



TRANSCRIPCIÓN

INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO SÁNCHEZ, EN EL COLOQUIO POSTERIOR A SU DISCURSO EN LA UNIVERSIDAD DE COLUMBIA, CON MOTIVO DEL FORO DE LÍDERES MUNDIALES

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Adam Tooze.- Sir, may I start by echoing President Shipman. Thanks to you for accepting our invitation. It is a it is a busy time. And in an era of troubled minds and thoughts, it's wonderful to hear such a clear statement of a particular position and an articulation of it. So I'm sure we're all very deeply grateful to you for that.

Your speech was at a level of abstraction and generality that was very inspiring. But I wonder whether we might in the next half hour and I'm going to be here channelling the uploaded questions from literally maybe 100 students, I might try and bring you, in a sense, back down to earth, because the predicament that we're in here right now is the result of political failure. And you are a political winner.

And I thought I'd like to start there because it's rare that one has the opportunity in America right now to speak to a successful progressive politician who has won against the odds election after election, that has survived the shock of Covid. Looking at your term in office, your only peer as Macron in the Western world and in the broader realm of big democracies, it's Modi. So this is an extraordinary track record.

How was this because and you will no doubt, of course, hear a lot of talk about the crisis of democracy and yet here you are, practicing it for real and making it work so that you can come here and speak to Americans about these basic things that actually, right now, it is very good to hear you speak about.

So do you yourself have a theory of how you're making this work? Because you're not. This isn't supposed to work, is it? This is supposed to crash and burn. And yet government coalition after government coalition you have stitched it together, pulled it together in and Spain is, after all, not an easy place to do this.

Can you give us some insight into your basic method here, your understanding of the choices you have to make.

Presidente.- So well, I think that in the case of Europe, especially in the southern part of Europe, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and others, you know, the consequences of the financial crisis and the response that we, you know, as Europe gave to the southern part of Europe causes a lot, you know, inequality, territorial and social inequality... It was really, really difficult to resolve and to respond.



And I think that what we are witnessing nowadays, even though this can be a bit shocking for the US audience, I think that we are witnessing the collapse of the right traditional wing parties, which are, you know, just giving all the ground to the far right and this reactionary populism that we are spreading in many countries, also in Europe.

And at the end of the day, what you see when it comes to progressive governments is that we are managing, or at least in the experience of Spain, we are managing to face the climate emergency, whilst we are, you know, boosting our economic growth. We are increasing salaries, the minimum wage, for instance, we have increased over the last seven years, 61%, whilst we are creating... we have a very strong job creation, more than 22 million people are working in Spain, which is, you know, a record.

And of course, we are reducing inequalities. We are strengthening the public health system and the education public system and so on and so forth.

So that is why we are also, you know, fighting against the politically with the far right and its movement, because we are showing that there is another way of doing things.

Adam Tooze.- It's kind of a win-win. A series of win win options that are unlocking.

Presidente.- Exactly. And that is why. And also not only in the contents, but also in the in the way of doing politics because, you know, we have a minority coalition government so that obliges us to go to the national parliament and to negotiate and dialogue with all different political parties. And we face very important reforms in the labour market, the pension system reform education system, the university system and so on and so forth. And we do it with social peace.

Adam Tooze.- And that was the second point I was going to ask you, because there was a moment I saw it when President Shipman referred to your political career, and she says that you've been a member of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party since 1993. And you smiled. And I thought, that's very that's very interesting. What does that socialist tradition mean for you in the current context? Because that actually would sometimes include a competitive edge right? There would not necessarily be about social peace and win win. And I ask that against the backdrop of New York politics right now, where we may very well by the end of the year and you heard the spirit in the room, people love this town. We may have a mayor who self-identifies as a democratic socialist. And in that campaign, it's going to be hard class politics that is going to be bare knuckles. That's going to be a tough fight, and it's going to be it isn't going to be a story of...

Presidente.- I mean, I don't know the, the let's say the proposals of this candidate.

Adam Tooze.-Basic European social democracy.

Presidente.- Well, I think at the end of the day, you know, for instance, if you compare what we spend in Spain when it comes to public health, it means 6 - 7% of our GDP. In the US, with the private system, we spend the private system, you spend more or less 17%.

Adam Tooze.-In the healthcare system.

Presidente.-In the whole healthcare system. So that means that trying to transform a public group into a private business is not a good deal for society, and especially also for the public accounts. So it is not only a question of equality, but also a question of efficiency.

And this is one of the things that I did when I came into office was to recuperate the universality of the Public Health System, which was broken by the previous administration, the conservative one. So, you know, I'm trying to be optimistic, even though, of course, the situation is complex and look grim.

I think that progressive forces will find a way to articulate, again, a political program that could mean change the real change for youth and also for the middle class and workers in the US and also in other parts of the world. And in this regard, I think that most of the examples from Spain, in a very humble way, we can share with our colleagues and the rest of the citizens around the world is something that we need to do because really, we need also to show that this way of doing things from the progressive perspective are in the interest of the middle class and worker class.

Adam Tooze.- I want then to turn to this dark background that hangs over us, as you just said, as well, you know, as bad as things are.

And I wanted to kind of ask you about your theory, about your understanding of how we ended up here, in a sense, because, again, maybe one way of putting this would be how surprised are you that foreign policy has assumed the salience that it has?

I mean, if I think about your analog, Emmanuel Macron in France, there is a sense in which he kind of rather I don't mean this facetiously, but he likes history with a capital H, right?. He's ready for it. He wants to make the big political move. He's pushing hard. He relishes it, transposition itself as a power actor. He wants to take up that challenge, right?

And listening to you, I get the opposite impression of somebody who is very vigorously restating the basic desire to not be in that world, to be in a world of rules, to be in a world in which to put it, you know, simply like the world of the 1990s, perhaps, or the world in which we thought the EU was a model of where the whole world was going to go.



And there's a question for me of how you make sense of this condition that we're in.

Presidente.- So I have my convictions, my values make principles but also I'm a very pragmatic person and politician. And when it comes to foreign policy or global politics, I remember these words of this intellectual, the US intellectual who passed away, I think it was this year, Joseph Nye, who said that in global politics nowadays you have like three chess boards. So you have a first chess board, which is I would say in a traditional way hard power, where the US, I could say is, you know, the leader and we can conceptualize like a unipolar chessboard where the US is clearly the leader.

Then you have another chessboard, which is the economics, the trade and so on and so forth, and I think that is a multipolar world. You have different regional blocs: European Union, China, India, Mercosur, of course, the US, Canada, and so on and so forth. And then you have another one which is global issues, global challenges which are things like climate change, migration, global health.

We have short memory because we are now breaking all this cooperation and collaboration but five years ago we suffered a pandemic, a global pandemic.

So it is true that even if you see, if you look at the first chessboard, which is hard power, at the end of the day with cybersecurity and all this cyber dimensions and the technology linked to security and defense issues, we must cooperate and collaborate. We cannot allow ourselves not to cooperate and collaborate.

And therefore, I think that the argument that we need to reform the multilateral system, that we need to keep to the rules based, that we provide for ourselves that gave by the way, a lot of prosperity to our world in the past decades is a must.

So it's not a question of giving a progressive answer to the global challenges, or defending my convictions and ideas and values, which of course is the case, but also it is in our need to do so.

So, for instance, in the case of Spain, we cannot allow ourselves not to cooperate with North Africa, with Morocco, with Algeria, with Senegal, with Mauritania, with many countries in the Sahel.

If we want to face and respond effectively to the challenge of migration, to boost the regular migration, but to fight against smugglers and illegal migration, to give you an example, but we can say also when it comes to climate emergency or when it comes to, you know, cyber security.

That brings me to the point about, you know, Spain was reluctant and we opposed to this proposal of 5% of our GDP in defense. And this was something that position, the political positions that some US media criticized about Spain.

First of all, we are a reliable partner when it comes to NATO, and we are providing the security and the capabilities that NATO asked us to do.

The point here is that if we want to strengthen our security in Europe, but also across the world, we of course need to increase our public spending on defense and security, but also cooperation.

We need to strengthen the multilateral system, we need to innovate on how we increase financial aid and financial means to other countries in order to respond to their own challenges.

This is what we did in Seville, where in Andalusia, last July, where we convened this very important summit for the UN system, the conference.

Adam Tooze: You're wearing the you're wearing the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) pin.

Presidente.- Exactly. So, I think it's a question not only of ideological approach, but also a pragmatic approach in order to respond to these global challenges

So, the point here is that more and more we are seeing that global politics or international politics is narrowing the scope of debates.

And now we are only focused on trade. Even not trade, just tariffs. But what about climate change? What about global health? What about, of course, war and peace? What about migration? What about all these issues that really matter to our citizens? And of course, trade. But when it comes to trade, I can tell you Spain suffered a trade deficit vis a vis the United States. And we suffer also the tariffs.

Adam Tooze: Yes. Let us come to a topic we have to talk about that is very much on the minds of the audience in light of the stances your Government have taken, that you chose to highlight in your speech as well, and that's the that's the situation in the Middle East.

And I was really struck by the way in which you approached it, because I think most of us in this time have been looking for a compass by which to navigate. How do we orientate ourselves so many conflicting emotions dragging us in different directions terror, sympathy, horror. And I was very struck by the way in which you chose to approach it today, which was by way of comparison or analogy or just a claim to consistency, right? So, if Russia attacks Ukraine, then why not, right? So, essentially positing a similarity of situations.



Presidente.- There is a similarity.

Adam Tooze: And there is clearly and undeniably and people are losing their lives, and there is an impulse to say, stop, stop. Whatever, it is clearly better just to stop now, right? That that is the force of it, and it is very powerful.

But then the politician and the strategists, the person thinking about the three boards, surely has to ask the next question. And that is the question that echoes through many of the comments, the load up of questions that we received from students as well. Which is that there is a painful, agonizing difference between the two scenarios. There are similarities, but there is a difference, which is that if we stop the war right now between Ukraine and Russia, we have a two state solution. We have a two state solution. It is not satisfactory to the Ukrainians, and the Russians may want something else. But *de facto*, we have a two state solution. And the resistance of the of the Ukrainians, the inadequacy of the Russians and the support of the West has meant that we have consolidated a two state solution.

Presidente.- But actually, both the states existed before the war.

Adam Tooze: Yes, exactly. The agony of the situation in the Middle East is that this is not the default. That is not where we go. And that is the question, the follow on question that I want to ask you, which is what is the strategic vision here? Because government after government in Europe is now endorsing Palestinian sovereignty and endorsing statehood. And yet we know that October 7th has meant for Israelis, leaders, Israel's leaders, in a sense, a goodbye –not just at a theoretical level, but at the practical level– to the possibility of the existence of two states formally stated now.

And so, that's my question, really, that's my strategic follow on question. How are you processing that next move? What is the future? Because, as you say, you have to adopt the policy, you do, for instance, towards North Africa because Spain needs that solution. But if we are to think beyond the immediate demand for ceasefire and the end to the horrific killing, isn't that the follow on question that we cannot escape responsibly and have to face?

Presidente.- Is Israel today more secure than before the war started two years ago? I do not think so. It is more isolated. It is more unsecure.

You know the Spanish history, unfortunately, we suffered terrorism for 40 years. And then we suffered one of the most horrible jihadist terrorist attacks in Madrid, in the capital. So, we know quite well how to face terrorism. And there is a mix or a combination of three policies. The first one, of course, there is the security dimension in fighting against terrorism. Not war, but fight. War is not the category. And this is the big mistake.

Adam Tooze.- It raises the terrorists attacks.

Presidente.- Not only because of that, it is because it is a combination of security response, justice and politics, which means in the international political level, which means diplomacy.

And, certainly, Israel is responding with, you know, in the security dimension, but it is lacking the rest of the two, let us say, categories or policies. There is no justice when it comes to the response. And there's a clear lack of politics, diplomacy.

And I think it is important that, from the international community, we give this response to provide Palestinians a political horizon of what to do, which means the two state solution. Because for those who disagree with this option, with this political choice, what would be the alternative? What is the alternative?

Adam Tooze.- Well, we know, right? It's been formulated. It's been spelled out.

Presidente.- Exactly. And this is something that we cannot conceive and, of course, accept.

And I think that we need to be consistent when it comes to the Western and Western countries. And coherence is critical for all of us. Because my interpretation is that, when it comes to the Global South, there is a clear question on if we are committing a double standard when it comes to Ukraine and asking the Global South to help us and to understand what is our political posture against Russia and in favour of Ukraine, and while at the same time, what we are allowing in the Middle East is this catastrophe, this humanitarian catastrophe.

So that is why I think that in the interest of the Middle East, not only the Arab countries, but also Israel, in the interests of Europe, which of course has a geopolitical interest in the Middle East, and the world, I think that we need to provide answers, clear political answers, not to the President, but also to the future of the Palestine citizens, which means, in my opinion, the creation of the Palestinian statehood. Which, by the way, when you speak with the Arab leaders, they all agree that, you know, of course, we need to keep and guarantee to the Israeli people and society a clear answer when it comes to security. So, all this is already agreed.



The point is that, unfortunately, nowadays we have a leading Israel personality, which is, in my opinion, using this war as an excuse to do something which is not acceptable, which is just to destroy Gaza, to occupy the West Bank and to create a kind of great Israel without Palestinian presence.

Adam Tooze: President, we have nine more minutes. I have two strands I want to pursue. One very serious, one more lighthearted, but kind of urgent.

The first is the other great geopolitical, truly political question of our era in the West, which is China. You know, the bracketing of it with Russia and the Middle East is absurd, but the basic set of questions which are posed there about what a progressive policy towards China means seems to me no less fundamental and no less essential for our generation, precisely because of the potency of the Chinese economic and technological one has to call it a miracle, right?

It's the largest material transformation in human existence ever in the history of the planet or species, any category you choose. And yet, under the auspices of a completely unapologetic authoritarian regime that directly traces its lineage in a much more direct way than you do to socialism, to the classics of Marxism.

How do you think positioning itself in relation to this, and where do you see Spain to this phenomenon, really world transforming phenomenon?

Presidente.- So, again, it is important to keep in mind that the global challenges that we face, technology, AI, its implication and human rights and the labour market and so on and so forth, climate change and global health, we need to cooperate. We need to cooperate. And we need to speak with others. And diplomacy, by the way, that is the meaning of diplomacy, to speak and to try to open a dialogue and to reach agreements with those who think different to us.

And at the same time, we cannot be naïve, and there is, of course, a competition. So, we need to cooperate and we need to compete. And when it comes to cooperation, I do not believe that we can allow ourselves not to include China, for instance, in a minimum governance of AI in the present and the future.

Which, by the way, brings me to something that will happen this week in New York in the General Assembly, which is that the UN is launching this, similarly to climate change COP, a scientific panel when it comes to AI.

So, that will create the foundation of a future governance of AI at multilateral level. And that will be very important because it will place all of us at the same level. No matter if your China, US, Spain or, you know, the dimension and the strength, economic strength of those countries, and of course, the scientific advice when it comes to the implications of this new technology.

I am truly grateful for science. Really, I think that and I say it because I was prime minister in Spain at the time of the pandemic. We suffered a lot. There was a lot of Spanish citizens that lost their lives because of Covid 19. And science brought us the response. So, going back to, you know, AI or climate change it is so important that from the political perspective, we include the scientific advice.

This is what I am doing in Spain, for instance, what I did. My goal was to create an architecture within each ministerial department and having a scientific advisory groups in order to give that vision to all our policies and the decision making process that brings to that policy. And this is something that we are losing.

And in my opinion, it is critical for politics nowadays to conceive and conceptualize how do we include this scientific advice when we decide whether we go in this direction or another.

Adam Tooze.- Because it's the ultimate source of the positive sum, win win, free lunch.

Presidente.- Because I mean, I do believe that politics gives you the opportunity to get to know about a lot of things, but in the surface. Of course you have the intellectual curiosity to dig and to understand and to know better this subject or another. But it is important to have the advice of science.

Adam Tooze.- On the China point, we're running out of time. But it is interesting that the EU framework on China that your Government contributed to in the spring of 2019, apart from cooperation and competition, had a third category, which was systemic rivalry. And that's where that's where the complex politics really...

Presidente.- Yes, because of course we are democracies and it is important that democracies deliver. And that is why going back to one of your first questions. It is the important that we distribute the benefits of the economic growth. And this is something that it will be, you know, triggered by the technological revolution and of course, the AI revolution.

So, I think that that is a progressive approach to all these challenges is critical for all of us. At the end of the day, when it comes to climate change, or when it comes to AI or when it comes to these global challenges, or global health it is a more pragmatic approach to cooperate than an ideological one.

And at the end of the day, you know, in the national parliament, we had a debate some months ago about migration. You know that in the last seven years, I said before, we received more or less 2 million migrants. But at the same time, we were capable to



reduce unemployment rate by 40%, which means that, of course, we have the capacity to create jobs for the Spaniards.

The point here is that the dilemmas that we must respond in the present and the future, not only in migration, but other issues, it's whether we decide to be prosperous and therefore open societies or poor and closed societies.

And I think that the US shines as one example of how you were capable to incorporate and assimilate that migration for the good of your society. And I think this is a big lesson that, of course, we are trying to copy in the good sense when it comes to the Spanish experience.

If you see now Spain is representing more or less 40% of the economic growth of the eurozone. And this is also thanks to the contribution of migration.

So, we are kindly asking students of Columbia, coming from different countries besides Spain, to come to join us in Spain and to profit this momentum that we are living in Spain.

Adam Tooze.- You anticipate my final question, which was literally going to be, how do we get in on this on this wonderful success story? Thank you so much, president, for this candid conversation. It really was fascinating to be able to exchange ideas with you.

Presidente.- Thank you very much.

Adam Tooze.- Thank you so much for gracing the beginning of The World Leaders Forum.

(Transcripción editada por la Secretaría de Estado de Comunicación)

(Intervención original en inglés)