

Spain Wants Treaty
Or No U.S. Bases

U.S. Bases

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The Spanish government is expected by Defense Department officials to demand a security treaty with the U.S. as the price for renewing American military base rights in Spain.

Just how the administration would respond to such a demand, which would in effect formally commit the U.S. to the defense of Spain, has not been determined, according to Pentagon officials.

Some officials, particularly in the Pentagon, would be inclined to accept on the ground that a treaty would only formalize an unwritten commitment the U.S. already has to go to the defense of Spain under the existing base-rights agreement.

Other officials, in the State and Defense Departments, object that acceptance would doom future base rights in Spain since the Senate is unlikely to approve a mutual security treaty with Spain.

The U.S. has had base rights in Spain since 1963, through executive agreements between the two governments rather than by treaty. The Air Force has bases at Torrejon and Saragossa plus a standby base at Moron; the Navy operates a base at Rota to support Polaris missile submarines as well as some operations of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

Defense Department officials believe Spain's wish for a treaty springs largely from her symbolic aspiration for a position of equality with other European nations that are linked with the U.S. through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Blocked over the years from admission to NATO by Britain and the Scandinavian states, Spain could achieve somewhat the same status through a bilateral treaty with the U.S.

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