



**NATIONAL**

## TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE, TALKING ABOUT SPAIN

**Mariano Rajoy**

**Closing speech delivered by the Chairman of the Partido Popular  
at the FAES Campus. Navacerrada, 17 July 2005**



LA RAZÓN

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin by congratulating FAES on this second year of its Campus in Navacerrada. I know that the conferences have been both intense and fruitful in terms of the debate they have provoked and the conclusions that have been reached. I believe we can confidently state that both FAES and its Summer Campus have attracted the attention and respect of all those who are interested in political ideas in Spain.

I want to encourage you to continue the good work in future years, because our party needs events of this kind. If we wish to confront the challenge of the next general election with the prospect of success, we must enhance our capacity for analysis and reflection. This is where FAES comes into its own. Let's not forget the fact that we have an obligation to update our message and adapt it to an ever-changing society, and to an electorate that is demanding increasing levels of rigour, performance and imagination.

My dear friends, we have just completed an unpleasant year, conditioned by the aftermath of electoral defeat. I shall not use up my time by recalling all the difficulties we have had to face: a National Congress, the corresponding regional congresses and a frenetic electoral calendar.

It has indeed been a very difficult year. However, the most important thing is that we have managed to come out of it well, in spite of all the obstacles we have had to overcome. We can now state that, just one year after the PSOE victory, we are in a political position that leaves us equal on points with the Socialists, and offers us some promising prospects for the future.

We have more than sufficient cause to be proud of our party and to congratulate our active members, because we have given an example of unity, hard work and dedication.

If there is a party with cause to be unsatisfied, it is certainly not ours. Rather, it is the PSOE, because we have not allowed the Socialists to leave the PP trailing behind in its electoral wake. That is why the Socialists are fearful of what may happen in the future, and rightly so. It is also why they have become increasingly aggressive towards our party.

What disturbs them most is that those Spaniards who trust in the PP have failed to become either jaded or disenchanted with our project. Quite the contrary, in fact. Our supporters have remained loyal and continue to encourage us with hopeful hearts, convinced that we will not be in opposition for long.

I recognize the considerable work our adversaries have done to ensure Spaniards believe otherwise. They have no other choice, since they desperately need to hide the fact that the Government is slowly sinking, that it has signed more pledges that it can possibly fulfil, and that the moment of truth is nigh.

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But this is all history. Now we must look ahead with enthusiasm and prepare to face the challenge of this new period in Spain’s political life.

The Socialists have already played their strongest cards. They have announced their most populist and reassuring measures. Now they will have to govern –if they know how to–. Now the going gets tougher and they will begin to slip up. In fact, they have already made mistakes, as reflected in Spain’s depressing international isolation. There will be more mistakes. The economy is entering centre-stage, and education and health are waiting in the wings. Above all, they will have to swallow a bitter pill and pay for their flirtation with the nationalist parties.

In short, as of now the Government is embarking on a new stage, and we will have to do so too. Until now we have had to face a Government that was living on credit. The Government has been nose-diving, though it has managed to conceal its incompetence behind an endless series of firework displays. Now we must confront

a different Government: a Government that will have to make the effort to face an uphill challenge; a Government that will inevitably reveal its incapacity and lack of endurance when it comes to jumping the first hurdles.

For our part, we will make all the changes needed to adapt to this new situation. It is not a question of being softer or harder in our approach, of being more severe or more pleasant. It is a question of being more efficient, of carrying out our duties more effectively and of defending the general interests of Spain more actively.

In this respect, I am going to need the help of FAES, this seedbed of ideas, more than ever. FAES has already done great service to the party, but it will now have to redouble its efforts.

I am going to need all the resources that the party can muster, because I propose to achieve victory for the Partido Popular at the next municipal, regional and general elections.

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This victory is quite possible. The PSOE are not wrong to look at the future with unease. They know that we have the capacity to win the next elections, whenever they are called. Because of this, because we know we can win, we have an obligation to society, to the electorate and to our supporters, to prepare for victory.

From now on, all our desires can be summed up in one: to be worthy of the trust of all Spaniards, and to achieve a majority that will enable us to govern the country effectively.

My aim is to lead a party that offers a real alternative, that inspires all the Spanish people and leads them to the conclusion that it is in everyone's best interests that the Partido Popular should win the next elections. This is why we must seize the political initiative, establish the political agenda and shadow the PSOE government in a rigorous and intelligent manner. To sum up, we must counter their excuses and prevent them from dodging the issue when it comes to answering for their poor administration and political mistakes. It is time the PSOE were forced to emerge from behind the barricades it has erected by its constant criticism of the PP's period of government.

We are not going to allow the Socialists to continue skirting around their fifteen months in power. They have the democratic obligation to answer for their actions and we shall be demanding answers. We shall demand, firmly but courteously, that the Government answer to the Spanish people.

Let us not forget that our party is in power in the most dynamic and fastest-growing Spanish municipalities and regions. There is a reason for this. Wherever we lead, we are grounded firmly in reality. We talk to people, we listen to them, and we try to understand their needs and to provide a competent and effective response.

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However, we must not simply limit ourselves to what we have already achieved. We must aspire to greater heights. We must be the party of government: a flexible and agile party, a party that is capable of appealing to the majority, because it is an open party that caters for the needs of a wide-ranging spectrum of voters.

The task I have been entrusted with is to prepare a political project for Spain in the 21st century, a project capable of winning the trust of the majority of Spaniards.

I want us to be more accessible to Spanish society, including both those who think the way we do and those who do not agree with us yet. We must listen to all opinions, because we learn much more from those who dispute our views than from those who agree with us. This is a task of considerable importance, which will help us to formulate alternatives and ideas that address the real concerns of society.

This is why we must enhance our capacity for dialogue, update our message and update our language and communication strategies.

**“We are the party of the centre, precisely because we are neither socialists nor nationalists, or extremists of any kind. We are in a condition to understand and appeal to the majority of Spaniards who see moderation and common sense as the essential foundations of political life”**

The Partido Popular believes that people should be at the heart of politics. However paradoxical it may seem, our daily task is not to win votes. It is to promote people’s welfare. That is our task, our *raison d’être* as a party. We are here because we have the best ideas when it comes to improving the welfare of Spaniards. Votes will naturally follow. If we work honestly to improve the common good and offer well-founded alternatives, votes will follow.

Nobody will vote for the Partido Popular simply because we say ‘Vote PP!’ People will vote for us if they prefer our approach, if they insist that we should govern the country. And they will prefer us if we show that we care for their welfare more than we care for ourselves.

I believe that the policies we propose are well suited to achieving this end. And I sincerely believe that the PSOE’s ideas are not designed to promote the peaceful harmony, progress and welfare of Spaniards, nor are they capable of achieving any such results.

We are the party of the individual and also the party of freedom. This is because we believe such an approach is the only way of building a more prosperous, more united and more harmonious society that offers greater opportunities to all. The

Partido Popular believes that the sole purpose of our political institutions is to protect and promote our freedoms.

In short, we are the party of the centre, precisely because we are neither socialists nor nationalists, or extremists of any kind. We are in a condition to understand and appeal to the majority of Spaniards who see moderation and common sense as the essential foundations of political life.

**“We are confronted by a Government whose only ostensible political project consists of satisfying the demands of its nationalist partners in exchange for preserving its hold on power. We are confronted by a Government that has spent the last 15 months pursuing the sterile strategy of dividing the Spanish people, setting Spain’s institutions against one another, and placing Spain in a position some nationalists have long sought to engineer: one of isolation and oblivion”**

I advocate a politics of the centre ground that is based on prudence and common sense, yet does not relinquish a sense of daring and ambition when it comes to defending freedom and progress.

I need your capacity for reflection and your help for this project. I know that what I am proposing is not easy, but it is time for us to tackle the challenge posed by the developments the Socialist Party seems intent on promoting by any means and at any price, if the Government’s first year in power is anything to go by.

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For the first time in its history, Spain is in the hands of people who do not wish to be Spaniards. In fact, Mr. Zapatero, who is officially the Head of the Government, has been entrusted with three specific tasks.

The first is to obey without any argument; the second is to do things surreptitiously –and I shall say more about this later on– in order to avoid any outrage; and the third is to dress up the dismantling of the Spanish State in a left-wing disguise so that it appears to be a progressive step.

I am not joking. Very soon everyone will realize this is the case. Let’s not delude ourselves: the time has come when words are finally going to translate into action. It is a highly detailed plan whose purpose is to dismantle the State according to the dictates of certain nationalist minorities, especially the tripartite regional government of Catalonia.

There is no better illustration of what is currently taking place than their attitude to the National Water Management Plan (PHN). Let us be clear on this point: the PHN has not been abolished for economic or environmental reasons or for reasons of efficiency. It has not been abolished because of lack of consensus among the

country's institutions –80% of the National Water Council and many Spanish regions, some of them governed by the Socialist Party, voted in favour of the PHN–. In fact, it has been abolished because the tripartite regional government of Catalonia does not like it. It has been abolished because it is a national project that proves the existence of a State over and above the regions, a State that guarantees the rights of all Spaniards.

The truth is that although they are bothered by the fact that the Partido Popular proposed the scheme, they are even more annoyed by the fact that someone outside a particular region should have any opinion at all regarding the rivers that flow through that region. In short, they are bothered by the State and by the idea of forming part of a project whose scope reaches beyond the town square. They are bothered by the fact that they are Spaniards.

And what does the PSOE say to all this? Nothing. It cannot say anything because Mr. Zapatero is under the orders of the tripartite government. He lives to please it, and he would not be Prime Minister if he angered it.

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This is Spain's main problem, so it is the main problem that we must address as members of the Partido Popular. It is a problem that has many ramifications, given that it encompasses every aspect of the country, ranging from the Salamanca Archive to telecommunications and the country's airports.

In any civilized country, education constitutes the basic pillar by which the government ensures that members of society are schooled as citizens and guaranteed equal opportunities. Wherever there is a State, there is an education policy.

For this reason, the Spain of Mr. Zapatero –which is the Spain of the Tripartite Agreement, the Spain that does not want a State– rejects the national education model. Mr. Zapatero aims to leave education in the hands of the regional governments. He is not concerned about whether this might mean the emergence of 17 different educational models; he is not worried about whether there may be inequalities in the education of Spaniards; he is not bothered if Spaniards are divided by historical untruths and ideological bitterness; or whether their freedom of movement within their own homeland is restricted, which is what is happening now. In short, he is not bothered that they may be made to feel like strangers in their own country. And what is truly deplorable is that he is prepared to do all this simply to remain Prime Minister.

For the same crazy reason, the Government is trying to dismantle our judicial system, create 17 Supreme Courts and, apparently, appoint 17 different attorneys-general and 17 branches of the General Council of the Judiciary throughout Spain. In short, it aims to create a judiciary that is increasingly less national, and increasingly nationalist.

This caricature of justice is bad news for us all, and it is appalling that it is being proposed simply to satisfy the whims of a few nationalist minorities. However, what is much worse is that it breaks the most important subject of consensus among the Spanish people: that on matters of justice. We should not forget that this consensus ensures that the judiciary acts as arbiter of our peaceful coexistence under the auspices of a State based on the rule of law.

In reality, the Government does not want consensus. It does not want dialogue. It simply wants to impose its will. We should remember that we are dealing with a serious issue here, the issue of justice, which is the very foundation of a harmonious society. It is obvious that the Government is not concerned that Spaniards may come to distrust their country's justice system because it is not of their country, nor independent, nor just.

And this is not all. Since we are not going to allow the Government to revise the Constitution in order to abolish the State, Mr Zapatero and his partners in the tripartite coalition have invented a constitutional reform that does not touch our Constitution, and will go unnoticed, a wolf-like reform dressed up in sheep's clothing.

Mr. Zapatero's Government seeks to strip the State of authority in order to divide its powers among the Spanish regions by means of administrative reforms. It has just approved a draft State Agencies Act, which is the instrument it hopes to employ –under the pretence of introducing administrative improvements– in order to transfer the exclusive powers of the State to the Spanish regions. I wanted to mention this point because I believe it is of considerable importance to us all.

I shall not go into the matter any further. It is enough to state that the most important thing in Mr. Zapatero's eyes is not whether Spain is actually a nation or not, but that it should operate as if it were not; and that the nationalists, whether they have their own nation or not, should operate as if they had one. As for all those who make up the vast majority of society and are neither nationalists nor have any doubts about being Spaniards, the Government could not care less.

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The Prime Minister has renounced Spain. He rejects the idea that as Spaniards we should feel citizens of the same country and enjoy the benefits of an efficient State, in other words a State capable of protecting the freedoms and rights of all its people in any part of its territory.

He has expended all his energy in bringing about this demolition, only worrying to slow down when required to conceal his true intentions. He needs to sell this defective merchandise to the Spanish people without them realizing it. Officially, Spain will remain intact. But if we let him proceed with this project, the nation will become nothing but a ridiculous cardboard cutout.

We could say that, if it were not for the Partido Popular, Mr. Zapatero would get his way without any difficulty whatsoever. If it were not for the Partido Popular, the Socialists would not even care about the impression they were giving. They would leave all pretence aside and divide up Spain as if they were slicing a cake.

Let me repeat this point. I am not exaggerating when I say that we are witnessing a process in which the State is being dismantled on the sly. This is where the real problem resides. We are not being offered a reform of the Constitution that proposes to strip the State of all substance, and must be passed by two-thirds of the Spanish Parliament to prosper. It is obvious that we would not support such a proposal. The problem lies in the fact that the Government is attempting to carry out the same reform by the back door.

Having reached this point, I would like to mention a matter that is linked to what I was saying before and that has become a burning issue in the last few days. I am referring to the Statute of Catalonia. They have spent two years discussing a matter that nobody cares about and that the vast majority of the inhabitants of Catalonia do not actually want. Some have no idea how to get out of the mess they have created. The Prime Minister, who has solemnly stated that he will pass any text that emerges from the Catalan Parliament, does not know what he should do now. I can help him on this point. The 350 members of the lower house of the national Parliament, the Congress, have the right and the obligation to voice their opinion on any statute that is approved by any regional parliament.

This Statute is radically opposed to the Constitution, and we oppose it for many reasons. We shall not permit Spain to be divided into various nations; we shall not accept models of bilateral financing, because this goes against the principle of equality of all Spaniards; it is not acceptable that the basic legislation of the State should be decided by the regional governments; it is not right to include Section 150.2 of the Constitution in the Statute; a statute of autonomy cannot modify national Acts of Parliament; above all, we cannot accept something that goes against the general interest.

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And now, as part of their tactical and strategic approach, it appears that they want the support of the Partido Popular for this Statute, maybe so that they do not have to rely on [the Catalan coalition] CiU. If they want the support of the Partido Popular they know what they have to do. If they withdraw the Statute they will have the support of the Partido Popular, which has drawn up an amendment for the entire Statute, and which will be presented next Tuesday. The Partido Popular will also present amendments to each and every one of the sections contained in this Autonomous Statute of Catalonia.

As I was saying before, a reform of the Constitution is extremely serious, but does not represent a major problem. The reform of the autonomous statutes has not taken place yet. The most serious aspect of everything that is happening at the moment is the deceitful, fraudulent and dishonest way in which the Government is attempting to destroy the operational feasibility of our State. And I am not exaggerating when I use these three adjectives. They reflect an objective fact. The Constitution is being undermined and the State is being dismantled by means of sectorial legislation and specific Government measures.

In other words, people are being deceived. This Government does not even have the courage to state: We are going to do this because we believe in it and because we are forced to do it. No, the sad and unacceptable truth is that they are merely attempting to deceive Spain as a whole. There is ample evidence to support this view. What is more, the examples I am going to mention are not value judgments, but objective facts.

The first example –and I would like to recall it because some people did not understand our party’s position very well at the time– emerged when the debate on the Ibarretxe Plan took place. This plan, which sought to abolish our Constitution, was debated as if it were merely a case of statutory reform. It could have been passed by an absolute majority in parliament and, as a result, would have led to the dissolution of the Constitution. Well, this is exactly what the Government is attempting to do now. Ordinary laws are being used to undermine the Constitution, the Statutes, common sense and, in short, everything that Spaniards really want.

I shall mention various other examples that are also extremely worrying. First, the withdrawal of the appeals that were presented to the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court is the body that determines the basic legislation of the State as laid down in the Constitution. If someone does not agree with what an autonomous region is doing, or an autonomous region does not agree with what the State is doing, the national government refers the matter to the Constitutional Court, which is the body that has jurisdiction over such matters. If it is not possible to appeal to the Constitutional Court because the national government does not wish to do so, then this indicates that developments may be taking place that are in serious breach of the Constitution.

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A second example relates to a question I mentioned previously, the proposed new Education Act. A year ago the Quality in Education Act was repealed. No alternative option has been presented. Now it seems that a bill has been drafted that even the Council of State has criticized, though it had praised the recently repealed Quality in Education Act. The bill abolishes the obligation to maintain a shared curricular content in the various Spanish regions. Until now, a minimum 55% of all teaching had to conform to a shared model. This 55% benchmark now represents the maximum allowed, whilst the minimum has been reduced to zero. The rule has been inverted, which means that the Spanish regions now have the absolute authority to design the educational model they wish to follow. There is no need to reform the Constitution, the Statutes or anything. The State is being stripped of its authority within the area of education entirely, and in an underhand manner too.

The same thing is happening with the modifications proposed in the draft statute to amend the Judiciary Act. In practice, this entails establishing some 17 Supreme Courts, thus doing away with the principle of equality among all Spaniards. Cases will be handled in one manner in one jurisdiction and in another manner in the others. Furthermore, it creates 17 General Councils of the Judiciary, and even local councils are given the authority to nominate judges.

All this goes against the Constitution, as does the draft State Agencies Act I referred to earlier. All public organizations and all public bodies will become State agencies whilst at the same time, other agencies are created (within the field of immigration, for example). These agencies will establish the role played by the regions in matters that now fall under the authority of the State. In this way, exclusive powers of the State are also being transferred to the regional authorities without even touching the Constitution or the Statutes.

The same thing occurs with the Public Administration Act that is currently circulating around the autonomous regions and the country's ministries in draft form. Why amend the Constitution if you can do so by passing a law that abolishes basic State legislation in the sphere of public administration?

I would like to publicly declare that all of this is in clear breach of the Constitution. All these measures abolish the Constitution without actually touching it. And, of course, we shall appeal against any law that seeks to do this.

I would like to make two further points related to this question. First, I am not going to accept that various prominent figures in the PSOE should make the same observations I have made here. That I will not accept. Today, the Chairman of the PSOE and the head of a regional government said something similar to what I have just said in relation to Spain's basic State legislation, Article 150.2 and the modification of laws regarding the State and the Nation. These prominent figures have made the same points as I have, but I shall not accept that they should do so and then fail to vote against these measures with us.

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The second point I would like to make is this: yesterday we heard the Prime Minister state that in 2008, Spain would have a strong Constitution, one that unites all the country's territories.

This declaration is in line with other vacuous soundbites from the Prime Minister, such as the alliance of civilizations, the sea of universal injustice and the infinite desire for peace and conciliation. If it is a question of inventing new catchphrases, we could say that we are up against a further example of astronomic ignorance, manifest irresponsibility and remarkable stupidity.

My dear friends, Spain needs the Partido Popular in government, because Spaniards want what Mr. Zapatero is intent on denying them. They want to live together in peace and harmony; they want to be prosperous, they want to trust in their institutions, they want a climate of normality, they want to live together and feel they are at home in any corner of Spain. And they would like to have reasons for being proud of being Spaniards.

We need an electoral victory to bring people together around a shared project, to recover our sense of being Spaniards, our sense of unity and our opportunities. We need an electoral victory so that we can govern the country's affairs. We believe in Spain, we believe in its national sovereignty, we believe in the equality of all

Spaniards irrespective of where they live. We believe in the unity of all the territories that make up our nation.

My ambition is to win the next general election, and this not simply a personal ambition. It is a responsibility, one that derives from the trust that millions of Spaniards have placed in us. It is also a responsibility we have to bear because of the path that the Socialist government has chosen to pursue. We are becoming an increasingly important alternative, and if things continue as they have, we shall be a virtually indispensable alternative.

Spain expects much of us and it does so because it knows the convictions we hold and because it has seen us govern the country. We must respond to this sense of hope and trust. We must assume the responsibility that has been placed on us. We are going to fight for a Spain that wishes to continue being a plural and united nation. That is what everybody wants. We are going to demonstrate that the constitutional Spain we advocate is the only feasible way forward.

We shall be in constant contact with the young. We have the best youth organization in Spain, which is not surprising because active young people, young people who are not indifferent, see the PP as the best channel for their ideals and the best forum for defending their values. We must be capable of reaching out to an increasing number of young people in order to convince them that being committed to current issues, advocating new ideas and preparing to build a better future is equivalent to being a member of the Partido Popular.

**“The Partido Popular believes in equal rights, in the creative power of freedom, and in justice as the foundation of society. Along with the majority of Spaniards, we share a desire to live in peace and to bury the resentments of the past. We believe in personal effort, in merit and in a job well done. We believe in the family as the core unit of our society, as the ideal framework for education, for the transmission of values and for mutual support. These are functions that neither schools nor society’s institutions can replace”**

We shall promote our social policies, the policies of a party that seeks to respond to people’s daily problems and to provide practical, effective and fair solutions to them.

Our economic policies must anticipate future developments and tackle the reforms that Spain needs if it wishes to retain its interest for other countries and position as a world leader within a global context.

In short, I would like the Partido Popular to propose a feasible State, one that is capable of leading public policy-making in order to promote freedom, justice and prosperity in Spain and throughout the world.

When we were in government we proved that we were capable of managing the State finances effectively. Now I would like the party to focus on social policies, so that we can enhance the effectiveness of public services within the field of education and health, without detriment to the sense of justice demanded by a society which seeks to make continuous progress.

Those of us who make up the Partido Popular believe in Spain, in its sovereignty, in its ability and in its prospects for the future.

We wish to raise the living standards of all Spaniards and offer them equal opportunities as they set out on the journey of life. We believe in equal rights, in the creative power of freedom, and in justice as the foundation of society.

Along with the majority of Spaniards, we share a desire to live in peace and to bury the resentments of the past. We believe in personal effort, in merit and in a job well done. We believe in the family as the core unit of our society, as the ideal framework for education, for the transmission of values and for mutual support. These are functions that neither schools nor society's institutions can replace. We believe in all these things and, in doing so, we share the convictions of the majority of Spaniards.

We believe that Spain and Spaniards today share and enjoy a marvellous legacy, a legacy that we must preserve and pass on to future generations. This does not mean that we reject reform out of hand. We are living in the 21st century and we must face the challenges posed by problems that have never existed before. We are learning with experience. We are prepared to defend the progress we have made and we are determined to progressively improve the life of all Spaniards. We wish to pass on an improved and enriched legacy, so that those who receive it will also consider it to be a legacy worth preserving, worth enriching and worth passing on to those who come after them.

This is what unites us, the party and the electorate. And I can assure you that there is no other political party in Spain that is capable of demonstrating the same sense of unity as ours.

That is why we are always able to present ourselves as a national party, a party that speaks the same language as all Spaniards, a party that advocates and defends the same values in all corners of Spain.

Our unity and coherence is clear, and unsurpassable. This is our party and this is how we would like it to remain, because this is what our electorate and, above all, what Spain demands.

It is the main reason why millions of people support our party, driving us on towards the electoral victory that we desire so fervently. These people can see we are united in our values, in our ideas and in the positions we adopt and the decisions we take.

Our party must face the challenges of this new period in Spanish political life by looking for support at the grass roots and forming a majority that will enable us to guide the future of our country to the benefit of all Spaniards.

And what I am asking of you is to reflect upon the current situation, to discuss and debate it and even to dream aloud of the kind of Spain we would like to offer the country. That is our commitment. And it is one that I fully accept.