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Spain did not go that way, says Serfaty, thanks to the "pragmatic" PSOE chief Felipe González, prime minister since 1982.

The PSOE won power in 1982—in the third election of the post-Franco era—partly by *opposing* NATO, which Spain, under Antonio Suarez's conservative regime, had just joined. With the youthful (44) González's victory came a dilemma. For economic reasons, he wanted Common Market membership, but negotiations dragged. The French, fearing Spanish rivalry in agriculture, were cool. And other Common Market leaders—Britain's Margaret Thatcher, West Germany's Helmut Kohl, and Italy's Bettino Craxi—now had doubts about Spain's NATO commitment.

González played tough. Every time the Common Market talks stalled, he threatened to hold a referendum on Spain's NATO membership. Slowly, Madrid's Common Market prospects improved. As they did, notes Serfaty, González "moved his party away from its anti-NATO stand." During a 1983 visit to West Germany, he hailed Bonn's decision to welcome new U.S. missiles. On Spanish television he declared that "Spain cannot be here and now a neutral country." Late in 1984, as the Common Market bargaining reached a crucial point—France was still opposed—González played his referendum card. He announced the oft-threatened vote on NATO, and, waffling carefully, said he would ask for approval of NATO membership only in a "political sense." To appease PSOE left-wingers, he would seek to reduce the U.S. military presence in Spain.

The Common Market approved Spanish membership in principle in March 1985. González then set the NATO referendum for March 1986. Despite wide opposition—from pacifists, Greens, Communists, even royalists—NATO was approved. Says Serfaty: "González's gamble paid off." He "consolidated" Spain's role in the Western alliance while maintaining his popularity. Spain has the highest unemployment (22 percent) of any industrialized country. But Spaniards were pleased enough by recent economic growth and falling inflation—1986's eight percent rate was well under the 1977 peak of 26.4—to return the PSOE to power last June.

González's main feat, says Serfaty, has been to transform the PSOE into the most "conservative" socialist party in Western Europe.

Moscow's Deal With Damascus

"The Soviet-Syrian Relationship" by Pedro Ramet, in *Problems of Communism* (Sept.-Oct. 1986), U.S. Information Agency, 301 Fourth St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Keeping a political satellite in stable orbit is a tough job, even for tough people like the Soviets. Consider Moscow's difficulties with Syria.

Ramet, who teaches International Studies at the University of Washington, notes that Moscow's Damascus connection is typical of Soviet patron-client relationships. There are no shared goals. Characteristically, Moscow seeks to "institutionalize" a Soviet role in a region's politics through a client; the client seeks aid "at the lowest possible cost."

Moscow forged its Syria link during the mid-1960s with arms shipments. Thereafter, the Soviets encouraged Syria's President Hafez Assad to build up a state-run economy, thinking that this would make him a good

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customer for East bloc goods and services. They were chagrined; Assad favored private enterprise and trade with the West.

A serious conflict of patron-client interests developed in 1976, when Syria plunged into Lebanon's civil war. Suddenly, the army of one Soviet client was at the throat of another—Yassir Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). When Assad ignored Moscow's request to get out of Lebanon, Soviet arms deliveries were suspended. Unfazed, Assad merely remarked: "We have a different point of view."

The Lebanese war prompted the Soviets to do some soul searching: Was it prudent to entrust all their weaponry in the region to one stubborn, undependable ally? In November 1978, hoping to exploit Syria's temporary "rapprochement" with Iraq, the Soviets called Syrian military leaders to Moscow. They proposed to base MIG-27s in Iraq, ostensibly to reduce Syrian vulnerability to Israeli attacks. Syria left the talks in a huff.

But later, Ramet observes, with Egypt "effectively neutralized," Iraq "alienated" from Syria, and Lebanon "disintegrating," Assad decided he might need Soviet protection from Israel after all. The two countries signed a 20-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in October 1980.

Even so, Damascus repeatedly skirmished with the PLO. In 1983, Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko ordered Assad to patch up his feud with Arafat. Instead, Syrian-supported insurgents soon drove Arafat's forces out of two Palestinian camps. In 1985, an angry Moscow withdrew more than half of its 13,000 military "advisers" in Syria.

The drama continues. Soviet general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev is reportedly "frustrated" by his inability to improve Syrian-Iraqi relations, or to prevent Syria from supporting Iran in its war with Iraq. As Ramet says, the Soviets "have not been able to change Assad's mind" about much of anything. But tolerance is the "the price they must pay" for "stability" in their spheres of influence. And so they have paid it.

Ne Win's Burma

"The Road from Mandalay" by Ian Buruma, in *The New York Review of Books* (Oct. 23, 1986), 250 West 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10107.

Isolated by mountains and the Bay of Bengal, Burma long preserved its unique Buddhist folk culture, despite trade traffic with India and China, British rule (1885-1948), and Japanese conquest (World War II).

But not enough of old Burma survived to suit President Ne Win, who took power in Rangoon in a 1962 military coup. He has led the poor if potentially prosperous land of some 30 million ever since, using the army and the Burma Socialist Program Party. To Buruma, a *Far Eastern Economic Review* editor, the goal of Ne Win's "Burmese Way to Socialism" is clear: no new order, but the "village Burma" that predated Britain's ouster of the Burmese monarchy and efforts to weaken Buddhism's authority.

Burma's 1948 independence was won by educated idealists who sought a Western-style democracy. But in 1947 their leader, Aung San, was assassinated. His successor, U Nu, had a vague vision of a Buddhist welfare state. Under the guise of "building socialism," Ne Win, now aged 74, has