2004), <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/487.asp>. The expulsion of Jorge Moragas, member of parliament for the Popular Party, and of two Dutch parliamentarians, demonstrates the limits of any negotiation with the Cuban government.

³⁶ Jaime Otero, "De Bogotá a Rosario. La lengua española y la política regional de España en América Latina", working document of the Elcano Royal Institute, DT nº 36/2004 (25/VI/2004), <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/123.asp>

friendly with General Secretary of the OAS for Venezuela; and in Colombia. It is true that in Venezuela the group was doomed to inactivity from the start, but Spanish authorities never gave it the necessary importance or took any clear lead in the process. In Colombia, despite stated support of president Uribe's policies, active cooperation policies were not implemented to bring the EU as a whole on board.

Europeanizing Latin American policy, or at least some key points on the agenda, has its pros and its cons. Among the pros is the greater force of joint action by the EU, compared to positions held by Spain alone, and the commitment of the other member countries. Among the cons is the fact that any agreement reached will always be the product of a compromise among 25 members, putting distance between the typical Spain position and the typical European position, obviously watering down the initial proposal in order to reach a consensus. Also, subsequent changes in direction will be slower and more measured. There could also be a high price to pay when there is any change of government and this is something that should be considered, since this has already happened with Cuba. In any case, it is always preferable to Europeanize the agenda than not to do so, although the points to be included should be based on prior agreement among the main Spanish political parties.

Regarding European policy toward Latin America and Spain's role in this, there is an important question that has to do with the line of negotiation of treaties of association with Latin America, originally approved at the European Council in Essen in December 1994. The first summit of the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1999, served to institutionalize the existing relations with Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), the Andean Community of Nations (CAN: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela), Central America, Mexico and Chile. As a corollary to the idea of the Bi-regional Strategic Association, decided in Rio de Janeiro, the EU to date has clearly preferred to negotiate with regional groups such as Mercosur, CAN and Central America, calling these bi-regional associations. However, the great paradox is that the only two treaties³⁷ signed to date are with specific countries, Chile and Mexico, and not with any regional group either consolidated or in formation. In this regard, negotiations with Mercosur are now at a delicate point, while those with CAN and Central America are advancing, albeit very slowly.

The issue is complex and merits more discussion since, on one hand, the European position has helped foment integration processes already underway, saving some from total collapse. On the other hand, this is a clearly Eurocentric position, with the EU trying to impose points of view not shared by many Latin Americans – Latin American countries themselves being the main obstacle to regional integration. At the same time, we must recognize that this is a difficult time for most subregional integration processes in Latin America. Spain must accept this reality and see if, in specific cases such as that of Colombia, it may be useful to work toward signing bilateral association treaties. The EU must somehow "bilateralize" its relations with Latin America. This would be more useful than to continue insisting on the EU's traditional official doctrine, as occurred when Alejandro Toledo visited Madrid, trying to maintain the fiction of regional unity. This is complicated enough in the CAN, not only because Hugo Chávez heads the Venezuelan government and is clearly opposed to any free trade agreement, as his support of the

³⁷ The Agreements on Economic Association, Political Agreement and Cooperation.

Bolivian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) shows, but also due to deep-rooted internal contradictions³⁸.

From the European perspective, bi-regional negotiations are preferable to country-by-country negotiations but, as has been mentioned, the main problem is Latin American resistance to deepening the processes of regional integration. This can be seen, for example, in the appearance by Peter Mandelson, future EU trade commissioner, before the European parliament. The future commissioner set out the priorities of European trade policy in the following order: negotiations in the WTO (expected to be completed in 2006); the agreements with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, in the framework of the ACP countries; relations with the United States to disarm the potential conflicts that threaten the world economy; EU-Mercosur negotiations; relations with large neighbors such as Russia, Ukraine and, finally, China³⁹. This suggests that Mercosur ranks fourth among the Union's set of trade priorities. A similar list from Spanish economic authorities would be useful, especially in light of the difficult negotiations to reach an agreement with Mercosur.

Leaving aside our country's role as a bridge, on many occasions Europe has served more as an excuse than as an impetus in Spanish policy toward Latin America. This is quite common, for example, on issues such as agricultural protectionism, the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) and immigration, and could become more common still with the weight of Eastern Europe in the 25-member EU. Instead of taking bold stances that fit with the proposals of our Latin American friends, Spanish diplomacy generally shields itself behind rigid EU positions, claiming it is impossible to change things. It should be kept in mind that Spain will very soon be a net contributor to the EU: in 2006 it will pass the barrier of 90% of the average community GDP. Lately, the key European issue has been the fear of how an enlarged EU with 25 members will affect EU – Latin American relations and if Spain will be able to go on defending Latin American interests as it has in the past. To raise the profile of Latin America in the EU-25, it would be necessary to increase cooperation with Portugal in this regard.

The CAP is one of the toughest issues, though it seems that things may finally be moving in the right direction. Nonetheless, in practice, the CAP is a kind of 100% tax on the consumption of agricultural and livestock products, resulting from different subsidies, contingents, para-fiscal measures, etc. The existence of the CAP means that nearly 50% of the European budget goes to subsidizing 870,000 farmers (and if we add in their families, we find that the CAP goes to only 4% or 5% of the population of the EU). Things are made worse by the fact that of these 870,000 farmers, between five and six hundred thousand receive only 500-1,000 euros a year, while 200 people (including some companies) receive more than 400,000 euros a year. The problem is that rural areas are over-represented in the European electoral systems and in some places a rural vote is equivalent to 20 urban votes, giving more power to rural ridings than they are really due. In some places, including Spain, the rural vote can end up deciding an election. In our case, this is an especially difficult issue to solve because the areas that most clearly benefit from the CAP are Andalusia and Castilla y León, huge sources of votes for the Socialist and Popular parties, respectively.

³⁸ It is true that the CAN insists on continuing to negotiate *en bloc*, which indicates the weight of the rhetoric on the other side of the Atlantic too.

³⁹ Gazette of the Comissão Parlamentar Conjunta do Mercosul, 4/X/2004, <http://www.camara.gov.br/mercosul/>

In relation to the CAP, Spain, instead of fomenting completely open trade and the free importation of agricultural and livestock products from Latin America, maintains policies that continue to benefit clearly marginal social groups. This is the case of certain crops like tobacco and cotton, which struggle to continue operations. Cotton, in fact, receives more subsidies than the fight against cancer⁴⁰. A recent OCDE study (June 2004), indicated that in 2003 the industrialized countries spent nearly 350 billion dollars on subsidizing agriculture. This figure contrasts with the 50 billion dollars needed annually to reduce poverty by half, as established in the Millennium goals. At the recent Summit against Poverty in which Spain and France participated along with Brazil and Chile, there was a call to join forces to fight hunger. Given our earlier consideration of the CAP, one way of financing this fight against hunger and poverty would be to reduce agricultural subsidies instead of reaching for hard-to-collect taxes, such as the Tobin tax or the one meant to tax the arms trade. As Alieto Guadagni said, “two birds can be killed with one stone” by providing resources to meet the Millennium goals and reducing agricultural subsidies in the most developed countries⁴¹.

Cooperation and Official Aid to Development (OAD) have been one of the traditional pillars of Spanish policy toward Latin America. Spanish cooperation for Latin America should now fit with the Millennium goals and the Lisbon objectives associated with the knowledge-based society and increased productivity, which brings us back to the great diversity in Latin America in this regard too⁴². The separation of the Secretariat of State for Cooperation from its Ibero-American branch leaves the future of OAD somewhat in doubt, especially if its budget is in fact increased in 2005 and following years. According to government plans, this would mean doubling the resources available for cooperation in only four years. Will the part for Latin America be maintained or increased, or will the decision be made to work with other areas, such as sub-Saharan Africa? The government is tending to make specific promises, but the main question is whether or not there will be sufficient management capacity to deal with such an increase. Although it is important to link Spanish OAD to the Millennium Goals (and president Rodríguez Zapatero will have to decide whether to join in the Brazilian initiative to fight against hunger), it must be kept in mind that some of these goals do not directly affect many Latin American countries considered medium-income countries. Therefore, OAD must be linked to the existence of inequality and not based simply on a calculation of income. There should be more cooperation among institutions: justice, security, health, education and tax authorities could be a good starting point. Similarly, we could consider specific projects of a general nature that could be assessed according to their concrete results, such as strengthening tax offices to improve tax collection or fighting informal labor by fomenting employment plans. Cooperation is a good way to strengthen ties with other Latin American countries and the approaching bicentennial celebrations of independence are a particularly good opportunity. Some years ago consideration was given to Spain and Chile planning joint cooperation programs in Central America, given the efficiency of the Chileans. However, these plans came to nothing in the end.

⁴⁰ Guillermo de la Dehesa, *Globalización, desigualdad y pobreza*, Madrid, 2003.

⁴¹ Alieto Guadagni, “¿Dos pájaros de un tiro?”, *El Cronista*, 29/IX/2004.

⁴² Iliana Olivé, “La nueva arquitectura de la ayuda y sus implicaciones para América Latina: Algunas sugerencias para la cooperación española”, working document of the Elcano Royal Institute, DT nº 41/2004 (23/VII/2004), <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/129.asp>

As for immigration, it is clear that a more active role could be played with Latin American immigrants, who not only are more valued by Spanish public opinion⁴³, but are also the most easily assimilated in Spanish society by virtue of their linguistic, cultural and religious baggage. This point of view should be adopted when preparing national legislation and also when negotiating European policies in EU institutions. One possibility would be positive discrimination based either on education (the higher the educational level, the easier it would be to immigrate) or by having the EU, like other countries in the world such as Canada, require immigrants to know one of the languages spoken in member countries. Positive discrimination in favor of Latin Americans does not mean excluding other groups from immigration, since this could lead to new conflicts, especially with Morocco, a country very sensitive to the issue of immigration.

The bilateral agendas

Despite the dimensions of global issues, the weight of bilateral problems has begun to impose itself on the agenda. This is an issue of great importance that will be dealt with in a later work. However, it is worth mentioning that there are problems that affect only certain countries, such as Cuba (the Castro dictatorship and human rights policy), Venezuela (relations between the government and the opposition and the accusations of emerging authoritarianism within the regime), Argentina (the renegotiation of contracts at state-owned companies and the foreign debt), Bolivia (the referendum on gas and the law on hydrocarbons), among many others. There are certain issues common to all Latin American countries, although their impact on the definition of bilateral agendas differs. This occurs with questions such as Ibero-American summits, immigration to Spain and remittances from emigrants, the validation of university titles, the weight of the CAP and negotiations with the EU.

The case of immigration is very revealing, beginning with the existence, or lack, of a visa to travel to Spain. While a priority issue for Argentina is for the Spanish government to grant its undocumented emigrants preferential treatment, Ecuador and Colombia have other problems arising from the large size of their immigrant colonies in Spain. For them, the important things are integration, the treatment their citizens receive, the validation of titles, the conditions in which remittances are made, etc. – all issues related to daily life.

Delinquency is a problem closely linked to immigration that is causing concern in the Latin American embassies and consulates with large colonies of nationals in Spain. It is obvious that not all of them have the same problems, but a high crime rate has a negative effect on the image of a given group. This is the case of the bands of Colombian narco-traffickers and the Ecuadorian youth gangs like the *Latin Kings*. Another question that will have to be addressed involves remittances from immigrants, which day by day are becoming more important for certain Latin America countries. Requests for lower bank commissions for these transactions could be included on the bilateral agendas.

Paradoxically, the development of bilateral agendas will also tend to improve the Summits system and strengthen the General Secretariat. Perhaps the two clearest cases of this are Brazil and Mexico, the two largest countries in the region and key members of the Ibero-American Community of Nations. Brazil is perhaps the most paradigmatic case, given the

⁴³ See the Barometers of the Elcano Royal Institute (BRIE), <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/barometro.asp>, and Javier Noya, “La imagen de América Latina en España”, working document of the Elcano Royal Institute, DT nº 40/2004 (12/VII/2004), <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/127.asp>

leading role it is developing in South America, which leads us to consider possible points of friction between Spanish leadership and Brazilian aspirations⁴⁴.

Conclusions

In these pages, I have insisted on the need to turn around Spanish policy toward Latin America, putting bilateral issues before global ones, which does not imply sacrificing one to the other, but increasing the synergy between them. Until now, “transversal issues” have taken precedence over specific issues and this has characterized the various governments and opposition parties in Spain, regardless of the party in power at any given moment, to the point that it could be said that global policy toward the region has conditioned the bilateral agenda. In fact, we should prioritize our bilateral policies more, so that all together, after adjusting for possible undesired effects, they can help us take better advantage of our relations with Ibero-America and our participation in the Summits system. There is continuous insistence on the high priority of our policy toward Latin America. It would not be a bad thing to admit that there are priorities and then there are priorities and that if we ranked them, Latin America would not be in first place, considering the significance of other areas or countries such as the EU, the United States and North Africa.

Emphasizing the bilateral agenda would mean putting some countries before others or discriminating for or against those closest to or farthest from our own positions. However, this would not be an easy step, given the dynamic created in the past thirty years. Emphasizing the bilateral, therefore, would have costs that would have to be assessed and, more importantly, it would require a significant effort to convince our Latin American friends that our positions are reasonable. It is also necessary to be clear with the different Spanish players who have to live with and who will benefit from Spanish policy toward Latin America, beginning with entrepreneurs, but also including universities and the many organizations in the so-called “tertiary sector” that are developing an intense and active relationship with Ibero-America.

The shift to the left that is now occurring in some Latin American countries and the privileged relations the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero could have with some of them are another reason for us to emphasize bilateral relations. Not all leftist governments are the same and it is not important whether or not they are more or less in line with European social democracy. However, some of them are more respectful than others of the laws and rules of play, or are more inclined to disciplined economic policy, rather than unproductive spending and waste, or are free of the populist urges that arise in certain cases.

As in so many other aspects of Spanish foreign policy, in the specifically Latin American area there is clearly a great contradiction between principles and interests. If we fall back exclusively on the rhetoric of essentials and priorities, which insists that Latin America is a fundamental priority of our action abroad, this will ultimately be totally counterproductive to Spanish interests, however they may be defined. It is important that European and Latin American policy tend to converge, because otherwise our foreign actions will take on a schizophrenic shape that has little to do with our goals. This can be seen, for example, in our support of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and of internal EU immigration policies, which contrasts with the explanations given to our Latin American friends at the

⁴⁴ Bruno Ayllón, “Brasil y la política de España en Latinoamérica (1950-2001)”, in *Carta Internacional*, Año X, nº 111.

Summits or other forums, where the responsibility does not rest with Spain, but with Europe, which does not consider or does not understand Latin America.

Spanish policy toward Latin America must aggressively defend democracy. However, we must make it clear just what kind of democracy we are talking about, to avoid sliding into a dialogue of the deaf. This is important because of the attacks on representative democracy launched from high places in the governments of Cuba and Venezuela. Spain now has a window of opportunity to strengthen its presence in Latin America. The fact that the United States has “forgotten” the region has left a vacuum to fill. This can be done to the extent that Latin American policy goals can be jointly determined with the United States on certain issues of interest to both countries.

Appendix 1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs web pages on foreign policy and Ibero-America

Foreign policy

- Gibraltar
 - Human rights policy
 - Bilateral political relations
 - North America
 - Asia-Pacific
 - Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa
 - Sub-Saharan Africa
 - CFSP and ESDP
 - Security and Disarmament Policy
 - Spain and the United Nations System
-

- Mercosur
- Central America
- Andean Community
- Ibero-American Summits
- 2nd European Union – Latin America and Caribbean Summit
- Latest news
 - STATE VISIT BY THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE
 - State visit by the President of the Dominican Republic and Mrs. de Mejía
 - MEETING IN LONDON ON INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR COLOMBIA (10/07/2003)
 - Joint declaration by the United States of America and Spain on the situation in Venezuela (April 12, 2002)
 - Appearance by SECIPI before the Commission on International Cooperation for the Development of Congress (27-06-2000)
 - Visit by the President of the Government, Mr. Aznar, to Mexico

- The Council of Ministers on September 22, 2000, authorizes the establishment of the Fundación Carolina
- Meeting of Ambassadors of Spain accredited in Ibero-America
- Links of interest
 - Documents and academic information
 - Other institutions
 - Ibero-American Ministries of Foreign Affairs

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, <http://www.mae.es>.

Appendix 2. State of payment of fees for the economic maintenance of SECIB to 30/09/2004

	Fee 2001 US\$	Payments 2001	Fee 2002 US\$	Payments 2002	Fee 2003 US\$	Payments 2003	Fee 2004 US\$	Payments 2004	Fee 2005 US\$	Payments 2005	Total to be deposited
Argentina	62,198.40	62,198.40	59,955.86	59,955.86	68,160.45	68,160.45	67,354.00	-	69,037.69	-	-136,391.69
Bolivia	3,477.55	-	3,352.17	-	3,810.89	-	3,163.00	-	3,703.75	-	-17,507.36
Brazil	108,260.99	-	104,357.68	-	118,638.37	-	117,144.00	-	120,072.89	-	-568,473.93
Chile	12,118.35	-	11,742.16	-	13,349.00	13,500.00	16,235.00	16,235.00	16,641.24	-	-40,350.74
Colombia	11,962.76	-	11,550.60	-	13,131.23	-	13,635.00	-	13,975.61	-	-64,255.20
Costa Rica	3,874.98	-	3,735.27	-	4,246.42	-	4,744.00	-	4,862.82	-	-21,463.48
Cuba	8,425.60	8,425.60	8,121.82	8,121.82	9,233.24	304.18	7,925.00	-	8,123.42	-	-24,977.48
Ecuador	4,073.70	4,073.70	3,926.82	3,926.82	4,464.18	412.44	3,990.00	3,926.83	4,090.26	-	-8,205.18
El Salvador	3,656.39	3,656.39	3,524.56	3,524.56	4,006.88	-	4,103.00	-	4,206.10	-	-12,315.98
Spain	1,589,735.53	1,589,735.53	1,532,418.21	1,532,418.21	1,742,120.00	1,742,120.00	1,811,804.80	1,811,804.80	1,857,100.00	-	1,857,100.00
Guatemala	3,954.47	-	3,811.89	3,811.89	4,333.52	4,333.52	4,405.00	4,506.86	4,515.07	-	-8,367.69
Honduras	3,318.57	3,318.57	3,218.08	3,085.81	3,658.45	2,967.14	3,463.00	3,827.71	3,549.15	-	-4,008.02
Mexico	84,116.88	84,116.88	81,084.08	81,084.78	92,179.93	92,179.93	117,244.00	-	120,175.26	-	-237,418.56
Nicaragua	3,239.09	3,239.09	3,122.30	3,116.30	3,549.57	3,116.30	3,312.00	-	3,394.78	-	-7,146.05
Panama	3,815.37	3,815.37	3,677.80	3,677.80	4,181.09	4,181.09	3,990.00	3,990.00	4,090.26	3,931.74	-158.52
Paraguay	3,735.88	-	3,601.18	-	4,093.98	-	3,727.00	-	3,819.82	-	-18,977.87
Peru	10,989.05	10,989.05	10,592.84	10,592.84	12,042.41	-	11,260.00	-	11,541.41	-	-34,843.82
Portugal	29,211.39	29,211.39	28,158.19	28,138.18	32,011.46	31,991.46	31,997.00	32,057.00	32,796.85	-	-32,776.85
Domin. Republic	3,815.37	3,815.37	3,677.80	3,667.80	4,181.09	-	4,593.00	-	4,708.21	-	-13,492.30
Uruguay	9,478.80	-	9,137.04	-	10,387.39	-	9,564.00	-	9,817.09	-	-48,384.33
Venezuela	23,607.57	-	22,756.41	-	25,870.48	-	20,651.00	-	21,167.69	-	-114,053.15
TOTAL	1,987,129.69	1,806,595.34	1,915,522.76	1,745,122.67	2,177,650.01	1,963,266.51	2,264,756.00	1,876,348.20	2,321,375.00	3,931.74	3,271,168.99

Source: SECIB – Secretariat for Cooperation with Ibero-America.