



ESPAÑA

**INTERVENCIÓN DEL
MINISTRO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES Y DE COOPERACIÓN DE ESPAÑA**

EXCMO. SR. D. ALFONSO DASTIS QUECEDO

**EN EL DEBATE GENERAL DEL
SEPTUAGÉSIMO SEGUNDO PERÍODO DE SESIONES DE LA
ASAMBLEA GENERAL DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS**

Nueva York, 21 de septiembre de 2017

(Cotejar con intervención definitiva)

**STATEMENT BY
THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION OF SPAIN**

H.E. MR. ALFONSO DASTIS QUECEDO

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 21 September 2017

(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Heads of State and Government,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to first welcome the election of Miroslav Lajčák as President of the Assembly and to wish him every success in his important role. This seventy-second session is the first during the term of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The Secretary-General can count on Spain's unwavering support for his work.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Spain is eager to make meaningful contributions to a fairer and freer world, a world with greater solidarity.

This assertion of our compromise is particularly relevant following the barbaric terrorist attacks that were perpetrated in Barcelona and Cambrils on 17 August. From this platform I wish to express the sincere gratitude of the people of Spain for the multitude of heartfelt displays of support and affection we have received from around the world. Terrorism will be vanquished through unity, perseverance and the full weight of the law.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Spain is a free and open society. Our rights and freedoms are safeguarded by our Constitution, which establishes a social and democratic rule of law system. The Spanish Government cannot and will not relinquish its defence of the rule of law and the values that underpin our political and legal system: freedom, equality, justice and political pluralism. Spain's public authorities have a duty to protect the rights and freedoms of all Spaniards. Any defiance of the rules of democracy is a grave assault on our peaceful and free coexistence. The act of pitting a supposed legitimacy against the constitutional rule of law inevitably leads to violations of fundamental rights of millions of citizens and is incompatible with the democratic system.

With the same conviction and determination with which we defend the constitutional rule and democracy in Spain, we do reaffirm the values, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. As His Majesty King Felipe VI said, standing at this very spot a year ago, the Charter "not only lit up the dark days of the past, but also now lights up our present and our future".

Mr. President,

Spain undertook our 2015-2016 term on the Security Council with a sense of responsibility. We made significant contributions in the fields of non-proliferation, the fight against terrorism and support for its victims, preventive diplomacy, the humanitarian agenda and also to increasing the Council's transparency. It is with this same dedication that we will serve on the Human Rights Council in the 2018-2020 term, should we be entrusted with this responsibility on 16 October. Defending and fostering human rights is a priority in Spain's foreign policy.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The modern world is highly interdependent. Extreme poverty, hunger, desertification, global warming and protection of woodland and the oceans are all crucial, pressing challenges that require concerted efforts. Spain reaffirms its full commitment to Agenda

2030, from which we have drawn inspiration for our policies. We are preparing for the voluntary review of progress on the Agenda in July 2018. The 2030 Agenda requires an enormous collective effort, to ensure that no one is left behind. We must work against inequality, promote prosperity and provide job opportunities to young people, in order for our planet to remain habitable for future generations. The future habitability of large areas of the world is inextricably linked to compliance with the Paris Climate Agreement. We must act accordingly.

Mr. President,

Large displacements of people have reached unprecedented levels in recent years. The two Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants that we have undertaken to adopt in 2018 should confirm the concerted, equitable and humane response to the phenomenon of refugees, contributing to the orderly management of migrant flows to the benefit of the countries of origin, transit and destination. Both phenomena deserve a differentiated attention.

Mr. President,

The scourge of war and threats to peace unfortunately still persist in many places the world over.

For seven years now we have been mentioning the conflict in Syria from this dais. We are comforted by the decline in hostilities and by the victories against Daesh, but we are still greatly concerned that individual interests are being placed before a political solution which, thanks to a UN's mediation, may lead to a genuine transition.

The UN is also playing a central role in promoting a political agreement in Yemen that will put an end to the world's most serious humanitarian crisis today.

In Iraq, the Iraqi government has been able to successfully recapture Mosul and other realms of terror from the hands of Daesh. Spain wishes to contribute to the new Iraq through, among other actions, the training of its security forces. Spain supports Iraq's reconstruction and reconciliation among its citizens, and rejects political ventures that detract efforts from the priority of consolidating a free, democratic and united Iraq.

In Lebanon, we welcome the recent renewal of UNIFIL's mandate, to which Spain's Armed Forces are contributing in a relevant way.

We trust that a rigorous compliance with the agreement with Iran will contribute to nuclear non-proliferation and peace in the region.

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict it is necessary for the parties to recover the spirit of Madrid and come back to the negotiating table. The status quo is not sustainable. We are concerned by the trends we are observing on the ground, which are going against the two-State solution. Only two democratic States, living side by side, within secure and recognized borders would finally make it possible to meet the legitimate expectations of Israelis and Palestinians.

Spain has always given priority to the Mediterranean region, which we aim to make a space for peace and prosperity. To this end, it is crucial to encourage greater cooperation, such as that fostered by the Union for the Mediterranean.

Peace and prosperity in the Maghreb countries are of a particular interest to Spain.

My country welcomes the UNSG's declared intention to relaunch talks between the parties in the Western Sahara conflict. We trust that his new Personal Envoy will make it possible for them to move towards a political, fair, lasting and mutually acceptable solution

which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, within a framework of provisions that are compatible with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Also in Libya, the SG's new Special Representative has Spain's full support to contribute to a political solution for a united country on the basis of the Political Agreement.

Spain pays special and preferential attention to the African continent. Africa needs peace, stability, economic growth and solid institutions. We firmly believe in the potential of African countries, which will flourish when conflicts end, peace becomes consolidated and social cohesion deepens.

Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia are two recent success stories that should lead the way for the other conflicts that are still ongoing in the continent. We reaffirm our conviction that the solution of these conflicts entails understanding them in their integrity and the cooperation in the pursuit of inclusive development solutions.

We are following with deep concern the situation in Mali, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Here, I would like to pay tribute to the Blue Helmets who lost their lives in these countries and in other United Nations missions. Spain has close ties with the Sahel countries. We want them to see Spain as a close neighbour, a country full of solidarity on which they can rely to combat terrorism and humanitarian crises such as that affecting Lake Chad.

We are concerned by the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call for respect for the constitutional provisions and for the dialogue in order to seek solutions, to lay the foundations for peaceful coexistence. Likewise, we call on the authorities of Burundi to act responsibly and with respect for the constitution.

Since 2001, the international community has invested significant resources to support Afghanistan, and last year it reaffirmed its commitment to that country. Spain deems it crucial to protect the promise of an Afghan society free from extremism and terrorism, respectful of human rights, including the rights of women and children.

Mr. President,

The nuclear and ballistic proliferation programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have become one of the principal threats to international peace. North Korea's renewal of nuclear and ballistic testing in January 2016 was in flagrant defiance of Council Resolutions, and severely undermines the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, to which Spain is fully committed. Spain once again reaffirms its call to the North Korean authorities to turn from a path that inevitably leads to the political and economic isolation of that country, and to sincerely embark on a way forward through substantive negotiations for a complete, irreversible, and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Latin America and the Caribbean are going through a period of deep changes in order to renew their institutions and search for mechanisms of integration. In this sense, we believe the Alliance for the Pacific is a successful model of political and economic coordination, and that its dialogue with Mercosur opens a hopeful future for the region.

Spain welcomed with satisfaction the peace agreement reached in Colombia. We would like to actively contribute to peace-building. We have taken part in the UN Mission to supervise the abandonment of weapons, we are heartened by the positive development of this process and we are open to participating in the new Mission that will verify the

reintegration of FARC guerrillas, beginning on 26 September. Besides, we are accompanying as well the consolidation of the peace process through development actions we are promoting in the bilateral, European Union and multilateral levels. We also welcome the prospect of a cessation of hostilities with the ELN, and we offer to contribute to this effort.

Spain is as well a brother country of Venezuela's. Thus, Spain fervently desires for the Venezuelan people to live again in democracy, peace and freedom. We call upon its government to, within the context of the current regional efforts, carry out a real dialogue with the opposition, a dialogue respectful with the Constitutional framework, with the integrity and separation of powers, and of the human rights, leading to the liberation of all political prisoners, the celebration of fair and transparent elections, and the end of the humanitarian crises. It is about returning the Venezuelan people its voice. My country will not spare efforts to make this agreement a reality.

Mr. President,

Spain supports CICIG's (International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala) difficult and necessary work for strengthening the rule of law in Guatemala, and encourages the continuation of the cooperation between the Guatemalan authorities and the CICIG. We hope that the recent disagreements between both parties may be overcome through dialogue and conciliation. CICIG is an important tool supporting Guatemala to reach governability, the correct functioning of the institutions, the prosperity, the well-being of the Guatemalan people, and its contribution to Central-American integration.

The development and stabilization of Haiti represent as well a major objective for Spain. My country has participated in the UN Mission from its onset. We will continue supporting the United Nations' efforts in the new chapter opened by Security Council Resolution 2350.

Mr. President,

The rule of law in the international sphere cannot allow breaches of the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. The annexation of Crimea represents a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in a clear transgression against international law. It is regrettable that such an act could occur in 21st-century Europe. We are also concerned by the persistence of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Its solution requires compliance with the Minsk agreements. The OSCE monitoring mission deserves all our support.

Mr. President,

The European Union is one of the most admirable legal and political constructs to arise after the Second World War. It has brought Europe unprecedented peace and prosperity. The United Kingdom's decision to leave the Union saddens us, but we will work so that the negotiations on a new relationship between the United Kingdom and the Union end with an agreement that preserves a close and fruitful relationship between both parties.

Mr. President,

In the context of Brexit, Spain has made a generous proposal to resolve the question of Gibraltar. It combines the unwavering claim of Spanish sovereignty over the colony, with a statute that benefits the Rock's inhabitants so that they may continue to enjoy the advantages of EU membership. We invite the United Kingdom to negotiate an

agreement based on these assumptions, which puts an end to an anachronism that seems completely outlandish in the context of the excellent relations between our two countries. We must not let more time go by without fulfilling the United Nations mandate calling on us to negotiate the question of Gibraltar.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Hispano-Roman philosopher Seneca wrote, "It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult." We have no choice but to dare to face, together and with determination, the problems that afflict us. With commitment, perseverance, and humility, we can make great progress. The road is long, and admits no delays. Let us make fulfilment of the San Francisco Charter's aspirations for peace, sustainable development, and human rights the imperative goal that guides our work during this session.

Thank you very much, Mr. President