



A Pact to Destroy ETA

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In Libertad Digital n° 1438

April 23, 2008

A consensus is not an end in and of itself, but an instrument to achieve political goals. It is not a sacred occurrence, but rather one of mere convenience which at times can be indispensable in achieving a determined collective objective. A consolidated democracy is based on a consensus among the representative parties on the rules of the game. This foundational consensus is reflected in the Constitution, which establishes principles and institutions to support democratic coexistence. As an extension to this constitutional pact, in advanced democracies they also produce a consensus regarding the so-called "questions of the state." This is an agreement among those who alternate in power, giving continuity, regarding the defence of national interests in foreign affairs and the educational model. These are questions which cannot be subdued by the ups and downs of democratic alternation.

The fight against terrorism forms a part of this strong core of State politics in

which a consensus is essential to guarantee victory to the democratic state. A consensus is imperative for four apparent reasons: firstly, this is because terrorism constitutes a challenge to the state and fears the democratic free will of citizens. Secondly, because it is absolutely necessary that the terrorists lose all hope of achieving their objectives for which they kill. This must happen regardless of what party is in power. Thirdly, because the terrorists use criminal actions in their attempts to divide society and weaken its ability to resist. Finally, because a consensus would strengthen the actions of the state to destroy the terrorists.

Keeping these reasons in mind, among others, we can agree that in the current legislature, it is necessary to repair the consensus on an anti-terrorism policy that the previous Government destroyed with its unilateral policy of negotiating with terrorists. The pact must have the objective of destroying ETA because this end result is only possible with the achievement of a

consensus. If what the Government expects is a pact to cover up their history of negotiating with ETA, and if it can, cover up any new contact with the group, it will not only never be able to count on the support of the Popular Party, but will have an even firmer and more energetic opposition from PP.

It is not necessary to create a completely new agreement to create this consensus on antiterrorist policy. We can simply readdress the Pact of the Liberties against Terrorism, signed by PSOE and the PP in December 2001. Although Zapatero broke the pact to pursue his negotiations with the terrorists, the Pact has not been formally denounced on any grounds and therefore, can still be reactivated. This Pact is the best expression of our democratic volition to destroy terror and has proven its efficiency in the fight against terrorism, inspiring the policy that drives ETA to its weakest point in history.

The new Government should try to attract other minority forces to this pact of the Liberties. However, the Popular Party will never agree to the devaluation of the Pact of the Liberties Against Terrorism, which represents a great majority of Spaniards, with the pretext of attracting forces which have minimal representation in our society. Furthermore, they will not accept future dialogue or negotiations with the terrorists. If the new Government is not successful in achieving the unanimity it hopes for, Zapatero will have to realize that a consensus among more than 80 percent of Spaniards for the destruc-

tion of ETA will always be better than an agreement of less than 50 percent for negotiations with them.

In the search for an agreement with the Popular Party, Zapatero has begun a new discourse based on creating a firm front against ETA. However, PSOE suffers a severe lack of credibility from the failure of their negotiations, which have been plagued with concealment and lies. Because of this, it is necessary that the Government now demonstrate factually, their desire to destroy ETA. It is extremely urgent that the terrorists and their political accomplices are expelled from democratic institutions. This will be the first test to see what can be trusted in the discourse of the new Government on this subject.

The destruction of ETA poses a question of principle for the Popular Party regardless of the chosen tactic or strategy. We believe in the consensus as an essential instrument to destroy ETA, we work loyally to fortify and expand this consensus and continue to support without fail, as we have always done, any action that takes on the mark of the Right of the State to destroy the terrorists. What we will never do is give political protection, not even as a silent accomplice, to any new negotiation attempts or political dialogue with terrorists. We will stand our ground, even if this defence of our principles leaves us alone, as Zapatero in his ventures.

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