



**COMMENTARY | Global Coalition**

# THE AMERICAN INTERESTS AT STAKE IN SPAIN

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## **Summary**

In November 2025, Senior Advisor to AFPI's President, Joshua Treviño, and Director of Civilizational Action at AFPI, Kristen Ziccarelli, traveled to Madrid and met with governmental personnel, political-party leaders, and civil-society leaders in Spain.

Spain remains a strategically important partner whose political trajectory, security posture, and foreign-policy orientation carry significant implications for American interests. The country is governed by Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and his coalition, while Spain's center right Partido Popular (PP) continues to hold a plurality in the national legislature.

President Trump has prompted what may be described as a broad European “awakening” to long-neglected defense obligations. This awakening is forcing EU governments—including Spain—to confront defense deficiencies, sovereignty failures, failures to live up to Western values, and the limitations of their previous dependency on U.S. security guarantees. Tensions persist in Spain’s approach to the Western Hemisphere. The Spanish Foreign Minister’s recent apology to Mexico for its conquest of the Americas reflects a troubling blend of radical ideology, historical misguidance, and political naïveté that only strengthens the forces within Mexico that are linked to the cartels; it also legitimizes the dangerous ideology of *indigenismo*, which has second-order effects on U.S. domestic security and regional stability.

Foreign-policy divergences between Spain and the United States are most evident regarding Morocco. Spain’s geographic proximity to North Africa and its migration pressures shape Madrid’s strategic priorities, often placing its position at odds with an America First approach in the region.

## **Interests for the World at Home:**

The landscape in Spain and among our European allies is directly relevant not just to American policymakers, but average U.S. citizens; in other words, foreign policy reaches

the dinner-table. Our trade deals determine whether factories in our heartlands stay open, maritime security determines whether fentanyl reaches American communities, and dangerous ideology in Europe flows into U.S. cities in the rapid transmission belt of ideas. Spain's trajectory therefore matters directly to Americans. Its posture toward Mexico, its indulgence of Latin America's narco-regimes, its openness to CCP influence, its internal battle over Christian heritage, and its proximity to African migration routes all shape matters that reach American families.

The American people want foreign policy towards all our allies grounded in *American welfare*—a posture that treats partners like Spain with clear expectations, aligns U.S. engagement with national interest, and ensures that the taxpayer institutions abroad truly represent those they serve. Even though this approach represents a break in the status quo of foreign policymaking, particularly with our European allies who expect a continuation of mere sentimentality, AFPI advances foreign policy approaches that prioritize U.S. interests and keeps this top of mind in all our engagements abroad.

### **Key Takeaways: Spain's Global Role and Its Relevance to U.S. Strategy**

Madrid views itself as a global capital. Spain sees its responsibility as global, embedded in the EU and NATO, but also anchored in its Mediterranean and African maritime and land borders, and its deep historical and cultural ties to the Ibero-American world. This positioning makes Spain a unique hinge between Europe, Africa, and Latin America.

Spain maintains close ties with Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua—despite their open hostility towards the U.S. and documented involvement in drug trafficking and repression. Spain also maintains a notably close relationship with China—an alignment that warrants increased U.S. scrutiny given its implications for European technological dependency, commercial influence, and political alignment with Beijing. Several of our interlocutors perceived China as a practical relationship to be managed rather than a threat to be deterred.

Although immigration from Latin America is not as numerically large as the influx from Syria, Morocco, or Algeria, interlocutors underscored that the cultural consonance of Latin American migrants is varied and complex. Assimilation challenges, crime, and gang activity will likely persist as central concerns regarding immigration of all non-European populations.

### **Key Takeaways: Spain's Domestic Political Landscape and the Future of the Right**

Spain's next general election is scheduled for 2027, but interlocutors widely agreed that a snap election could be called sooner. Most were confident that the Sánchez government and the Socialist Party would not prevail in the next contest. The most likely governing



coalition is a center-right bloc comprised of the PP, Vox, and several small regional right-wing parties such as Navarra's provincial conservatives.

Vox currently holds 33 seats in Spain's 350-member parliament and six Members of the European Parliament. While the PP does not intend to shift rightward—despite voter demand suggesting otherwise—it perceives Vox as ideologically similar but rhetorically more extreme, digitally savvy, and skilled in social media mobilization.

Upcoming elections in Andalusia, Extremadura, Castille & León, and potentially Valencia create the possibility of serial snap elections if coalition agreements falter, with the risk of exhausting the electorate.

The Socialist Party under Pedro Sánchez has moved sharply leftward, including alliances with communist factions. The Left relies heavily on fear-based messaging—"the far right will govern unless you vote for us"—which is especially persuasive among older generations still shaped by twentieth-century traumas.

Spain's overwhelmingly Christian population has not translated its faith into policy. This disconnect is driven by information asymmetry and a broader cultural separation from Catholic social teaching. Vox remains disadvantaged by Spain's electoral system, which favors rural strength, but the party has steadily risen in the polls since 2023, when Sánchez assumed leadership. When it comes to perceptions of the U.S., AFPI's interlocutors consistently noted that while the PP views President Trump as unpredictable, it also sees Vice President Vance as more consistently engaged in European affairs and more attentive to Europe's internal strategic debates.

### **The Grave Threat to Religious Freedom**

A deeply concerning dimension of Spain's internal trajectory is the escalating threat to religious freedom, particularly for the country's Catholic Christian population and heritage. Under the Socialist-led government of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, Spain has advanced a years-long campaign to secularize, redefine, or dismantle major Christian sites associated with its political rivals. The most significant target is the *Valle de los Caídos*—the Valley of the Fallen—home to the world's largest Christian Cross, a Papal Basilica, the remains of more than thirty thousand war dead, and an active Benedictine community. Long a center of Catholic pilgrimage and worship, the Valley remains one of the most symbolically powerful Christian sites in Europe.

The Socialist government seeks to remake the Valley for two primary reasons: its towering Cross and monastic community stand as a visible repudiation of the Left's project of an aggressively secular public square; and the site's origin in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War makes it, in the view of the Left, a historical affront to be neutralized.



This campaign represents a wider pattern of coercive secularism in Western Europe—one that tolerates private belief but seeks to eliminate public expressions of Christian heritage. As Vice President Vance warned at the Munich Security Conference, “the threat from within—the retreat from the values we share with Europe—is the most dangerous.” Spain’s actions therefore merit urgent American attention, diplomatic engagement, and coordinated pressure in defense of religious liberty, Christian heritage, and the values that underpin the transatlantic partnership.

### **Key Takeaways: Immigration, Border Pressures, and Demographic Trends**

Immigration remains one of Spain’s most destabilizing internal challenges. High levels of crime are reported among immigrant populations from the Middle East (including Syria and Pakistan), Africa (especially Morocco and Algeria), and certain parts of Latin America such as Colombia, where law enforcement institutions are comparatively weak.

In immigrant communities from Asia—particularly Chinese and Japanese populations—crime rates are low, but integration is also low. These groups tend to form their own enclaves, creating parallel societies rather than cohesive and assimilated communities.

A strong welfare-immigration correlation is present: 60 percent of African immigrants in Spain rely on welfare benefits, and only one percent return to their home countries. The Foreign Minister’s Political Officer emphasized that Spain is now pressuring African states not to serve as transit countries, warning them that transit rapidly becomes permanent settlement.

Mass migration is unfolding against the backdrop of staggering demographic decline. Interlocutors consistently linked falling birth rates to the erosion of Christian values, the normalization of divorce, the influence of radical feminism, and broader cultural shifts. In Spain, 25 percent of pregnancies end in abortion. The lack of virtuous family models in media and public life compounds the demographic crisis—an issue not unique to Spain but emblematic of Western civilizational decline.

Among leaders in the European right, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was cited more than once as a model of prudent, effective governance rooted in strong principles—an approach that members of Spain’s right hopes to emulate.

### **Way Forward:**

Spain is entering a period of political transformation marked by heightened geopolitical competition, accelerating immigration and demographic issues, and growing debates over national identity, sovereignty, and the country’s future. For the United States—particularly



under an America First strategic framework—Spain’s political direction, its posture toward China, its approach to Morocco and Latin America, and its internal security environment all carry direct implications for U.S. national interests.

As the balance of power within Spain shifts, the United States must remain attentive. Spain is both a frontline European state and a critical bridge between continents; our policymakers cannot afford to overlook the stakes.

