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Paella for Pennies: American Appeasement of Francoist Spain in the Infancy of the Cold War

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Paella for Pennies:
American Appeasement of Francoist Spain
in the Infancy of the Cold War

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2024

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all of those who have provided me the confidence to take pride in a project composed of my own research, thoughts, writing, and conclusions.

*I would also like to dedicate this thesis to Sue Marcus. Although you chose to be my mother, you never chose to be my role model– it was an honor bestowed upon you without any second thought. I thank you for your congeniality, thoughtfulness, and advice that have given me the love, freedom, and strength to be who I want to be in life.
I am my mother's son.*

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Introduction

After the fall of Nazi Germany in the spring of 1945, Europe was deemed to be rid of fascism. “General Eisenhower informed me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the United Nations,” President Harry Truman said on May 8th, “and the flags of freedom fly all over Europe.”¹ However, the assurance that Europe was cleansed of authoritarianism was not as all-encompassing as Truman had made it sound; just five years earlier, the former Spanish military general Francisco Franco assumed his position as dictator, or caudillo, of Spain and its fascist Nationalist party. He would remain in power until his death in 1975.

Make no mistake that the period directly before and after Victory in Europe Day in 1945 was incredibly impactful in shifting the alignment of democracies in Europe: Benito Mussolini was arrested in 1943 and his regime was thrown out of power in Italy, and the defeat of the Nazis gave way to the division of Germany and creation of the Federal Republic of Germany. This establishment created a democracy with an ordoliberal economy that symbolized the potential reformation of a former authoritarian state. There was a chance that the United States could assist in the democratization of Spain and the diffusion of liberalism throughout a war-torn Europe.

The facts remained that at that time, Spain held the most unmarked graves in the world as the consequences of its three year conflict, and that the Francoists had gone on a reign of terror to not only restrict freedoms and instill fear, but to assist the Germans with testing out new

¹ Baehler, David M., Ronald D. Landa, Charles S. Sampson, John A. Bernbaum, Lisle A. Rose, David H. Stauffer, and William Z. Slany, eds. *Foreign relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Western Europe and Canada*. Part IIed. Vol. VI. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1986.

methods of killing civilians.² And still, in contrast to its future track-record of removing elected individuals it opposed, the United States extended diplomatic and economic olive branches to the Francoist regime throughout the 1950s, culminating in both the Pact of Madrid in 1953, which extended US military presence to Spain in exchange for economic concessions, and Spanish entrance to the United Nations in 1955. This concept of supporting an authoritarian dictator of a major European country after defeating Nazi totalitarianism appears to be at odds with Truman's 1945 assertion, as well as global movements towards international treaties of peace. The questions unearthed must first be posed systematically: how did the United States treat and diplomatically interact with Spain between 1940 and 1955? How and why did the United States assist Spain in shifting the global perception of the Spanish nation throughout the decade after the end of World War II? Why did the United States extend preferential treatment to Spain and its ruthless dictator while America was parading itself as the global catalyst, supporter, and defender of freedom and democracy? And all told, what lessons can we learn from this example of American appeasement and foreign diplomacy?

By understanding the role Spain played within America's plan for containment of communism, it will help showcase America's ability to swallow the pill of working with dictators or right-wing authoritarian regimes in order to contain the growth of its most feared enemy- in this case, Stalin and the USSR. American appeasement exemplified its willingness to create a hierarchy of enemies and prioritize containment of external conflicts.

² Saks, Nora. "Unearthing the truth about Spain's mass graves," March 01, 2022. *Last Seen*, published by WBUR, Podcast, MP3 audio, 46:02, Transcript.

The United States was successful in achieving its two-folded goal of this period by utilizing strategies of tactical appeasement, firstly preventing Spain from joining the Axis in WWII, and subsequently keeping Spain in the American sphere of influence during the beginning of the Cold War.

These points are essential to understanding the Spanish question that arose in 1945 at the United Nations' San Francisco Conference: "With regard to paragraph 2 of chapter III, the delegation of Mexico considers that this paragraph can not be applied to States whose regimes were established with the help of military forces from countries that have fought against the United Nations as long as these regimes remain in power."³ This contentious debate underscores the importance of Spain to the United States' plans in preventing the rise of the Soviet Union throughout continental Europe, as well as the morally– and geopolitically– unstable hoops that the US had to jump through in order to do so.

The United States refrained from helping Spain gain access to the United Nations inaugural formation in 1945 for both direct and indirect reasons; firstly, the UN was composed of fifty countries, forty-four of whom had issued legal declarations of war on Germany and Japan. Due to Germany's assistance to Franco's Nationalists during the Civil War, Franco would never have gone through with such repudiation of an ally. Secondly, the omission of Spain from the most powerful intergovernmental body would only serve to ostracize Spain; due to Franco's limitation of the Spanish economy in its rapid re-construction as an autarky, Spain was extremely limited in global assistance for monetary or diplomatic means. Spain's main ally, Adolf Hitler,

³ Leonart K. y Amsélem Alberto, Fernando María Castiella, and Samuel G. Marcus, "La Cuestión Española (1945-1950)," essay, in *España y Onu* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Francisco de Vitoria, 1978), 27–45, <https://www.cepc.gob.es/sites/default/files/2021-12/34690rpi152027.pdf>.

fell in 1945, and Mussolini had been hanged a week before Nazi surrender. How might the American ability to work with an enemy, one who was deemed sympathetic to the Nazis, a further perpetrator of crimes against humanity against his own citizens, yet one who was also geopolitically influential and staunchly anti-Communist, have created a precedent for the American approach to international politics and the perpetual cycle of its hegemonic restrengthening?

This essay will examine its questions from a top-down perspective, beginning with the more general and introductory information, such as the background of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's control over his country, before moving to a mechanical understanding of how the United States recalibrated European and American actions towards Spain from 1940-1955. The end of this paper will concern itself with the role of Spain within American plans for Soviet containment. This essay will weave in a closer examination of the motives behind America's ability to support a European dictator after fighting fascism mere miles away. Considering primary pieces and historical analyses centered around Spain's tangential influence throughout the infancy of the Cold War will provide a framing of this period through the American lens of containment. By understanding the interpolation of concurrent actions by the United States towards European actors, the American efforts to stymie Nazi and Soviet spheres of influence may become re-applicable and potentially create a framework through which one can examine current US foreign policy.

Chapter I: Background of Francoist Spain and the Spanish Civil War

Spain's loss in the Spanish-American War in 1898 marked the collapse of the Spanish empire's influence in the Western Hemisphere and created a lasting strain on the economy; "[The war] deprived the country of its protected external markets, and in so doing kickstarted an intermittent and acrimonious debate over how Spain should modernize itself economically, and who should bear the cost."⁴ Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, progressive industrial elites, mainly residing in Catalonia and making their money in the industrialized textile industry, were unable to create progress in the redevelopment of the country's economic structures.

The Spanish economy was massively overweight in its agrarian sector and the division of political power represented this; "The large landowners whose estates dominated the southern half of Spain would have been the elite sector most affected by economic political reform. Temperamentally too they were inflexible; many were the fathers and elder brothers of Spain's officer elites – groups known for being profoundly suspicious of change."⁵ Amidst the global rise of anti-democratic movements, there was a growing instability of global economies after World War I. Only one European country had a rise in production throughout the early 1930s: the Soviet Union, due to its command economy. Although Spain did not participate as an actor in World War I, the country was not immune to the lasting effects that the conflict propounded throughout the continent. There was an economic expansion but inflation began to rise throughout the domestic economy, creating a fragile fiscal environment that helped birth new

⁴ Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

⁵ Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction*, 5.

industrial centers, such as Seville and Zaragoza, while widening the income inequality gap. The overproduction of agricultural products in Spain drove food prices down, hurting farmers and the agricultural motor of the economy.⁴

The social reverberations, and subsequent reactions, of this tightening economic period were varied throughout the Spanish regions, affecting both rural and urban areas. However, the political consequences were even greater, and it was in Barcelona that local elites began to apply the lens of bolshevism to any domestic protests. Fearful of Soviet-sponsored uprisings, both Southern landowning and urban white-collar workers were against the liberalization of their government and the labor class.

Conversely, a political fervor began to rise amongst the middle class workers. Many felt as if the economic expansion and the social changes it brought – such as the increasing speed of communication and the widening dissemination of information– were indicative of the right for more political power. There was a disdain for military rule, again highlighting the cultural divide between liberal Spaniards who tended to support freedom of thought and democratic powers, while the southern and northern conservatives felt a connection to the gloried history of Spain's empire through the strong arm of the state's police powers. Generals and soldiers were revered, while legitimacy was vested in the monarchy, which preferred undemocratic political leaders to run the country: in order to mitigate the spread of liberalism and the rising labor unrest in Barcelona, a 'soft' military coup was organized by General Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1923, which was supported by King Alfonso XII, as the King "strongly favored military rule over constitutional solutions to the problems of government."⁵

Subsequent economic growth in Spain throughout the second decade of the twentieth century helped to ease Primo de Rivera's way towards immediate power, whilst increasing the likelihood of future dissension. Many educated Spaniards were moving into urban areas and, with their increasing incomes, found themselves in desire of constitutional protections against the absolute power of the dictator and monarchy. Although political parties were illegal, many professional associations began to form in the latter half of the 1920s— comprised of teachers, doctors, and others— as the middle-class urban sectors began to “republicanize themselves in a quest for political rights.”⁵ There arose a sharper divide between the unreformed agricultural territories of Spain and the urbanized centers, the former being in support of religious traditionalism, monarchical rule, and conservatism, while the latter was ushering in an era of freer information transmission (thanks to the popularity of the radio), constitutionally vested rights, and the devolution of the dictatorial government.

Spain began its Second Republic in 1931, shortly after deposing King Alfonso XIII. Many historians consider that the Spanish conservative elites believed the ushering in of a new regime in 1931 was simply a means to pacify the growing fever of republican thought, hoping that it would prove to be business as usual in practice. However, this was not the case. A provisional government was formed and a constitution was ratified, marking a clear change to the monarchical rule that the country had historically endured. The shift to a political system with democratic measures and free voting promised to radically redistribute power and wealth amongst the divided nation.

The period of the early 1930s was characterized by the democratization of the Spanish polity and the expansion of civil liberties, including granting women the right to vote, and

establishing freedom of speech and the freedom of association. Notably, this constitution stripped the Church-backed Spanish nobility of its power and for the first time allowed couples to divorce, marking a far leap from the conservative Spain that many had known. In fact, the early 1930s in Spain has been referred to as a period “hostile” to religion in its separation of church and state, and this establishment of a liberal state catalyzed festering dissent and the formation of Spanish fascism.⁶ The quick descent from a radically liberal government to a fascist dictatorship speaks to the anti-Communist, anti-liberal political environment overtaking the world at this time. The latter contributed to the formation of dictatorships in Italy, Germany, and Spain, while the former led the United States to prioritize Soviet containment strategies over re-establishing democratic states in continental Europe.

The Spanish Civil War, which lasted from 1936 to 1939, was a fight interpolating the warring sides of political factions, of the two opposing tides that were both positioned against liberal democracy, both of which were taking over the world at large. This period of global political unrest is viewed as the fall of the first wave of democracy, as the Soviet Union was gaining global power and increasing its domestic industrial might, giving credence to the possibility of major countries operating successfully within a communist system. Conversely, fascism was being supported in the election of the Nazi party in Germany and the ascension of Italy’s dictator, Benito Mussolini. As Spain began to fully devolve into civil war in July of 1936, many other European countries began to pass legislative acts to agree in principle to non-intervention. This exemplified the lack of cultural or innate connection between Spain and other European countries at this point in time, as well as an abdication of geopolitical and

⁶ Alfred C. Stepan, *Arguing Comparative Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 221.

jurisprudential responsibilities; “The accepted rules of international law governing civil strife were largely ignored,” in addition to “...the principles of humanity.” A non-intervention agreement was eventually signed by twenty-seven European nations, most pledging themselves to “prohibit the direct or indirect export or re-export of arms, munitions, materials of war, aircraft, and vessels of war.” Seventeen European nations, including Britain and France, “assumed an even stricter duty ‘to abstain from all interference, direct or indirect, in the internal affairs of Spain.’”⁷

The lopsided response in regards to the role of individual nations towards the Spanish conflict reflected the lack of continuity between European nations, politically, culturally, and economically. This jaggedness also reflected the United States deference to the United Kingdom. The respective reasonings of Britain, the United States, and France to agree –again, in principle, but not necessarily in practice– to such strict forms of non-intervention in the Spanish civil conflict can be helpful in understanding their respective outlook on the stability of the continent and conflict as a whole. There have been many pundits blaming the United Kingdom’s government for a deep-seated fear of the Communist left in Spain, arguing this led the British government to adopt a philosophy of “non-intervention” that would naturally become “malevolent neutrality.”⁸ Recognizing the German and Italian relationship with Spain’s rightwing Nationalists, a lack of support for the Republicans would ensure them to be underequipped, both logistically and materially, for the brutal war. Recent historians have pushed back against the

⁷ Ann Van Wynen Thomas and A. J. Thomas, “Non-Intervention and the Spanish Civil War,” *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting (1921-1969)* 61 (1967): 2–6, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25657707>.

⁸ Scott Ramsay, “Ideological Foundations of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: Foreign Office Perceptions of Political Polarisation in Spain, 1931-1936.” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 31, no. 1 (2020): 44–64. doi:10.1080/09592296.2020.1721059

notion of Britain's implicit support for any anti-communist measures, instead discussing the disdain that the United Kingdom also held for right-wing fascists as well as their overarching fear— in other words, the principle that governed their actions (rather, expressed inactions) most significantly— was the belief that allowing the Spanish civil conflict to begin and end without international assistance would not only bring about the end of the civil war most quickly, but would prevent the internal conflict from spilling over the Spanish borders and triggering another international conflict.⁸

From the German perspective, Adolf Hitler knew that his army was not yet ready for war on a global, or even continental, scale. However, the Spanish Civil War provided an important opportunity to test new German weapons and military tactics in a mitigated yet consequential manner. Almost immediately from the beginning of the Civil War, Hitler provided military equipment, artillery, men, and strategies of engagement and bombing in order to catalyze the creation of a Spanish nation that would assist Germany in its future endeavors of European hegemony.⁸ The Spanish conflict also helped shift global attention from the brewings of Nazi Germany, where fast rearmament and Hitler's central European strategy sought to eliminate historic European powers such as France and the United Kingdom. Hitler tested his new air force by bombing the Basque town of Guernica in northern Spain, which wounded over fifteen hundred citizens and led to Pablo Picasso's famous anti-war painting, *Guernica*.⁹ However, due to Hitler's reluctance to trigger an international conflict in 1937, he began to limit Germany's individual contributions to the Spanish Nationalists and instead called on another fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini of Italy, to assist in sending reinforcements to Francisco Franco's side.

⁹ "April 26, 1937: The Bombing of Guernica," Zinn Education Project, January 4, 2023, <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/bombing-of-guernica/>.

An interesting consideration regarding the Spanish Civil War was the propagative flexibility when discussing the two sides as personified actors. One could argue that the Nationalists were fascist, anti-democratic heathens, while the Republicans were exemplary of self-governance and democratic ideals— after all, they were representative of the democratically-elected party. Furthermore, the Republicans were defending their nation from internal attacks and domestic pressure for division, which naturally would endear many citizens to their cause.

Conversely, religious citizens in many liberal nations perceived the Republicans to be representative of godlessness amidst the support of secular communism, that the tidal wave of anti-Christian presence in political bodies would ensure the fall of religion and catalyze global chaos. Therefore, these citizens would view the Nationalists as the defenders of God, the reincarnation of the Christian crusaders. This dichotomy still exists in current global politics, as the fear for a world without divine intervention or appreciation can lead many citizens to shift to more conservative right-leaning politicians or missionaries. The overweighting of heavenly and eternal reward against atheists (or foes practicing other religions) rather than the material conditions and consequences of actions in this earthly realm has continuously prevented a sense of global peace and agreement.

In current politics, this phenomenon can be seen within the undying support of Donald Trump by supporters of Christian nationalism and right-wing evangelists, as the politician has decried American liberals for atheistic values and championed his role in overturning the federal ruling protecting a woman's right to abortion. "They want to tear down crosses where they can, and cover them up with social justice flags...But no one will be touching the cross of Christ

under the Trump administration, I swear to you.”¹⁰ This rhetoric festers and brews within fear mongering tactics, which has created a quasi-deification of Donald Trump as the defender of Christianity against a godless people. In this way, 12% of Americans in 1936 supported the Spanish Nationalists because they perceived the group to be restoring Christian Nationalism, law and order, and “the will of the people” to Spain in its fight against secular Communism.¹¹

The Spanish Civil War is considered by many to be a small-scale introduction to the Second World War due to its pitting of left and right wing political bodies and the confluence of international actors with wide ranging self-interests. Many leading democratic powers, such as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, engaged in non-intervention because of ill sentiments after the first World War, in which although they were victorious, they faced low domestic support and the prospect of a changing role in global politics.¹²

Many United States citizens felt as if their country had been dragged into the international conflict as a favor for their British allies, as the presence of the Atlantic Ocean provided not only a sense of geographic division and thus safety from European conflict, but also a lack of cultural or social responsibility to defend democratic allies. Sending weapons or military equipment, let alone human reinforcements, would be supported by American socialists but held in high disdain by many moderate-leaning Americans, who agreed with the British perspective that intervening in this conflict would not only cause it to continue further than it

¹⁰ Will Weissert, “Trump Says He’ll Defend Christianity from ‘radical Left’ That Seek to ‘Tear down Crosses,’” PBS, February 23, 2024, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/trump-says-hell-defend-christianity-from-radical-left-that-seek-to-tear-down-crosses>.

¹¹ Austin Clements, “General Washington Goes to Guernica: Pro-Franco Americans and the Spanish Civil War,” Scottish Centre for Global History, February 11, 2021, <https://globalhistory.org.uk/2021/02/general-washington-goes-to-guernica-pro-franco-americans-and-the-spanish-civil-war/>.

would otherwise (which, frankly, was not of great concern past what the continuance would cost America in dollars) but that it would cause an internal conflict to spill over into international lines. France's inclusion would be metered and potentially isolated, but if France reached to the United Kingdom for assistance, and Germany entered the conflict thereafter, the United States would surely be pulled into another global war that many Americans felt they had no part of engaging in.

These sentiments of neutrality expressed through a lack of intervention continued to prevent the United States government from publicly assisting the Allied leaders throughout the first two and a half years of the Second World War. Any indications of expressed allegiance to one faction of the warring halves would enrage American citizens who naively believed that they would be able to resist entering the war. Tempering the fears of citizens while understanding the potential inevitability of American inclusion, through which he would build on a precedent of assisting the Soviet Union and the British against the Germans, was one of President Franklin Roosevelt's most difficult balancing acts throughout the third term of his presidency. By the time the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Roosevelt's military leaders had already been preparing for engagement against the Axis for two years.¹²

The historical importance of the Spanish Civil War was twofold; firstly, it was the prelude to the Second World War that would begin with Hitler's invasion of Poland just months after the Spanish Civil War ended; secondly, this conflict was unique in the insight it provided into

¹² Maurice Matloff, "Prewar Military Plans and Preparations, 1939-1941." U.S. Naval Institute, July 1953.
<https://usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1953/july/prewar-military-plans-and-preparations-1939-1941>.

American global politics. More than other wars or regimes, the Spanish conflict and Francoist regime would appear as what “[Americans] wanted to see,” whether they regarded the Republicans as defenders of a loyal, free government, or whether Franco’s Nationalists were the modern Crusaders.¹³ The lack of material condemnation of a brutal regime would appear at odds with American philosophy to those who viewed the Nationalists as an abusive, undemocratic regime. Above all, Francoist Spain could not be separated from the context of other nations throughout this period. This conflict helped illustrate the idea that international punishment is more likely to occur the more that a bad actor stands out from the crowd.

¹³ Peter Stansky, “Spain without Tears: America and the Spanish Civil War,” *The Massachusetts Review* 4, no. 2 (1963): 420–23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25079037>, 421.

Chapter II: Initial US Treatment of Spain: 1940-1945

Francisco Franco's ascent to power and immediate tenure was antithetical to American values of democracy and freedom. A strong-armed authoritarian, Franco's regime was characterized by the murder of political adversaries, the repression of women and the working class, and the abolition of civil rights. Constitutional freedoms of speech, religion, and regional/cultural identity were not only abdicated by the Francoist regime but persecuted. Spain had been a patchwork society built of different regional identities, from Catalonia, where citizens took pride in speaking Catalan, to the Basque region in the north, housing one of the world's oldest languages, to the Castilian Madrid that characterizes the idea of the Spanish language that most speak today. Franco forbade any languages other than Castilian Spanish from being taught or spoken in schools, criminalizing any example of what his regime considered to be anti-Nationalism.

The connection of democracy and secularism was drawn between dissenters and those outside Franco's ideal citizen, which catalyzed the increased role of the Catholic Church in organizing Spanish society. Although the Second Republic had legalized a woman's right to vote, to divorce, and to become educated in 1931, Franco's grasp of power in 1939 completely eradicated these opportunities for Spanish women. Forced to return to a position of subjugation, women were expected to act in manners emblematic of a Christian mother, prioritizing purity, acquiescence, and piety above all else.

Although American society was still rigidly patriarchal and racially segregated, the devolution of Spain's constitutional protections throughout 1939 and 1940 was worrisome to American officials. However, President Roosevelt recognized the necessity of a balancing act

when dealing with Franco and Spain. The official public rhetoric from the American government towards Spain during WWII was nothing less than unpleasant, and at times particularly hostile, yet this was not always the case behind closed doors. American leaders utilized a conciliatory policy, in which the US would support the non-Falangists (non-Francoist right-wing politicians) in the Franco regime in order to concurrently “subdue the authoritarian orientation” of Franco’s leadership while “diminishing Spain’s susceptibility to radical revolution.”¹⁴ This policy potentially recognized the abdications of human rights and certainly the absence of civil liberties, but mitigated any applied pressure due to the fear of inflammation; if the strong-armed Falangists began to lose power, a second revolution could spark in which the Soviets would surely assist the revolutionaries in creating a Communist state.

Thus, the United States was playing a delicate role in intervening within the nation, especially as American public opinion of Franco was not kind; whereas the Spanish right-wingers were able to garner a considerable amount of American support during the Civil War, the eventual repression of civil liberties, the inefficiency of the economy, and the effect of western propaganda caused a shift in the minds of many domestic citizens.¹¹ What had once been viewed as a crusade against secularism had become the propulsion of a degenerative system.

Following the conciliatory policy, the United States enacted a “confrontational policy” when the Allies thought that the tides of the war were turning in their favor in 1943.¹⁴ An official State Department communication stated that Franco would need to be ousted from power before Spain would be welcomed back into the international community, a point that was specifically

¹⁴ Glennys J. Young, “Spain and the Early Cold War: The ‘Isolation Paradigm’ Revisited,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 24, no. 3 (2022): 43–79, https://doi.org/10.1162/jcws_a_01088. 50.

held in contention between American President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Evidence shows that Roosevelt was in support of removing Franco and implementing a regime change, presumably one that continued the conciliatory formula; by supporting the right-wing regime that did not wield the military for domestic repression tactics, the United States was hoping to gain an ally that would not succumb to either Stalin or Hitler. Of important note here is the degree to which there were varying forms of right-wing nationalism in Spain at this point in time. Many historians have turned a patchwork-quilt of varied conservative ideologies into the concept of Franco's vision of Spain, although there were in fact many non-Falangists within his regime. Therefore, this plan gained credence due to the lack of totalitarian support. Correspondence shows that Churchill and Roosevelt disagreed on the means of replacing Franco as the leader of the Nationalist regime. According to Collado Seidel, Churchill drafted a message to Roosevelt in April of 1944 that accepted the US position regarding the removal and replacement of Franco— but since it was never sent, the US instead “accepted the British stance and ceased trying to dislodge Franco.”¹⁴

Even prior to the shift in policy from conciliatory to confrontational, United States officials were working “strenuously” with Spain throughout the Second World War in unique measures, like helping to save Jewish people from concentration camps, reunite downed American pilots with US forces, and in 1945, even having US military members “stationed in Spain, though they were ordered not to appear in military uniform.”¹⁵ (It must be noted that historians disagree on Spanish willingness to reunite US pilots, as certain cases showed

¹⁵ Young, “Spain and the Early Cold War: The ‘Isolation Paradigm’ Revisited,” 52.

American pilots being interned by the Spanish. However, this may speak to the lack of public knowledge of what collaboration was truly occurring between Spain and the US). All cooperation had taken place “below the level of ambassadorial relations,” highlighting the divide not only between public remarks and the true happenings, but also creating a lopsided level of awareness amongst government and military officials.¹⁶

This dissonance continued throughout the development of the war, as the United States and Britain would supply the Spanish with non-military equipment as needed— it has been recorded, though rarely discussed, that the United States provided “raw film for the Franco regime’s cinematic propaganda” for four decades.¹⁵ The reliance on American and British goods was a main deterrent for the Spanish to join the war in full-force. Utilizing the nonviolent hard-power of blockades and restricting access to capital and consumer goods, the United States was able to strike a delicate balance: if the United States did nothing to support Spain throughout the war, the Spanish would have been more desperate for industrial and commercial trade and therefore been more reliant on Germany and Italy. Doing so would have created an even bigger debt to their Axis allies, as Hitler and Mussolini had not forgotten about the assistance they provided Franco throughout the Spanish Civil War. Providing a material lifeline to Spain would certainly have intensified their calls for Spanish military assistance, such as annexing Gibraltar from the British.¹⁷ However, due to Spain’s dire need for the goods it was receiving from the Allies, facing them was an unconscionable task.

¹⁶ Young, “Spain and the Early Cold War: The ‘Isolation Paradigm’ Revisited,” 51.

¹⁷ Murray Sager, “Franco, Hitler & the Play for Gibraltar: How the Spanish Held Firm on the Rock,” *Espirit de Corps*. Archived from the original on 08-07-2012. <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Franco%2C+Hitler+%26+the+play+for+Gibraltar%3A+how+the+Spanish+held+firm+on...-a0203602877>

Furthermore, the United States was able to receive lower level military assistance from Spain while simultaneously critiquing the nation on a larger scale, appeasing both their constituents who despised the illiberal regime, as well as their self-propagandizing as the defenders of the free, democratic world.

Preventing Spain from joining the war on the side of the Axis, even though the Spanish military had been severely depleted during the Civil War, helped the Allies focus on Northern Africa (and subsequently European) military endeavors without fear of Spanish attack. When 1943 showed significant promise for an Allied victory in Europe, American officials were more willing to demand policy or regime changes from the Spanish.¹⁴ Up until this point, the leadership of Francisco Franco had been seen in the context of the greater European conflict. Therefore, the US had had to play a delicate hand in which it was restricted from supporting his regime, but could not repudiate his needs for fear of spurring Spanish entry into the war. Finally, by the end of the war in 1945, the United States was able to deal with Franco's regime separate from its role in the equation of winning the war.

Here arises a central question of this paper— why did the United States appease Francisco Franco and legitimize his role as the dictator of Spain?

Firstly, the concept and definition of appeasement, which has been muddled throughout public discourse since the 1930s, needs to be examined, before considering Spain's specific role in US strategy. Denoting a connotation of shortsightedness, naivety, or weakness since British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's failed plan for appeasing Adolf Hitler in 1937— in which he allowed Hitler to expand the German empire throughout Europe in the late 1930s unchecked— the strategy of appeasement had been considered prudential and unexplosive. Appeasement can

be used as a pragmatic tool to avoid immediate conflict whilst simultaneously disavowing actions of an adversary. Appeasement is typically undertaken when a political leader believes that security is scarce, and therefore has to make “diplomatic and economic concessions” in order to dissuade a potential aggressor from engaging in conflict.¹⁸

There has been a division in recent political thought between the motivations for appeasement, as some theorists believe in the importance of the triage theory; when a leader faces multiple foreign challengers, they may be more likely to triage and choose to work with a secondary aggressor against the primary, while other scholars posit that such agreements are formed because they were purchased at what was deemed “an *acceptable* domestic price.”¹⁹

The American declaration of neutrality throughout Spain’s Civil War and the support of the Spanish nation throughout World War II can be considered through this first lens of appeasement. Whereas the knee jerk reaction necessitates a questioning of why the United States, the purported bastion of democracy and freedom, would assist the Spanish militaristic dictator while he assisted the enemies of America, the political understanding of appeasement introduces the reasoning for such treatment while questioning if any alternatives, though perhaps more palatable, could have been more successful. By recognizing the natural alignment of Nazi Germany as the main European adversary, the United States would have to prioritize material security claims over ideological differences in order to stymie Nazi proliferation.

As part of the Allied strategy for western European action, economic pressure became one of the first tools for preventing full Spanish allegiance with Germany. Understanding that the

¹⁸ Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy: Partisan Ambition and American Statecraft* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 44.

¹⁹ Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy: Partisan Ambition and American Statecraft*, 45.

stagnation of European trade would cripple the British economy but full concessions might allow the Spanish to formally assist the Axis cause, the United States introduced naval blockades on Spain that lasted from 1940-1945.²⁰ A uniquely long strategy, the Allies were able to become the only official suppliers of oil to Spain throughout this period due to the naval blockade– the only other opportunities for Spain to have received oil would have been from Germany and Romania, but neither options were particularly practical, as “German needs were too heavy to justify supplying Spain,” and “Romanian oil was too expensive and the costs of transport too high.”²¹

These difficulties ossified the Allied position as the sole supplier of Spanish oil, a material necessity not only for a country hoping to operate its military, but a country hoping to operate at all. Again, it can be argued that the United States was supporting a dictatorial regime by providing *all* of its oil necessities. However, by doing so, the United States was able to achieve three separate goals; firstly, the provisions allotted to Spain helped prevent the country from joining into the war on the Axis side, as the issue with German oil would presumably only be solved by the Spanish being full participants, which Spain could not afford. Therefore, Franco would have to play by US rules in order to have the energy resources necessary to run his country, let alone field any form of military. Secondly, the United States was hoping to turn the Spanish press against Germany, as Spain’s ideological ally was refusing to aid its partner, thus forcing them to adhere to the requirements of the Allies in order to receive any oil. The United

²⁰ Leonard Caruana and Hugh Rockoff, “An Elephant in the Garden: The Allies, Spain, and Oil in World War II.” *European Review of Economic History* 11, no. 2 (2007): 159–187. 159.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1361491607001943>.
https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w12228/w12228.pdf

²¹ Caruana and Rockoff, “An Elephant in the Garden: The Allies, Spain, and Oil in World War II,” 161.

States was hoping this would help turn the favor of Spanish citizens, and specifically the pro-Franco ruling class, against any support of the Germans. Finally, the blockade and oil embargo helped the United States require Franco to domestically realign military structures in order to help the Allied cause. Though the famous Blue Division, a volunteer unit composed of pro-Franco Spanish soldiers fighting with the German Army on the Eastern Front, was no longer viewed as a threat, the mere presence of a Spanish military faction was considered unacceptable by Allied leaders. In addition to this group, German spies were still given free allowance to operate throughout Spain and its territories, bringing the prospect of North African military operations into question for the Allies.²²

Throughout 1943, Allied control over importing oil into Spain allowed them to exert considerable power over Spanish exports as well. By appeasing the Spanish necessity to continue exporting specific products to the Germans, the Americans were able to successfully require a depleted exportation of tungsten ore to their adversaries.²² Of note here is the success heretofore of American appeasement; because the British relied heavily on production mines they owned in Spain, as well as importing potash and iron ore from the country, the British were confident that they would have to deal with the Franco regime during and after the World War. Supporting a policy change and inserting a left-wing government could risk the nationalization of British investments, such as the pyrite mine. This mine produced “a significant amount of the world’s output” of pyrite, which can be mined for industrial, elemental, or paper usages, and was partly commandeered by Franco during the Civil War, though he made it clear that he still recognized

²² Caruana and Rockoff, “An Elephant in the Garden: The Allies, Spain, and Oil in World War II,” 161.

British ownership.²³ Although the Americans had less investments in Spain and therefore less to lose by the potential nationalization of capital properties, the prospect of British economic depression was one of the deterrents for removing the Franco regime, perpetuating the strategy of mitigated appeasement.

The balancing act that the United States was aiming to strike in Spain consisted of preventing the Spanish from becoming belligerent actors on behalf of the Axis, protecting British financial interests in Spain, and keeping open certain diplomatic possibilities between Spain and the US.

The United States, which did not rely on Spain for importing many necessary goods, viewed the Spanish export of tungsten ore to Germany as a main motivation of intervention, as an injunction would “save American lives when the invasion of Europe began.”²³ The reasoning for Allied appeasement was varied between the Americans and the British, as the “long term consequences of offending Franco were minimal” for the Americans; instead of utilizing appeasement as a strategy to continue quasi-stable relationships in the future, as the British had, the US wanted Franco to be reliant on American goods in order to prevent his full patriation of the Axis belligerency.²³ What happened to Franco’s regime after the war, as the USSR was not yet considered a major enemy of the US, was not of much importance to the United States.

Appeasing Franco’s regime in the short-term was more of an aid to Britain (see, again, Roosevelt acquiescing to Churchill’s rejection of regime change in Spain) and a strategy to mitigate Spain’s role in the war. It worked.

²³ Caruana and Rockoff, “An Elephant in the Garden: The Allies, Spain, and Oil in World War II,” 180.

Chapter III: Reformation of Postwar Europe; Where Spain Lands

As early as 1936, President Roosevelt was worried about the proliferation of Nazi Germany— not for security purposes, but for economic reasons: “America’s prosperity could not be guaranteed in a world in which the United States was cut off from international trade,” and Europe was still regarded as the major foreign market for American producers. “The United States was too dependent on foreign trade to view with indifference the division of Europe into closed trading blocs.”²⁴ Roosevelt’s fear of high barriers to trade can be seen as an early seed for the American vision for postwar Europe.

In July of 1947, the United States launched its plan for European economic recovery titled the European Recovery Program. Broadly referred to as the Marshall Plan, named after the United States Secretary of State George Marshall, this economic program sought to lend money and goods to war-torn European nations in order to rebuild their infrastructure. Through a decrease of international trade barriers, thus lowering the cost of trading, and funneling an influx of cash into the continent, the United States was hoping to simultaneously increase European economic integration while preventing the spread of communism: the Marshall Plan marked an important shift in American foreign policy because the United States was using economic might and fiscal accessibility, rather than militaristic threats, to prevent another large-scale global conflict.²⁵

²⁴ Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and strategy: Partisan Ambition and American statecraft*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011. 46.

²⁵ “Milestones in the History of the United States: 1945-1952: The Early Cold War,” U.S. Department of State, accessed April 18, 2024, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/foreword>.

The United States becoming involved in the reformation in Europe was not only done to prevent another international war between external actors, but to mitigate the rising Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union: President Harry Truman “pointed to instability in Greece and Turkey following [the Second World War] as proof of a need for American intervention [in Europe].”²⁶ Civil War in Greece between the Communist-backed National Liberation Front and the British-supported Greek monarchy challenged Britain’s already strained ability to support anti-communist forces while trying to rebuild after the war.

In 1946, there was deep concern that economic instability in Europe could open the door for the Soviet Union to increase its sphere of influence, which helped realign the United States actions after World War II, shifting from punitive measures– consequences to the Axis countries for starting, and losing, the war, like the Treaty of Versailles after World War I– to reformative assistance, which would increase American reliance. In attempting to close this loophole of potential instability, the United States even extended a formal invitation to the economic recovery program to the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites. It took three weeks of radio silence from the Soviets before America was given a response.

Meeting in June of 1947 with his British and French counterparts, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov laid out the Soviet issues with the American plan for economic assistance; firstly, the Soviets opposed any aid given to Germany after it had so deeply wounded their country throughout the past four years. Furthermore, Molotov argued that Stalin must have full control over any aid given to Germany, garnering unfettered autonomy for the Soviets.

²⁶ “The Marshall Plan and Postwar Economic Recovery: The National WWII Museum: New Orleans,” The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, March 29, 2022, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/marshall-plan-and-postwar-economic-recovery>.

Lastly, Molotov wanted to know exactly how much the United States were planning to give to each individual nation through this plan.²⁷ It can be contended that because of George Marshall's speech at Harvard a month prior, which expressly detailed the necessity of an economic recovery package for European countries in order to prevent the spread of communism, both the respective invitation and negotiating tactics of the Americans and Soviets were done in bad faith.

The American interest was to stall a souring relationship with the Communists through public offers of assistance, and to gauge the economic stability of the Soviets after the war. If the USSR were truly in need, the Americans considered there to be a chance that any extended money could mitigate rising tensions and solidify the United States' position atop the global order. For the Soviets, taking a meeting may have been indicative of trying to ascertain in which countries the United States would place most importance of rebuilding (both economically and diplomatically) and letting it be known that the reconstruction of Germany would be a point of major contention, whether within the Marshall Plan or not.

Along with the Soviet Union, the Marshall Plan benefits were offered to every European nation except for Spain. The United States did not consider the Spanish to have any contending factors for inclusion; "Interventions by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy in favour of Franco during the Civil War reflected badly on the Madrid government," and while other European countries like Greece and Portugal were also dictatorships at the time of the program, the origins

²⁷ "Soviet Union Rejects Marshall Plan Assistance | July 2, 1947." History.com. Accessed April 30, 2024.

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/soviet-union-rejects-marshall-plan-assistance>.

of such power were considered much less “turbulent.”²⁸ To assist the Spanish would be a repudiation of American public opinion. Although there were domestic supporters of fascism as early as the mid-1930s, such as the American Nazi party, three thousand Americans went to fight against the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War on behalf of liberalism. One could contend that American support of Franco (whether in political systems or amongst the American polity) would be supporting anti-communism efforts, but generally, the commonly held position was that the Spanish Republican government was more supported “because it was thought to be legal, constitutional, republican, liberal, democratic.”²⁹ Therefore, it would be “unacceptable” to enlist any measures to strengthen the relationship with Franco. Aside from diplomatic qualms, the American military recognized that there was a “low likelihood” of Spain being of combative assistance, due to the country’s depleted military.³⁰

Nevertheless, the American government stated that it would not oppose offering economic assistance to any nation in the European continent; by binding the continent together with lower (if any) tariffs between each state, reducing the barriers to business, and increasing the rate of American goods flowing across the Atlantic, the United States would be able to repatriate former enemies, restrengthen relationships with allies, and play a major role in the

²⁸ José A. Carrasco-Gallego, “The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis.” *The Economic History Review* 65, no. 1 (April 13, 2011): 91–119. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0289.2010.00576.x>. 94.

²⁹ Allen Guttmann, Review of *The Wound in the Heart: Two Volumes on the Spanish Civil War*, by Hugh Thomas and Sandor Voros. *The Massachusetts Review* 3, no. 1 (1961): 197–202. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25086795>.

³⁰ Carrasco-Gallego, “The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis.” 95.

recreation and linking of Europe as a cultural entity— all while increasing the global reliance on American dollars. Therefore, in February of 1948, “Marshall declared that the US had no objection to Spain joining the ERP as long as the 16 ERP countries agreed.”³⁰

However, this would be no simple task. The British, most notably through their trade unions and the Labour government’s foreign secretary, were staunchly set against the admission of Spain to the recovery program due to the fear that it would legitimize USSR propaganda regarding the Marshall Plan: as the Soviets and their Western counterparts were now existing within a dual-sided relationship, where they worked together to discuss the reformation of Austria and Germany, but were adversaries in the sense that they did not trust each other to not act out of self-interest, the alliance that had been formed between the USSR and the West from 1939-1944 was now deteriorating greatly.³⁰ The Soviets were claiming that the Marshall Plan was simply an example of Western imperialism, one which would use economic might, rather than manned armies, to increase American hegemony.²⁷

The Marshall Plan has been routinely credited with positioning the American economy as the leading global economic power. Providing over \$13 billion (\$180 billion in 2024 dollars) of economic aid, in the form of both cash and capital goods, to the European nations from 1947 to 1952, this plan was a major undertaking of economic and political reformation and reconstruction. It paid off, as by 1950, all participating countries either “returned to or exceeded their pre-war production levels.”³¹

³¹ “Money Matters: An IMF Exhibit -- The Importance of Global Cooperation; Destruction and Reconstruction (1945-1958), Part 4 of 6,” International Monetary Fund, accessed April 18, 2024, https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/center/mm/eng/mm_dr_03.htm#:~:text=In%20the%20end%2C%20a%20total,exceeded%2C%20their%20prewar%20production%20levels.

The fiscal credits extended to the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom throughout the beginning of the war were able to be repaid due to the Allied victory, and the extension of monies to fallen Axis nations helped to not only rebuild their economies but open themselves as a market for American business. Furthermore, this plan created a sense of repatriation and reacceptance to the global order of democracy led by western nations. The Marshall Plan marked a clear shift from the response of World War I, where the Treaty of Versailles bankrupted Germany and sowed the seeds of its alienation. Doing so had led to the sharp rise of inflation as well as civil discontent in Germany and Italy, leading to the formation of fascist governments. Interestingly, the leaders of these right-wing parties had shifted from labor-devised movements (orthodox Marxism) to nation-branded fascism, with an emphasis on how the nation superseded all divisions of class, race, or interest. This was an important aspect of the United States' plan to rebuild Europe; by lending to its former enemies, the United States was able to prevent future economic collapse and thus potential rises of insurgency. Most importantly, repatriating former enemies to the American cause would allow America to build up its newly-minted priority—European-continental allies— against its newest, greatest foe; the Soviet Union.

But where does Spain come into play here? Spain's omission in the Marshall Plan meant that the country was not afforded the same economic growth that other European nations were given over the few years after the conclusion of the war. Furthermore, the Spanish absence in the plan perpetuated other absences in international organizations that had arisen throughout the ERP. Presumably, if the United States' main interest in this post-war period was to gain as many anti-communist allies, they would do anything possible to create a good relationship with Franco and his anti-communist regime. This was not the case. Understanding the internal reformation of

Spain after the Civil War, the American government's response to Franco in 1946, and the changing global tides by the time of the 1953 Pact of Madrid, will help shine a light on the changing impressions of defense and alliance in the infancy of the Cold War.

Internal Reformation of Spain after WW2

Throughout the Second World War, Francisco Franco was expressly aligned with the fascist regimes of Europe involved in the conflict. However, his nation was less embroiled in the fight than its counterpart of similar might, Italy, as Franco recognized that the material cost of engaging in the conflict to a similar extent was too great.³² Mussolini was bankrupting Italy in the hopes of being on the winning side of the conflict, perfectly entrenched to receive some spoils of victory, yet even throughout early successful battles, Mussolini was finding the overexposure of Italian military and economic investments made it difficult to generate returns.

Before the commencement of the Second World War, Franco had taken a page out of the Italian fascists book by reimposing the 1938 Charter of Labour (known as *El Fuero del Trabajo*). Drawing inspiration from the 1927 Carta del Lavoro, this charter saw the Spanish government increase worker pay benefits, such as minimum wage and assistance during unemployment, while decreasing worker rights; losing the right to strike, to assemble, or to unionize, the Spanish government was acting in direct opposition to the 'social contract' that would later be spread by the Marshall Plan.³⁰

³² András Lénárt, "Franco's Choice: The Reevaluation of Spain's Neutrality and Non-Belligerence during the Second World War." *Studia Historyczne* 63, no. 1(249) (July 20, 2022): 61–74. <https://doi.org/10.12797/sh.63.2020.01.04>.

As the Americans saw it, extending monies and capital goods to European nations was most definitely a two-way street. There was no benefit to any party involved if the recipients were going to squander the opportunity, whether through corruption or monetary mismanagement, and so the social contract was hereby established. The United States would promise not only loans and grants, but goods (otherwise impossible to acquire) to assist in the reformation of the European nations. In turn, these nations would form what we have come to know today as the European Union; starting initially as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, the US and its main allies in this process, Britain and France, believed that there was a necessity to form international organizations with the purpose of “organizing the distribution of Marshall Plan aid...and implementing treaties for the liberalization of trade between European ERP countries.”³³ In addition to the OEEC, the United States founded the EPU in 1950 as a centralized clearing-house for the Marshall Plan countries in order to “boost intra-European trade,” as well as to create a system which the positive and negative cash flows of each respective nation would be balanced against those of the group.³³ This interconnectedness, and the fact that the success of each individual nation rested on the success of the group, created a sense of European cohesiveness and interreliance that had not existed until this point. This is important not only because it strikes a sharp contrast to the unwillingness of European nations to intervene in the Spanish Civil War— as the success or failure of liberalism in Spain would not necessarily affect one’s own country, but getting involved in the fight would— but because the

³³ Carrasco-Gallego, “The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis.” 96.

period from 1946-1950 showed that the Spanish were excluded not only from monetary aid, but from the organizations of international cooperation that were born from the Marshall Plan.³⁴

To summarize, the importance of the Marshall Plan is not only evident in the way that it was able to restructure the continent of Europe and assist the sixteen European nations to get back to pre-war levels of production, but in the way that it was able to create a lasting legacy of cohesion and interdependence. This means that the countries included were not only in a financially healthier position, but they were subsequently more reliant on their neighboring nations, and less prone to anti-democratic uprising as they had been in the initial interwar period. The omission of Spain into the Marshall Plan not only prevented Franco from enjoying the fruits of such economic growth, but it also prevented the Spanish from entering into the international organizations that would recognize Franco's government, ensure global maintenance of peace, and drive decision-making for the decades to come.

The United States had explicitly offered the opportunity to enter into the Marshall Plan to every European nation, including the Soviet Union and including the Spanish. The Portuguese had even argued on Spain's behalf for inclusion into the ERP, but it was of no use, as America's most prominent ally, Britain, would not allow it. British labor union leaders were fearful of the anti-democratic, anti-free labor movements that the Spanish had purported from 1937 on.³⁵ Franco's desire to draw on fascist labor dialogues and institute anti-democratic, elitist measures were worrisome to the free workers of Europe. In America, although there can be something said for the domestic anti-communist movement that would allow for some initial support for Franco,

³⁴ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 92.

³⁵ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 95.

the main emotion towards the Spanish conflict had been one that was disappointed to see a democratic, legal government fall. Therefore, any true push in the American delegation to include Spain in this plan would have been against the wishes of the American public.

As seen in the rhetoric reported by the Americans, it was important that US officials did not advertise for Spain to join, but rather to say that if the other sixteen participating members would vie for Spanish admission, then the Americans would not object. This whole plan was viewed by the Soviets as an extension of Western and American imperialism.²⁷ This was a fair critique, as the United States was now using a nonviolent hard-power technique of extending its economic might to increase reliance on American dollars, as opposed to the early 20th century tactic of using a military to imperialize colonies and create new markets. By opening markets to trade and imposing conditionality, of which some conditions required prioritizing the export and import of American goods, as well as allowing for freer trade within the continent amongst individual nations, the United States was using its economic powers, for the first time, to create a different form of world— one with the United States as the leading superpower.

The Spanish not being included in this program made it so that they would have to fend for themselves. The autarky that Francisco Franco had created in the years after the end of the Civil War would have to stand for itself. If the country was successful, there would still be a desire to associate with the United States, as Franco knew that his country could not operate in a vacuum. He eventually would need to reach a larger scale, which could be done through increasing his sphere of influence in international organizations, as well as dealing with the world's largest Western market. Therefore, the United States was able to recognize that the ability to relate and connect with the Spanish was twofold; the first being through economic

means, where, if Spain was not able to generate a powerful enough economy, they would then find themselves reliant on the United States; or secondly, that the Spanish would find themselves truly isolated from world order, and then repatriate themselves into some form of a democratic agreement with western nations. Both options implied some democratization of Franco's government.

The fear that the Spanish could, in fact, ally with the Soviets was placated by the belief that the countries were too diametrically opposed in all forms of political life. Therefore, the United States could both quell domestic public opinion by not advertising for the support of Spain initially, while keeping the Spanish government in its back pocket for when the US needed it.

Effect on Spain

Exclusion from the Marshall Plan had a massive effect on Spain's economy and spurred a "decade delay" of economic recovery and growth.³⁶ Nazi Germany, knowing that it would face numerous economic restrictions throughout the 1930s, formulated Germany's economic market into a closed, autarkic system. By reducing the exports of German products and prioritizing import substitution, Germany was able to rebuild its economy while reducing inflation and mitigating the potential punishments of the international trade community. Therefore, the Marshall Plan viewed the reopening of Germany's economy as imperative; although the Plan assisted sixteen European nations, it treated each case with nuance, and it was important for both Germany and the whole of Europe that the German economy be revitalized and its production

³⁶ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 101.

capabilities return to pre-war levels. By removing economic restraints to recovery and reopening markets to West German exports, the Marshall Plan helped West Germany become the economic motor of Europe.³⁷

Spain, on the other hand, was spurned by the organizational and regulatory concessions that the Marshall Plan enacted. Due to Spain's absence in the Plan, Spanish leaders instead embraced the autarkic ideals of Nazi Germany and supported self-supply and "a nationalistic way of improving the economy."³⁶ Dramatizing and "exaggerating" international pressure on Spain allowed the Falangists to revitalize the country behind "Franco's personal power" and to legitimize the repressive cultural and economic tactics of the country.³⁷ In other words, Spain used the lack of its invitation to the Marshall Plan (and to a free economy) to close their market further and to inspire domestic confidence in an autarky that served as a symbolic repudiation of international isolation.

This response had been predicted by the US State Department, which advised in 1947 that "international isolation would make Franco ask for domestic support as a proof of patriotism" and therefore recommend a loosening of official trade restrictions.³⁸ The Spanish government knew that isolation would be incredibly difficult, so once they knew they had been left out of the ERP, Spanish officials bargained US agents for a change in US aid policy – i.e., either inclusion in the ERP or separately allocated monies– in exchange for a commitment to free-market capitalism. The United States rejected this proposal, hoping to refrain from supporting a former Axis ally and to decrease Franco's ability for success. A few months later,

³⁷ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 102.

³⁸ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 99.

Franco, in an attempt to re-emphasize the abilities of Spain's self-supply economy, created stronger limits for foreign direct investments and capital formation. These regulations affected all Spanish companies and started the decade of delay for the lagging Spanish economy.³⁹

According to international trade theory, a country will gain an increase in welfare if it maneuvered successfully from an autarky to liberalized trade. Therefore, it can be understood that a country moving in the opposite direction would experience losses in general welfare when shifting to an isolated economy. In Spain, the country struggled mightily throughout this period in its attempts to feed citizens, create proper infrastructure, and revitalize domestic investment and industry.⁴⁰

The Spanish Civil War tanked Spanish GDP and it was not until halfway through the 1950s that the country was able to achieve prewar levels again. In fact, it was not until 1952 that Spain reached a level of industrial production equivalent to pre-Civil War metrics. Countries that experienced far greater destruction of infrastructure during the Second World War than Spain, like Germany and Italy, were able to return to prewar production levels much faster (both in 1949). This means that with the assistance of the United States through the ERP, countries destroyed from the deadliest conflict in human history were able to rebuild in just over four years, while the Nationalists in Spain, isolated from the global market after the war, decimated their own country and were still recovering a decade later.⁴¹

³⁹ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 100.

⁴⁰ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 91-92.

⁴¹ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 104.

In opposition to Franco's later declarations that self-supply and closed markets were beneficial to the country, the period between the end of the war in 1945 and the expansion of the ERP in early 1947 were initially beneficial for Spain's economy. Taking advantage of the postwar desires for the "liberalization of purchasing power," the dollar shortage, the relative lack of Spanish destruction after the war, and the foreign necessity of raw and finished materials due to the lack of European infrastructure, the Spanish government was able to advantageously position itself economically.⁴² Utilizing this period of postwar flexibility allowed European nations to deal with Spain without considering the Allied blockade, which ended a year prior, nor political sanctions, which would be enacted the following year. Therefore, "trading with Spain in 1946 had a positive effect on western European countries."⁴³ However, 1947's introduction of the Marshall Plan started Spanish economic isolation, in turn creating the Spanish autarky and reinvigoration of Spanish nationalism, as well as Spanish political exile, from both ERP-founded organizations and most notably, the United Nations.

The UN and the Spanish Question

Established in 1945 in San Francisco, California, the United Nations was created in the wake of the two deadliest conflicts of human history. Delegates from fifty countries, representing over 80% of the world's population, joined to lay out the groundwork for the most important international organization of peace promotion and to hash out the task of writing and agreeing upon a charter. Expressly aimed at reducing international strife, the preamble of the UN Charter

⁴² Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 108.

⁴³ Carrasco-Gallego, "The Marshall Plan and the Spanish Postwar Economy: A Welfare Loss Analysis." 106.

demands “fundamental human rights,” “to establish conditions under which justice and international laws... can be respected and maintained,” and a promotion of “social progress and better standards of life in larger freedoms.”⁴⁴ After the failed attempts of creating a similar organization 1919, known as the League of Nations, permitted another global conflict to break out, world leaders were motivated to create a global treaty organization. Born from such volatile circumstances and bearing these requirements (and goals), the initial question of who should be admitted into the organization was of major concern.

The UN Security Council, made up of five permanent members – France, the United Kingdom, the United States, China, and the USSR (now Russia)– had to discern which actors from World War II would be allowed entrance. This was a difficult task because forced exile could catalyze a re-energizing of illiberal movements in countries that had just been defeated with such regimes. Similar to the exclusion of Spain in the Marshall Plan, exclusion from the UN was feared to potentially cause a rise in nationalism, autarkic economies, and illiberal regimes. However, this was considered a cost worth bearing: any country that assisted the main Axis powers in World War II, including those who provided expressly non-belligerent assistance, were to be prevented from joining the UN. This was not only considered a punishment, but to be important for increasing the legitimacy of the peace organization.

The United States, in accordance with the philosophy of the European Recovery Plan, believed that free economies should be prioritized before free political movements. This theory rested on the assumption that free markets and movements of people would catalyze democratic movements, whereas liberalized democracies would not be able to survive under closed or fixed

⁴⁴ United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, 1 UNTS XVI, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/preamble>.

economic systems. Therefore, President Harry Truman hoped to use the Marshall Plan's initial reformation of European economic infrastructure in the former-Axis countries as a litmus test for a country's ability to rejoin the world order.

The Spanish question was one of the most contentious first discussions of the young United Nations; could Spain be admitted into the UN whilst having a mass-murdering dictator in power? After supporting the Axis powers? Spain had assisted Germany, and in its Civil War, been greatly assisted by the German and Italian fascist regimes. Hitler had held a specific reverence for the country because of his similarities with Franco, and had considered the German aerial bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica, as well as German military and technical assistance with Spanish political repression and the exclusion of adversaries, to be an unpaid debt. Although Hitler died in 1945, the United Nations Security Council could not forget the alliance that Spain had forged with the Nazis. Providing the tungsten ore necessary for German weaponry, which the United States had enacted a massive naval blockade to prevent, was considered tantamount to providing men and bombs to the German military. As Luis Quintanilla, a representative of Mexico, said in the introduction of his resolution in June of 1945, "No state whose regime had been established with the help of the Axis could be admitted to the United Nations while that regime remained in power."⁴⁵ He went on to quote Franco's message to Hitler in which Franco had expressed a shared hope for Germany to "reach its immortal destiny under the glorious sign of the swastika."⁴⁵

The Security Council held separate impressions of Spain's potential inclusion in the UN; the United States leadership was cognizant of the potential devolution of Spanish society into

⁴⁵ John A. Houston, "The United Nations and Spain." *The Journal of Politics* 14, no. 4 (1952): 683–709. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2126447>. 683.

one that resembled prewar Germany which allowed the Nazis to rise to power. Civil societies that are strong but domestically and internationally repressed are fundamentally more likely to devolve into totalitarian regimes. The potential for Spain to re-arm and amend itself as a pro-fascist, anti-Western nation, was not feared by the United States to the same extent as the potential that a removal of Spanish Nationalists could lead to a Communist regime gaining power. Furthermore, Truman had to contend against the rising tide of anti-Spanish public opinion in the United States.⁴⁶

After the United States was dragged into World War II, the country had been shaken up. Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941, showed US citizens that the perception that the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans kept them isolated from global conflicts was only a facade. Thus, although there was no great sentiment to intervene in Spain, the objectives of appeasement and allegiance were not suitable for Truman's constituents. The end of triaging, because of the collapse of Nazi Germany, permitted the United States to stop assisting the Spanish with material imports- now, for a moment at least, the country could be realigned in the United States' view for world peace without the necessary context of appeasement in order to prioritize greater enemies.

For the British, political and economic feelings towards Spain were at odds with each other; British investments in Spain and imports from the country were considerably necessary for the health of the British economy, while Franco's political endeavors were antithetical to British security. British labor movements held that anti-worker policies, including the limiting of free speech, the right to labor, and the fixed economy that Franco was building, were dangerous movements to be building only hundreds of miles away. In this vein, the permittance of a

⁴⁶ Young, "Spain and the Early Cold War: The 'Isolation Paradigm' Revisited," 56.

pro-Axis, anti-democratic regime to remain in power nearby promoted massive security concerns that could not be appeased. However, the removal of Franco could promote the nationalization of British investments in Spain. British support of the economic coalition with Spain promoted the signing of trade agreements throughout 1945-50 and in 1951, Miguel Primo de Rivera, the former military dictator of Spain before the Spanish Republic took power in 1931, became the Spanish Ambassador to the United Kingdom.⁴⁶

For the Soviets, it was much easier to formulate a response to the question of Spanish inclusion in the UN; after providing secret assistance to the Republicans in Madrid throughout the Spanish Civil War, the USSR had already been faced with direct repudiation by the controlling Nationalist faction of Spain. Markedly anti-Bolshevik, pro-Franco officials considered any allegiance to the Communists as anti-Christian, anti-Spanish, and antithetical to the internal conflict fought seven years prior. Truman and Stalin agreed that there was no strong reason for interfering in Spanish internal affairs, though for juxtaposed reasons; whereas Stalin believed that there was no likelihood for a “people’s democracy,” i.e. a Communist regime taking power, and thus considered any intervention to be futile, Truman believed that there was a real chance for a pro-Communist faction to gain legitimacy, and therefore did not want to risk any meddling from increasing such likelihood.⁴⁷

All of these conflating interests notwithstanding, the United Nations members voted unanimously (though the USSR abstained) to exclude Spain in perhaps the simplest moment of discussing Spanish global positioning that would take place. The ability to demand “mere

⁴⁷ Young, “Spain and the Early Cold War: The ‘Isolation Paradigm’ Revisited,” 58.

expression of sentiment for the record,” as Luis Quintanilla had done, would not be substantial enough for the coming years.⁴⁸

In February of 1946, Spain executed a group of former Spanish members of the French Resistance who fought against the Nazi occupation of France. The reaction of the French, which had 30% of its cabinet identify as communists, was “violent” and the Communists and Socialists together forced the French Foreign Minister to close the Spanish border. Simultaneously, the French government reached out to the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union to ask them to petition the Security Council to consider the “severance of diplomatic and economic relations with Spain so long as the Franco government remained in power.”⁴⁸ This was one of the first examples of recognizing the United Nations’ role in international politics and provided the legitimacy that the League of Nations had failed to generate.

When Poland brought the question of Spanish repudiation to the floor of the United Nations in April of 1946, it was indicative of the growing global institutional exile of Spain. In a few months, Spain would be excluded from the Marshall Plan and all of the subsequent organizations that would be born from it; the loss of Italian and German alliances deepened a lack of ideological partners in Europe, and although Spain was able to bolster itself economically throughout this year as a leading exporter, the rising anti-Spanish sentiments in US and U.K. labor and class movements were indicative of an impending shift of Spanish perception and treatment.

⁴⁸ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 684.

“In view of the foregoing, the situation in Spain must be considered not as an internal affair of that country but as a concern of all the United Nations.”⁴⁹ Although the Allies, mainly through the American and British, had worked operatively (though not diplomatically) with Spain through World War II, Poland’s request of the Security Council to consider Spanish internal affairs as an affront to world peace was also a formal request for the US and UK to distance themselves from Franco. The execution of Spanish citizens in a symbolic spurning of France’s leftwing democracy positioned France on the other side of this equation, where there was a clearer evaporation of any potential relationship between the two countries. The United States expressly supported French moderates in hopes to “prevent precipitati[ng] action” and introduced a proposal in March of 1946 calling for the Spanish people to remove the Franco regime and institute a new government of liberal leaders while refraining from entering a civil war.⁵⁰

Moscow considered these discussions to be evident of a “rehashing of the old non-intervention policy,” implying the futility of such debates.⁵⁰ In the face of continuous French pressure, the United States was forced to articulate its position; “On the basis of its present analysis...the Government of the United States does not believe that a situation exists, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.”

⁵¹ French insistence of UN-imposed diplomatic severance and Soviet discrediting of the

⁴⁹ United Nations Security Council. *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 1945-1951*. New York: United Nations, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, 1954, 306-308.
https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/repertoire_1946_1951.pdf. 306.

⁵⁰ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 685.

⁵¹ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 686.

Anglo-American handlings brought into question the ability of the United Nations, or any international peace organization, to properly administer and promote peace; this goal of peace promotion, as the French specified, required the defense of one's nation.

The Spanish issue came to a head in April of 1946. Whereas the initial discussion of Spanish admittance into the UN a year earlier had found unanimous favor, by the time the Polish representative Oscar Lange introduced a resolution regarding the future treatment of Spain, the Security Council was fractured. The United States and the United Kingdom were not keen on Franco staying in power but were fearful of a Communist government "replacing Franco and posing a threat on the strategic Iberian peninsula."⁵² Conversely, the Soviet Union wished to "even the score" against Franco and empower the forces it had initially supported during the Spanish Civil War.⁵¹

Lange introduced arguments based on the legalese of the UN Charter that aimed to determine whether or not the UN had the authority to enact enforcement measures, as well as whether or not the Spanish question fell under the umbrella of domestic jurisdiction. Establishing the precedent for jurisprudential authority, oversight, and action, this case was one of the first examples of international law being enacted and challenged.

Appeasement was a great fear for many of the UN member nations that supported Lange's assertion that Spain's actions and illiberal government were a security issue for the world at large. Whereas the initial Allied tactic of mitigated appeasement garnered them leverage over the Spanish without forcing them to join the Axis on the battlefield, the UN committee focused on the Spanish question found that appeasement as an *objective* would be wholly

⁵² John A. Houston, "The United Nations and Spain." 687.

ineffective and irresponsible. However, in a dynamic soon to be worn as a reputation throughout the next decades, the Security Council found its hands tied by the legal boundaries of the UN Charter it had written. The British representative, Sir Alexander Cadogan, purported that the Charter outlines denoted that the Spanish question was not for the Security Council to decide but rather the General Assembly.⁵³ This articulation of the British stance highlighted the juxtapositional desires of the British government in regards to Spain.

In December of 1946, Polish representative Lange entered his resolutions to the General Assembly of the United Nations. The United States again continued their policy of non-intervention, arguing that the Spanish people should have the right to a government of consent and not censorship, but that it was not for the international community to impose. United States Senator Thomas Connally argued that international intervention in Spain would “only induce internal strife,” going on to describe Franco as “no direct threat to the peace” of the United Nations member states.⁵⁴

Here belies a diversion from the initial United States tactic to enact appeasement strategies derived from triage considerations; the initial non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War was done in the hopes of preventing any further growth of the growing geopolitical conflict in Europe, as Italy and Germany were growing their power and the latter was beginning to extend its empire territorially. To consistently defend a strategy of non-intervention in 1946 was to declare a hollow view of the “constantly increasing misery of the Spanish people” under Franco’s regime.⁵⁴ France’s representatives argued that “no security system could guarantee [world] peace if so strategic a country as Spain were excluded from membership.”⁵⁴ The United

⁵³ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 689.

⁵⁴ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 691-692.

States deference to Franco, whom it had three years prior strongly considered removing by force, was indicative of the changing geopolitical tides. Such appeasement could be considered again through the lens of triaging, prioritizing Spanish relationships in the face of a new foe; the Soviet Union.

In calling out Western naivete and hypocrisy, Léon Jouhaux addressed the United Nations, and truly the United States and its supporters, with a scathing remark: “Anyone who wants the end must not shrink from the means ... if the United Nations fails to do this, it is of no further use.”⁵⁵ The United States, recognizing the inability to garner more support for non-belligerent intervention, eventually curtailed its attempts to peacefully maintain diplomatic relationships with Spain. The Spanish question had, for now, been answered; all member nations were forbidden to send ambassadors to Spain and were required to remove all forms of symbolic allegiance. Due to the youth of the UN and the United States’ authoritarian control over the organization, what this regulation meant practically would be tested and revised over the start of the Cold War. Notably, anti-Franco sentiment was not again held so universally by the UN member nations from this point on.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 693.

⁵⁶ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 694.

Chapter IV: Burgeoning Cold War and Spanish Re-Inclusion to World Order

Many political historians consider 1947 as the beginning of the Cold War, which can be corroborated by the seismic changes in US official policy toward Spain at that time. Calibrating US military policy towards the Spanish against the context of a potential Soviet annexation of the Iberian peninsula, military leaders formulated the opinion that the US “should aid Spain economically as soon as possible.”⁴⁶ At the same time, the United States, in its introduction of the Marshall Plan, was denoting the official stance of neutrality towards Spain, putting the onus on the sixteen recipient nations to determine whether or not Spain should receive economic assistance.

Prior to this, the United States viewed any dealing with Spain as a tool to prevent the Axis from gaining geopolitical and military power during the Second World War. Prioritizing the stifling of the German army allowed for the upheaval of Spanish civil society to be cast aside while the security of the world was at stake. In the year after the end of the war, Franco’s violent, militaristic rise to power was able to be considered from a diplomatic, legal perspective without a necessity for triaging or reprioritizing against global conflict. However, after the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948, US officials began to reevaluate the potential strategic benefit of alliance with Spain. Again, Francisco Franco was able to avoid full indignation of the global community because of the necessity for appeasement amidst the US strategy of containment. Spain’s anti-Bolshevik reputation helped the United States pay less attention to the repression of citizens and civil rights, showing the US tendency to overweight future fears above current atrocities.

1948 began to show cracks in the UN’s desire to restrict diplomatic and economic relationships between Spain and the US. This year brought a major rise in visits from the US

Department of Defense to Madrid, as well as civilian vacations. Chase National Bank, at the spurring of US Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, began to write loans to Spain in order to ensure economic headspace whilst Spain was excluded from the Marshall Plan. All of these measures, both official and unofficial, were done so as to stabilize Spanish society; not to liberalize it, but to ensure its ability to withhold Soviet pressures.⁵⁷

Spain and the Infancy of the Cold War

In early 1947, the CIA had conducted an investigation into the extent of Soviet influence throughout the Spanish government and society. In attempts to determine whether or not the Soviets were “instigat[ing] another Civil War,” the goals of the US enemy were more clearly outlined; the USSR held that the mercurial US diplomatic relationship would remove Spain from the American sphere of influence and prevent a strong tie between Spain and the Western allies; furthermore, the Soviets were banking on Spanish disgruntlement with internal society pushing Spaniards to revolt— even if they were not communist, they may act as communists, in utter repudiation of the current government.⁴⁷

This understanding helped the United States realign its strategy towards Spain. Recognizing that losing the Iberian peninsula would be of great danger to its containment efforts— which by 1948 had resulted in such official recognition of tensions between the two superpowers that the United States pledged to offer diplomatic, militant, and economic assistance to any country resisting Communist intervention— highlighted the necessity for American cohesion regarding Spain. In this same year, although Stalin had ceased planning guerilla warfare

⁵⁷ Young, “Spain and the Early Cold War: The ‘Isolation Paradigm’ Revisited,” 57.

in Spain, the Soviet Union believed that any destabilization of the Spanish government would result in American occupation, similar to the division of East and West Germany. Therefore, the Spanish territory would become an important component between the Western allies and the Soviet Union, providing insight to the Cold War framework that was being developed throughout European nations at this point.

However, the Soviet Union was still searching for ways to attract the Spanish into its orbit. Deciding against the tactic of removing a regime came at the same time of the expansion of the Marshall Plan, which was showing the ability for economic cooperation to result in political alliance. In addition to the Soviet attempts to use “top-secret, informal, third-party contacts” to engage in diplomatic efforts with other Western European nations throughout this period, the USSR attempted to purchase materials to craft military equipment from Spain, via third-parties in Switzerland.⁵⁸ The United States, due to its retained relationship of supporting the Spanish people through non-intervention and the secret assistance it had given Franco’s regime throughout World War II, was able to use its leveraged position to prevent the deal with the Soviets from occurring.⁵⁹ The USSR had initially exported wheat to Spain before World War II and presumably was considering how to restart trade talks with the Spanish during this period of global restructuring. This example highlights the long-term benefit of America’s initial diplomatic policy towards Spain in which the US repudiated Franco’s actions but refrained from intervening internally in Spain. Doing so created American favor; if not to a great extent, it at the

⁵⁸ Young, “Spain and the Early Cold War: The ‘Isolation Paradigm’ Revisited,” 61.

⁵⁹ Young, “Spain and the Early Cold War: The ‘Isolation Paradigm’ Revisited,” 62.

very least showed Franco that aligning with the USSR was not Spain's only route out of global exile.

Although the USSR had decided against a ground attack of Spain in favor of using diplomatic means to forge an alliance, Spanish officials were still fearful of a Soviet armed attack. Even through 1950, this fear coursed through Spanish interactions with the West and forced Spain to prioritize its diplomatic relationship with the United States and its economic relationship with Britain. The worry of Soviet attack helped give the United States leverage in its plans for retaining the Spanish alliance amidst the West's sphere of influence throughout Europe to prevent the expansion of communism. Furthermore, it allowed the United States to continue to offer promises of future military and economic assistance in order to maintain relations between the two countries. Immediate patriation of Spain to the UN, Marshall Plan, or other world organizations was not achievable between 1946-50 because of Franco's alliances of Mussolini and Hitler, as well as the continuing totalitarian rule of his regime.

However, amidst the changing context of world allegiances due to the beginning of the bipolar world order, the United States prioritized the preservation of diplomatic ties with Spain, and US actions leading up to this point had made it so there were diplomatic ties to preserve.

By 1950, the relationship between the US and the USSR had soured so greatly that it became clear; the United States, similarly as it had a few years prior, was put in between a rock and a hard place, and by utilizing the tactic of appeasement by triage circumstances, was going to develop a relationship with Spain in order to stifle the potential cross-continental growth of the Soviet Union.

From the Spanish perspective, there were many different factors suffocating Spain's future outlook. Although Spain was reported to have engaged in trade with the Soviets for a brief period in 1950, these actions are understood as being born from a necessity to gain greater treatment from any potential deals with the United States. The political ramifications of annexing itself from American relations were too great to risk; pacifying relations with the Soviet Union would be useful as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the United States, and could allow some insight into Soviet plans (possibly assuaging Spanish concerns of Soviet invasion). Furthermore, it helped Spain "play the United States and USSR off of each other" amidst Spain's economic troubles.⁵⁹

Franco's regime had reduced the Spanish economy to an autarky, a closed-market economic system, by using tariffs to "protect or promote national industries."⁶⁰ Utilizing repression tactics against workers worsened labor movements and productivity, while Spanish industry was still operating in its pre-war, agrarian, antiquated ways, and was truly feeling the burn of exclusion from the Marshall Plan. Unlike the other European nations that had been included and thus surpassed pre-war levels of production, Spanish economic isolation was choking the country's abilities to sell and produce goods. National subsidization of goods manufacturing, such as the country's steel industry, prevented competition, low prices, and any meaningful cyclical of the economy.

Private capital and public labor were also underutilized during this period of late-industrialization.⁶⁰ The removal of Spain, by both internal and external forces, from

⁶⁰ Jose D. Garcia Perez, "Spain: Economic Development Under Conditions of Autarky." In *World Development: An Introduction*, edited by Prodromos Panayiotopoulos and Gavin Capps, 125–132. Pluto Press, 2001. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt18fsc3v.22>. 127.

international markets prevented Spanish laborers from being able to afford the products that were highly subsidized and inflated by the government's economic ministry. By introducing such high tariffs, the barriers to import foreign products were impermeable. Unlike Nazi Germany, which had radically revitalized its industrial capabilities throughout its autarkic period, Spain was paralyzed by its governmental regulations and productive incapacities. The Spanish economy was beginning to fail.

The Pact of Madrid

The Pact of Madrid, signed in September of 1953, was an agreement between the United States and Spain wherein the United States would extend \$500 million worth of cash (roughly \$6 trillion today), as well as technical and military aid, in exchange for the ability to place four military bases on Spanish soil. The agreement, formulated to end Spain's international isolation, contained three pillars; the economic concessions from the US to Spain, the stated military and technical assistance that the US would provide the Spanish military, and Spain giving the US military the ability to create four air bases on Spanish soil.⁶¹

It has been noted that, while the economic assistance helped open the Spanish economy, what was most intriguing to Franco was that he was going to be able to bolster his military government's ability to suppress the populace of Spain and continue its dominance internally. However, the inclusion to the organizational structure of the Marshall Plan, including the network of European groups for economic development and free trade, allowed Spain to recalibrate its economic positioning in the European market. This transition helped spur the

⁶¹ Pact of Madrid, Articles 1-5, 1953, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/sp1953.asp

eventual opening of Spanish borders to foreign travel in the late 1950s, which propagandized the Spain we know today, with bullfighting, paella, and topless beaches. These cultural traits advertised a shift from the repressive Catholic regime that killed political adversaries and prevented women from becoming educated, and such traits were encouraged because of the necessity for foreign tourists and investors.

According to officials at the time, the military bases in Spain “constitute[d], along with the bases in Turkey, perhaps the most important network of American bases outside the United States.”⁶² This importance was due to Spanish control of the Strait of Gibraltar, the Spanish-controlled waterway between Europe and Northern Africa that oversaw the majority of the world’s oil export supply as well as a large amount of material goods. Spain’s location allowed it to “monitor and control entrance into...the Mediterranean,” which became increasingly vital as Communist-supported uprising began to spring up in the region: “All sea transportation from the United States and other northern European allies attempting to supply the nations, such as Greece and Turkey...must pass through the Strait.”⁶² For the Soviet Union, the Strait of Gibraltar was one of only two possible routes between their ports in the Black Sea ports and international waters.

Spain’s future exclusion from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1959 was based on the belief of neighboring countries that Franco’s government acted upon

⁶² Perry R. Oaks, “Historical Analysis of Spain’s Entrance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Its Lack of Full Integration into the Military Force Structure.” Thesis, Air Force Institute of Technology Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, School of Systems and Logistics, 1990. 3. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA229424.pdf>

“incompatible...ideals” to their democratic systems.⁶³ The assumption that Spain would not be committed to “strengthening their free institutions,” as stated in Article Two of the NATO treaty, prevented diplomatic and military agreements from being formed at this point.⁶² However, the Pact of Madrid, signed six years earlier, was indicative of the US desire to increase its presence in Western Europe and to be apart of the control over the Strait of Gibraltar; rather than increasing Spanish presence in US-led diplomatic territory, the US goal was to increase American presence in Spanish-controlled economic and geopolitical territories.⁶¹

The actions taken, and rhetoric employed, by the United States in the year and a half leading up to the signing of the Pact of Madrid is of great importance. President Harry Truman enlisted Paramount executive Stanton Griffis as an ambassador to Spain in 1951, noteworthy because he was the first US Ambassador to Spain since the UN embargo that prevented any diplomatic relations with Spain in 1946. Griffiths referred to Franco as a “charming gentleman,” which showed a stark contrast to not only the way that the United States public thought of the Spanish leader, but to previous American statements made about the Spanish regime.⁶⁴

Spain had been slowly integrating into international organizations, joining the World Health Organization in 1951 and UNESCO in 1952. In the spring of 1952, a Spanish technocrat suggested the creation of a “southern tier defense alignment” of Spain, Greece, Italy, and several Arab states “to defend the Mediterranean... in conjunction with NATO.”⁶⁵

⁶³ Perry R. Oaks, “Historical Analysis of Spain’s Entrance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Its Lack of Full Integration into the Military Force Structure.” 2.

⁶⁴ Dewitt Mackenzie, “Griffis Reports Franco Is ‘Charming Gentleman,’” *Miami Daily News*, March 5,

1951.<https://www.newspapers.com/article/the-miami-news-stanton-griffis-franco/11851277/>

⁶⁵ Stanley G. Payne, *Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison: Univ Of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 418.

The return of Spain into the world order and international organizations has been noted as Franco's biggest coup in the Pact of Madrid, as it fully solidified Spain's ability to decorate themselves as a nation that was anti-communist rather than anti-democratic. Doing so opened the door for the United States to work with the Spanish to contain the spread of communism, as opposed to the perception of being a nation that was supporting the spread of fascism. Especially in accordance with the fact that Hitler and Mussolini, two deadly fascist dictators in nations adjacent to Spain, were dead, and their countries were now working with the Americans, Spain did not appear as much of a diplomatic sore thumb as it might have years prior. US officials prioritized a future-facing approach that recognized Spanish utility over condemnation for past actions. By refraining from entering into the Civil War on behalf of the Republicans, assisting the Spanish throughout World War II, and arguing for non-invasive/non-belligerent intervention of Spanish society at the UN in 1946, the United States had been able to play the long game and prevent a souring of their relationship to Spain. Now, when the US needed them in their sphere against the Soviets, Spain would be there.

Conversely, pundits could argue that Spain was operating from a drive reduction mindset, where the country would act in its best interest both continuously and reflexively to each new situation. This, for example, would mean that whether or not the United States condemned the Francoist regime in 1945, the Spanish government would recognize that their best path to economic stability and re-inclusion to world order in 1948 was through playing by the rules of America's game. So, the United States could have done more to quell the fears of the French by more harshly condemning the Spanish execution of former French Republic defenders, and could

easily have eased domestic public opinions by refraining from making concessions to a military dictator that embodied a resume antithetical to that of American ethos.

However, this argument falls flat because it is enacted with the fallacy of hindsight bias. The United States prioritizing the appeasement of Spain in the Second World War in order to keep the country as a potential geopolitical asset for the start of the Cold War only makes sense if the United States *knew* there was going to be a Cold War. Instead, appeasement must be seen instead through a more immediate lens— as the tactic of creating a hierarchy of enemies and acting with two simple motivations; the first being to prevent further inflammation of external conflict, and the second being to retain specific amounts of control over a subjugated actor. The United States, by controlling Spanish oil supply and at times assisting Spain monetarily throughout World War II, was able to simultaneously keep Spain from joining the War as a belligerent actor as well as reinforce American hegemonic power. The Soviet Union was right that the US was creating diplomatic relations with Spain as an extension of Western imperialism; it was wrong in believing that this meant anything for expansion of territories. The United States did not want to have more land— it wanted to make sure that it could keep its enemies from having it.

In the verbiage of the Pact, the United States was entering into this agreement in order to “...contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security” and bolster Spanish defense mechanisms.⁶⁶ More clearly, this agreement finalized the Spanish alliance with the United States over the Soviets, providing the American military a marked presence in Western Europe and the Iberian Peninsula. Assuaging the initial geopolitical fears America held regarding Spain, the

⁶⁶ Pact of Madrid, 1953, Preamble.

Soviet Union would thus have to directly face American forces in order to invade Spain or annex the trade routes in the Strait of Gibraltar between Spain and Morocco.

Rhetorical analysis of the Pact of Madrid highlights the changed priorities of American officials over the prior seven years. Whereas Roosevelt had considered removing Franco from power in 1943 but refrained because of British investments and a fear of inflaming another civil war, United States officials were now referring to Francoist Spain as a “friendly nation,” this Pact ensuring a continued development of the two countries’ “friendship.”⁶⁷ The role of Spain as a geopolitical asset against Soviet expansion throughout continental Europe, preventing Communist control of the Strait of Gibraltar (thus preventing the collapse of Europe as an American market for goods), and Spain’s ideological assertion as a Catholic, anti-Communist entity was worthy enough fodder for the United States to put aside Franco’s crimes against humanities, brutal ascent to power, and commitment to illiberal rule. This can be seen as the start of the United States diplomatic policy tactics of proxy appeasement and the Washington Consensus, where expanding economic freedoms and reducing barriers to trade could liberalize a political society in a trickle-down method.

Spain’s Induction to the United Nations

1950 was a turning point in Spanish-American relations. United States foreign policy had become tangled, as the 1946 resolution prevented diplomatic relations between UN nations and Spain, but the United States was holding full relationships with many Soviet bloc countries aimed at maintaining international peace. American officials considered three main reasons for

⁶⁷ Pact of Madrid, 1953, Article 1.

realigning foreign policy with the Spanish; Secretary of State Dean Acheson declared that the United States government did not believe that Spain represented “a threat to the peace,” that economic or political sanctions would either “unite the Spanish more solidly than ever or lead to a civil war with unknown consequences,” and that diplomatic recognition of a government did not presuppose a “moral approval” of the government itself.⁶⁸

This creation of a new policy aimed at establishing relations with Spain belied a lack of alternatives to Francisco Franco and an understanding that the Franco regime was fully entrenched in the governance of Spain. This policy also recognized the importance of preventing Spanish isolation from other Western European nations. However, Acheson understood that these other countries were “not then prepared” for Spain to be inducted into international peace treaties and economic organizations.⁶⁹ To appease these nations, Acheson described President Harry Truman’s attempts to convince the Franco regime to “liberalize its practices in the direction of ‘increased civil liberties, religious freedom, and the freedom to exercise the elementary rights of organized labor.’”⁶⁸ These communications became the groundwork for Truman’s stipulations for Spanish economic partnership, although Congress felt differently; in August of 1950, Senator McCarran introduced a bill amendment that would apportion \$100 million to loan to Spain. Both President Truman and Secretary Acheson believed that Spain had “thus far refused to adopt more democratic policies,” and expressed their disfavor of providing Franco general funds for financial and military development.⁶⁰³ Congress passed the resolution with concessions to Truman, limiting the total credits to \$62.5 million, and mandating Spanish actions of domestic liberalization.

⁶⁸ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 703.

⁶⁹ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 704.

Subsequent to the changing relationship between the United States and Spain, and US postulation that recognizance or relationship should not imply a judgment of moral approval towards a nation, several Latin American states introduced a resolution to legalize such perspectives. Supporters of the resolution argued that they were not supporting the Franco regime but rather redirecting any judgment of a government's internal machinations to the people within the "domestic jurisdiction" of the state itself.⁶⁸ The Soviet Union and the Communist bloc at large believed this resolution to be further proof of American imperialism, stating that "once again, 'ruling circles' in [the United States] were interested only in transforming Spain into a base for military aggression" and were using the Latin countries as puppets.⁷⁰ To the Soviets, Acheson's supposed reversal from his earlier position of anti-Spanish integration showed that "the United States was no longer interested in human rights and fundamental freedoms."⁶⁹

The United States, in response to these accusations, continued to build what would later become a tenet of the Washington Consensus; "freed of external pressure, Spain [will], in its own way, take steps which would enable it to re-enter the family of nations."⁶⁹ Although American economic concessions and assistance always came with mandated economic stipulations, there was consistently a belief of a trickle-down effect that would eventually liberalize a nation. Within the American position was an admission that the global political atmosphere had changed greatly since the year prior, signaling the beginning of a bipolar world order between the Soviet Union and the United States. Bolivian representative Eduardo Anze Matienzo outlined the pro-resolution opinion, stating that "no one in 1946 had foreseen the reproduction of totalitarian systems elsewhere under other names than fascism, but embodying the same threat to liberty and

⁷⁰ John A. Houston, "The United Nations and Spain." 705.

independence.”⁷¹ To the supporters of Spanish integration, any discussion of Franco’s lack of democratization was naive in the faster declining polities of other nations, like Greece and certain Soviet bloc countries. To oppositionists, any changed opinions towards Spain were indicative of Spain’s role as an asset in the changing world order, rather than any growth of liberalism within the country. Therefore, any relationship with Spain would indicate an abdication of human rights and erode the legitimacy of the United Nations.

When the French delegate finally rose to speak right before the final vote, his position was perhaps most interesting. Remembering prior policy of his government towards Spain, though recognizing the role of the United Nations in administering proper order internationally, he stated that “the decisions proposed to the General Assembly may prove expedient even if they are not justified.”⁷⁰ With the French capitulating to the United States and the Latin American countries, the resolution passed: the United Nations no longer stood in the way of any diplomatic relations between its member nations and Spain.⁷⁰

Although the United Nations was not preventing diplomatic relations, it did not promise Spain membership into the organization. Spain was not inducted into the United Nations until 1955 because although domestic jurisdiction should not prevent relations, it was a deterrent for Spanish inclusion in the UN: “...It should long have been obvious that a form of government may be directly related to the aggressive propensities of a state. The existence of a mere “potential” threat to the peace was considered sufficient to make the question one of international concern.”

⁷² The changing United States opinion towards Spain provided the gunpowder for initial relations to be forged between Spain and UN nations; the growth of Spanish-American relations and

⁷¹ John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 706.

⁷² John A. Houston, “The United Nations and Spain.” 709.

“friendship” through the 1953 Pact of Madrid provided the framework for Spanish international integration and the assumed assurance that Spain no longer represented a threat to international peace. The Cold War split the globe into pro-Soviet or pro-American factions, with separate definitions of what “international peace maintenance” meant.⁶⁶

The question of whether Spain had truly attempted to enter stages of democratization became less important than what they were willing to promise to uphold in the future, if the fragile world order were to truly fracture; “I...Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, ...declare that the Government of Spain hereby accepts the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations and undertakes to fulfill those obligations.”⁷³ Spain, in December of 1955, with the assistance of the United States and several Arab and Latin countries, became a member of the United Nations, ten years after the end of World War II.

⁷³ Spain, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Alberto Martin Artajo. "Declaration of Acceptance of the Obligations Contained in the Charter of the United Nations." Madrid, September 23, 1955. Accessed April 30, 2024. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/docs/spain.pdf>.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to understand how and why the United States treated Spain the way it did from the pre-WWII period to the infancy of the Cold War. This was done by initially viewing the motivations for non-intervention during the Spanish Civil War. Moving next to understanding the context of Spain's role in the Axis sphere during World War II, actions of appeasement were undertaken to assist or restrict Spanish economic movement in order to prevent Spain from joining the war as a belligerent actor. After the end of World War II in 1945, it appeared that the creation of the United Nations and the novel structuring of global modes of coalition would alienate the Spanish due to Francisco Franco's violent rise to power, proclaimed alliance with the Axis powers, and continuous dictatorial repression of his citizens. However, the fraying relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States became a Cold War, and Spain's geopolitical role became a potential asset for either actor. The United States, through its initial strategy of appeasement and non-belligerent assistance prior to the end of World War II, as well as military and financial assistance given to Spain in 1953, was able to leverage its relationship with Spain to become some variation of allies. These interactions opened the door for Spanish reintegration into world order, and culminated in the admittance of Spain to the United Nations in 1955, officially recognizing Francisco Franco's government.

The United States utilized a strategy of nonviolent hard-power economic measures and non-interventionist appeasement in order to achieve its goals with Spain. US officials considered the spread of communism to be a more dangerous long-term threat than fascism because of the externalizing nature of the Soviet system. In order for countries to expand economically, foreign

economies would have to be centered around the same monetary and fiscal systems of governance. The United States would not be able to trade with a Communist regime in free-market practices because the latter regime would be a closed market. Therefore, the United States will presumably prioritize right-wing extremist regimes over left-wing because the former are more closely aligned with American ethos, and through expanding economic assistance, could develop into a stable market for American business.

From the Spanish Civil War to the induction of Spain into the UN in 1955, the United States employed this appeasement tactic in order to not further inflame European conflicts. The United States diplomatically and military had to operate by a triage tactic, where it positioned and prioritized enemies against the greater evil. In this case, by recognizing as early as 1936 the potential dangers of German territorial expansion, the security of allies, mitigation of European conflict, and health of the American economy became the most important goals for Roosevelt. If Roosevelt were to violate the non-intervention agreement in 1936 and send American weapons or military members against either the Republicans or Nationalists, it would have inflamed European conflicts, put the security of France at risk, and closed another market to American businesses. However, by refraining from entering on either side of the war, yet condemning Franco publicly and privately, Roosevelt was able to both limit the Spanish conflict from spilling over the borders and realign US interests.

The United States' treatment of Spain showcased a different definition and enactment of appeasement than the colloquial definition. Whereas Neville Chamberlain decided to allow Germany to rebuild its military and expand territorially in the hopes that Hitler would be

satisfied and satiated, the United States leveraged its subjugated position over Spain in order to both restrict and control Spanish movements. By administering the supply of materials, such as oil and weaponry, and connection to international organizations, like the UN and the Marshall Plan, the United States was able to direct Spanish actions without further inflaming internal conflicts. Preventing any foreign invasions or belligerent allegiance with Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union was of utmost importance, followed by mitigating any chances of further civil wars, and the United States created a new form of tactical appeasement to do so.

This definition of appeasement relies on a country leveraging its power over another in order to motivate specific trends or actions by the latter. However, the former country refrains from intervening in internal machinations, instead utilizing restrictive measures to *support* the subjugated country in other ways, in order to keep positive favor. The United States, by restricting Spanish access to oil imports, became the sole supplier of oil to Spain, therefore creating a reliance on American goods. Roosevelt refrained from intervening in Spanish political society, instead using the allowance of economic measures or capital materials to sway Spanish favor. In this way, the United States used appeasement as a tactic, unlike the British, who had initially treated appeasement of Nazi Germany as the final objective. The British had just fought a bloody battle twenty years earlier, and hoped that allotting concessions to Hitler would keep them out of another. Roosevelt instead used appeasement as a tactic to prevent Spanish aggression during World War II, whereas his final objective was to maintain the United States position of power using economic and diplomatic sanctions.

Although this strategy was successful for the United States in the mid 20th century, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022 has shown that similar forms of appeasement may not always be as triumphant. Initial condemnations of President Vladimir Putin's actions had been followed by exile from specific international organizations, utilizing similar tactics that the US had enacted with Spain. Russian banks were removed from SWIFT, the main system for organizing and relaying international money transfers, leading to a tanking of the ruble and a massive hike in interest rates by Russia's central bank. Economic sanctions were celebrated by the international community and perceived to provide a chance for changing Russia's actions moving east. However, two years into this war, the Russian economy has survived and its oil industry, ever-relied upon by almost all of Europe, has thrived. A difference between this example and the United States strategies with Francoist Spain was that the United States held more leverage over the Spanish due to a lack of necessity for goods from, or access to, the Spanish market. The combination of a lack of reliance on Spanish production/exports and the geopolitical commodity of Spain in the infancy of the Cold War created a paradigm wherein the United States could condemn and restrict Spanish foreign action without disintegrating bilateral relations.

The US, like any other government, cannot act in a vacuum. The nature of diplomacy may lead to cognitive dissonance for the public who repudiate the support of an anti-democratic regime, whereas their government might see any coalition as the only compatible option to prevent further conflict. This does not mean that a country is always successful in these types of tactics. However, it's clear that the foreign policy of the United States demonstrates a willingness to swallow the tough pill of working with a right-wing regime in order to defend against that of

its greater enemy (which has usually been left-wing governments). The unraveling of the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union throughout World War II helped contextualize and subjectively position Spain based on its political value in the strategy of communist containment (or containment of Western imperialism, from the Soviet perspective).

The lessons the United States learned of their Spanish strategy, contrasted by their direct engagement against the Germans, led to the rise of proxy wars fought over the next forty years. Engaging in warfare in both Korea and Vietnam in order to contain Soviet expansion, rather than engaging directly on Soviet territory, was not only indicative of the deterrent nature of nuclear warfare but of the success of mitigated, scaled conflicts. Whereas the United States could have torn down the Berlin Wall and faced the might of the Soviets, the US instead rebuilt and democratized West Germany, decreased the barriers to trade for other European countries (successfully creating a linked European market), and built a sphere of influence through diplomatic efforts balancing assistance and control.

Prioritizing an enemy while working with another highlights the American logics of understanding future fears to be more serious than current atrocities. The United States would rather fireproof a neighborhood surrounding a single home on fire than try to extinguish the house. This could be considered as callous or naive, yet international relations do not act as fire does, rationally or physically determined; the United States chose to mitigate future risks of inflammation rather than take a chance on extinguishing Spanish internal conflicts with a stronghand, and in doing so, achieved their goals of defeating the Axis powers and increasing the American sphere of influence throughout the infancy of the Cold War. Can this strategic

framework be utilized for warfare, hot and cold, throughout the 21st century? Does the increased flow of information to, and protest power of, global citizens premeditate a decreased ability for a government to support an illiberal foreign government? Only time will tell if America's willingness to create a hierarchy of enemies will hurt it in the long run.

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