

Centre for Policy Studies

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Private

Prime Minister

Spain in NATO

I know that it is government policy to ensure this.

I know too that the Spanish Government is in favour but in its own time.

A recent visit to Spain suggested to me that if we do want this we should seek to do something about it soon rather than later.

This is because:

1. The Russians are plainly determined to do everything to prevent this, and are stirring things in every way that they can, e.g. their main business wheeler dealer Mr. Ramón Mendoza has bought the evening paper Informaciones.
2. The Communist Party, otherwise formally anti Moscow, is united with the Soviet Union on this.
3. The Socialist Party, the main opposition party, is also against and even the social democrats such as Enrique Múgica, the shadow defence minister (otherwise admirable) thinks it would be an error to change over from Spain's old special relationship with the U.S.
4. The Government is (a) going through a bad period with public opinion and (b) plainly enjoys its semi independent role, the friend of the Arabs, the voice of Spanish America in Europe, etc. The holding of the Madrid Conference on European Security later in the year may enhance this semi neutral stance.
5. The French may be expected to want Spain have the same attitude to NATO as they have (i.e. not helpful) and France is the second most important arms salesman to Spain (Mirages; Agosta submarines; AMX-30 tanks).
6. Gibraltar may be a sticking point too for the Government.

This may be unduly pessimistic but I thought it worth saying.

Hugh Thomas
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