Introduction

This book has its origins in a lecture I gave in 1999 at the London School of Economics at the invitation of Professor Paul Preston. The initial idea was to examine military policy during Spain's transition to democracy. Soon afterwards I left my post as general-secretary of the Catalan Socialist Party, and although I continued as a member of parliament until March 2004, I had more time available to act as a consultant to programmes of military reform for a number of governments in Latin America and one or two in Europe.

My growing awareness of the political realities in different countries revealed both the complexity and similarities of the problems to be resolved, starting with the lack of knowledge of military issues displayed by civilians responsible for reform in almost all of these countries. A lecture I gave in the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Santiago de Chile in 2002 and another in Belgrade in 2003 forced me to start to articulate my personal experiences in government in Spain and the wealth of experience I was now acquiring through my consultancies. I began to think of a model that would allow me to demonstrate the complexity of the process and, at the same time, help develop policies to reform the armed forces.

Obviously, the key factor was my previous stint as Minister of Defence. I held this post from the end of 1982, when Felipe González entrusted me with that portfolio after the Socialist Party had won a decisive victory under his leadership in the October elections. I remained in post for eight years, until I was appointed vice-president in the government. As a result, I was responsible for a large part of the process of reforming the Spanish military during the period I describe in this book as one of democratic consolidation. Before my appointment I had had no opportunity to find out the issues involved, even though I had to take decisions almost immediately. In my previous post as mayor of Barcelona, I had learned that it was not necessary to have extensive technical competence in an area in order to have the political

and moral authority to take sensible decisions. Clearly one must read reports and study many issues in depth, particularly in the first few months in post. Longevity in post increases competence, even in the more technical areas. When I left my post, I was the minister of a European democracy who had held the defence portfolio for the longest period of time. This time factor is crucial in tasks like military reform that demand that authority be backed by knowledge and continuity in order to be able to put flesh on guidelines and move from the pages of the Official Bulletin of State to everyday practice. It has always been my belief that the short period in post of Latin American ministers of defence has been their greatest undoing when it comes to solving the problems they have with their armed forces.

Not that I had time to reflect on questions of military policy in the years immediately after my period as Minister of Defence. It was several years before I could read the existing literature on civilian–military relations and think about aspects of Spanish policy that might be of use in other latitudes. Two developments fuelled a renewed interest in the analysis of civilian–military relations at that time: on the one hand, transitions to democracy in Eastern Europe and Latin America and, on the other, the frictions and conflicts between the Clinton administration and the military in the 1990s. I doubt that Samuel Huntington would write now, as he did in his preface to his seminal work, *The Soldier and the State*: 'the study of civilian–military relations had suffered from too little theorizing'.[1] In the 1990s, numerous monographs were published on the state of civilian–military relations in several Latin American countries. In the mid-90s, the academic world in the United States began a serious debate on government control of the armed forces that was truncated at a stroke by the terrorist attack on New York in September 2001. All this literature has been of enormous help in the preparation of this book. Nonetheless, there are few books that discuss what happened in Spain, although I was able to draw on Felipe Agüero's pioneering book, which I hope to complement.[2]

By reading the existing literature and analysing different case studies, I began to give shape to a book that does not set out to be a chronicle of the process of military reform in Spain. Instead, the approach I have

[1] See Huntington 1957: VII.
[2] I am referring to Agüero 1995a, a book that will be quoted extensively in the following pages.

tried to adopt is normative, rather than descriptive or historical: a narrative account of Spain's lengthy process of military reform has yet to be written. I have attempted to reflect on the military policy that should be developed as part of a process of military reform in a transition to democracy. In the academic field, even within the political sciences, it is usually claimed that theories should help anticipate outcomes on the basis of their cogent explanation of the facts. This is a somewhat limited approach. Steve Smith's view seems much more fruitful when he argues that: 'theories do not simply explain or predict, they tell us what possibilities exist for human action and intervention; they define not merely our explanatory possibilities, but also our ethical and practical horizons'.[3] This admittedly hybrid approach is the one I have tried to adopt in my study.

I have already indicated that one feature which impressed me as I studied situations in countries as different as Chile and Serbia was the similarity of the issues to be confronted. Many scholars of civilian–military relations share this perspective. In a recent work, Thomas Bruneau and Scott Tollefson state 'in all democracies, new or old, issues of civil–military relations are fundamentally the same'.[4] In fact, Juvenal already posed the basic issue at stake between civil governments and the armed forces, almost twenty centuries ago when he asked *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* That is, who will guard the guards? The control by society and its representatives over the group to which it has granted the use of force, precisely to free it from those who pose a threat, is, has been and will always be the key issue in civilian–military relations.

Edmund Burke was very pessimistic on the matter of control of the armed forces. He believed that 'an armed, disciplined body is, in its essence, dangerous to liberty; undisciplined, it is ruinous to society'.[5] Much more recently, S. E. Finer, a pioneer of the study of relations between governments and the armed forces, concluded that the only single stable solution is for the military to accept that its subordination to civil power is an entirely necessary prerequisite for a country to function in a democratic way. I agree with Finer and would add that this subordination is also necessary if the military as a group is to serve the state effectively. If we add to the criterion of control the need for efficiency that must be pursued in any sector of state administration, we

[3] Quoted in Burchill 2001: 2. [4] Bruneau and Tollefson 2006: 3f.
[5] See the introduction in Howard 1959.

have the two essential goals of military policy. This position informs the suggestions in chapters 5 and 6, which focus on the analysis of the different measures that should comprise military policy.

An issue that follows directly from this, and which must be addressed in a transition, is whether the government decides that the military must share the same values as society: in other words, how much does it want the military to differ from the society in which it is located? There are two, almost contradictory, responses given by the two most influential studies published in the last fifty years. Huntington argues that to be effective, the military has to be different, and Janowitz states that it must move closer to civilian values and procedures in order to improve its efficiency in the new context. This debate, like the previous one, is almost as old as the existence of the armed forces. Machiavelli in his *Art of War* had already stated: 'there is nothing which has less in common with another, and that is so dissimilar, as civilian life is from the military'.[6]

Those were other times. On the brink of the First World War, Max Weber expressed an opposite point of view: 'a person holding rank in the military domain, in other words, an official, is no different to a bourgeois civil servant. In effect, the modern mass army is also a bureaucratic army, and an official is a special kind of civil servant, in contrast to the noble, condottiere, bandit-leaders or heroes of Homer'.[7] It goes without saying that in this book I criticize the position defended by Huntington as wrong and dangerous. I believe that the passage of time, the end of the Cold War and the growing awareness that there have to be legitimate reasons for the use of force on the international stage, make Janowitz's criteria valid for the twenty-first century. The United States' enormous military power has blinded them to this necessary development to the extent that in the case of Iraq, the US administration believed military victory was sufficient to win the war.

The path opened by Max Weber leads us to another problem linked to relations between the military and the government. It is an issue that arises frequently and in quite dissimilar countries: the transition from an army that considers itself, and is considered to be, an institution in dialogue with the other institutions of the state, to an army that is integrated into the state as a special area within it. This question has been much discussed, even in Spain where it was at the centre of

[6] Machiavelli 2003 [1520]: 7. [7] Weber 1968: Chapter IX, Section 3.

parliamentary debate in the process of drawing up the Constitution of 1978. I analyse this issue in chapter 5 from the perspective of someone convinced that the necessary route to the adaptation of the armed forces to democracy passes through its integration into the state administration.

The following pages attempt to follow the suggestions of two American academics well known for their work in this field. The first, Samuel Fitch, concludes in one of the most lucid studies on this question in relation to Latin America that 'there are no simple recipes or proven strategies for civilian governments seeking to redefine relationships with the military'.[8] In this book I have tried to simplify those recipes, following the criterion I have always found useful in my professional life, namely that clarity of thought is the best instrument with which to confront complex situations.

The second, Eliot A. Cohen, writes in his study of the relations between political leaders and armies in the great warring conflicts of the past century: 'There is nothing obvious or inevitable about the subordination of the armed forces to the wishes and purposes of the political leadership'.[9] In effect, the satisfactory evolution of military reform is not predetermined by the conditions in which it takes place and the beginning of a process of democratization, however promising, does not guarantee that it will reach a satisfactory conclusion. In other words, if I am clear about one thing after my experiences in the field, it is that policy is important and that the way a process of military reform is planned and carried out is central to its eventual success. This conviction permeates the whole book.

This study is structured over eight chapters. In the first, I review part of the literature on the transition to democracy in order to draw some conclusions on the way it is connected to policy for military reform. In the second, I analyse studies that concentrate more directly on the relationship between the transition to democracy and military policy in order to demarcate the different phases in the process. In the third, I attempt to define the concepts that are necessary to show what in my view constitutes proper military reform and to articulate a model that can act as a guide to the design and implementation of military policy. What I consider to be the first part of the book concludes in chapter 4 with an analysis of various reform measures structured according to the axes of the model suggested in the previous chapter.

[8] Fitch 1998: 169. [9] Cohen 2002: 226.

Chapters 5 and 6 analyse the Spanish process as divided into periods of transition and consolidation, respectively. They represent the application of my model to the situation I know best, which is obviously Spain. This allows me to evaluate possible measures, their advantages and risks, as well as their inclusion in a global policy of military reform. I include the reflections in chapter 7 concerning the US debate on the control of the armed forces, because I want to show that an active policy on the part of the government in order to retain control of the armed forces and their effectiveness is a necessity in all circumstances, even in a consolidated democracy. Finally, in line with the book's normative approach, I conclude with a series of reflections and suggestions on military reform policy in processes of transition and on the control of the army in various situations, in the hope that these may be of use to civilians who from ministerial or other similar positions of responsibility must propose or implement decisions in the area of military policy.

Many people have helped me in writing this book. I should mention, from within the academy, Professors José María Maravall and Felipe Agüero. Among my colleagues in my time as minister I must mention Gustavo Suárez Pertierra, José Enrique Serrano and Generals Ramón Fernández Sequeiros and Jesús del Olmo. Pol Morillas and Laia Mestres helped me with the notes, bibliography and final editing. The following pages were written over numerous weekends and holidays. Without the help or interest of Conxa, my wife, I would never have finished.

It behoves me to say that all the errors are exclusively my responsibility, but I think a fitting conclusion to this introduction might be the last paragraph to Hugo Grotius's preliminary discourse to his *The Rights of War and Peace*:

> Whatever Liberty I have taken in judging of the Opinions and Writings of others, I desire and beseech all those, into whose Hands this Treatise shall come, to take the same with me. They shall no sooner admonish me of my Mistakes, than I shall follow their Admonitions. And moreover, if I have said any thing contrary either to Piety, or to good Manners, or to Holy Scripture, or to the Consent of the Christian Church, or to any Kind of Truth, let it be unsaid again.[10]

[10] Grotius 2005 [1625]: 132.

1 *The study of the transition to democracy*

I will begin by considering some of the studies of transitions from authoritarian regimes and the subsequent interactions between civilian and military spheres developed over the last twenty years, in order to scrutinize approaches to, and definitions of, democratic transition and consolidation. This is the first step to be taken before applying these terms to a case study of Spain and the experiences accumulated there. It is not my intention to track down the theory that best explains the process of political transformation generated in Spain after the death of General Francisco Franco. My aim is rather to consider critically the policies needed to encourage a democratic transition in the area of the control of the military. If a normative focus is to be of use, the process one wishes to nurture or control must be understood. It is not sufficient to reflect on the adequacy of policies and measures taken in the field of defence during the process of the transition. In this first chapter I will try to review some of the many advances that have been made in a field which some have dubbed 'transitology'. This will enable us to set the procedures belonging to military control within a more general view of the process that brought democracy to Spain. I would also like to establish the groundwork in order to determine whether the Spanish experience, together with an analysis of processes of reform in other countries, might suggest a line of political action that could be applied to current processes of transition, even though none are strictly comparable.

A brief glance at the large number of countries that have been able to overcome authoritarian regimes in the last twenty-five years is enough to explain why the field of political science has been so fascinated by these processes. If we take 1974, the year of the Revolution of the Carnations, as our point of departure for the third wave of democratizations, we have moved from a situation in which out of 145 existing countries, 39 were democracies, that is 26.9 per cent, to a very different balance sheet: in 1997, 191 countries existed in the world of which 117, or 61.3 per cent,

were democracies.[1] In fact, between 1974 and 1999, 85 authoritarian regimes fell, of which 30 are now stable democracies, 34, new authoritarian regimes and the remaining 21, pseudo-democracies or countries that have fallen into the hands of war lords.[2] We are thus faced by a new, wide-ranging phenomenon that has inevitably, and most fortunately, attracted the interest of scholars from different social sciences.

Given the intense concern for these issues shared by academics, it should come as no surprise that the studies carried out have created new, widely used terms despite the lack of real consensus as to their content. The two most used terms are transition and democratic consolidation. Different authors endow these terms with different meanings, but that is far from unusual, as we can see from other concepts, such as development and globalization, widely used in the political sciences. Nonetheless, we should note that the expression 'transition to democracy' is ambiguous because it implies that the final outcome of the process is a democratic regime. A summary scrutiny of the situations in most countries in Latin America and Eastern Europe, however, reveals that consolidated democracy is not the only possible outcome for transitions sparked by the collapse of a dictatorship: that result is in fact the least likely and the most difficult to achieve.[3]

It is possible that the success of the changes in three southern European countries (Portugal, Spain and Greece) has led researchers to wax optimistically about the results of processes of transition and drawn them towards a determinism that had hitherto been the domain of structuralists, and towards a so-called 'teleology'.[4] Clearly, the Spanish process of transition has constantly belied any determinist vision of history, from the designation of Adolfo Suárez as president of the government to the resolution of the 1981 attempted coup d'état via the Moncloa Pacts or the re-establishing of the regional government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya). Suárez himself wrote:

> One comforting lesson that I, at least, have drawn from the Spanish transition, in which I played a central role, is that there is no such thing as historical

[1] Diamond 1999: 25. [2] Geddes 1999: 115. [3] Przeworski 1991: 51.
[4] A term proposed by Guillermo O'Donnell that he later rectified. In his May 1997 Postscript to 'Transiciones, continuidades y algunas paradojas', O'Donnell admits that the idea of democratic consolidation the article puts forward is wrong (O'Donnell 1997b: 253). In a later article, 'Otra Institucionalización', O'Donnell, considers that the previous article is an example of the very teleology he himself criticizes (1997c: 305ff.).

determinism. By living and making history in this phase, I experienced a most important justification of an essential idea: that the future, far from being decided in advance, is always an open, unstable realm of freedom, even though one can foresee possible outcomes from the analyses we make of structural conditions and the forces at work in the society in which we live, which include, as a vital impulse, the free will of men, who are the protagonists of history.[5]

I use this quotation to emphasize the fact that there is a broad field for a study of the behaviour of leading political players, and of the scope for compromise and the impact of these on the subsequent process of transition. As we shall see later, the analysis of political action in these contexts is much more relevant and enlightening when related to underlying structural and cultural factors.

In any case, the way different realities developed dealt a final blow both to 'teleology' and historical determinism. Situations with similar departure points, for example, as those in which the military ceded power in Latin American countries, have evolved quite distinctly. Even worse, very few of the thirty countries that have become stable democracies (perhaps only Portugal, Greece and Spain) have carried the process of transition to democracy, in the real meaning of that term, to its conclusion. There are many countries that have not reinstated dictatorial regimes, but neither have they progressed to a situation that could be called democratic. As a consequence, expressions such as formal democracy, pseudo-democracy, weak democracy, partial democracy, *delegative democracy* and *low-intensity democracy*[6] have arisen, which try to encompass recognition of the sad fact that the fall of a dictatorship does not inexorably lead to democracy. In this respect, a study of transition and military reform in Spain is clearly of interest as it focuses on a process that can be called a true and proper transition to democracy, since it led to the consolidation of a state of law.

The analysis of transition processes

The pioneering work of Dankwart A. Rustow stands out in the field of transition studies. It is quite astonishing, with the hindsight of what

[5] Adolfo Suárez, 'La Transición Política' in 'Historia de la Transición', Madrid, *Diario 16*, 1983. Quoted by Colomer 1998: 9.
[6] O'Donnell 1994. For the concept of low-intensity democracy and its relationship to social and civil rights, see O'Donnell 2001: 601 and following.

happened in Spain, Greece or Portugal, that in his article of 1970, written five years before these processes of transition had begun, he was able to describe so precisely their most salient features. Rustow starts from a view that 'the factors that keep a democracy stable may not be the ones that brought it into existence: explanations of democracy must distinguish between function and genesis'.[7] In this way, he opened the door to the specific study of transitions to democracy. From this departure point, Rustow considers such transitions as a process that could be divided into three phases, with a single prerequisite in order to be operative: national unity. Rustow thus denies that a minimal level of economic development is a necessary prerequisite for democracy.

The first phase, which he describes as preparatory, is one of struggle and conflict over power between different social forces. The initial aim of the latter is not necessarily to establish democracy. The second phase, decision making, can be viewed as an act of explicit consensus in which 'political leaders accept the existence of diversity in unity and, to that end, agree to institutionalise some crucial aspects of democratic procedures'. In the third phase, habituation, politicians and citizens alike apply the new rules to other issues and adjust to the new democratic structure.

Rustow based his article on his knowledge of the situations in England, Sweden and Turkey, and was of course unable at that stage to analyse the numerous cases of transition that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Nonetheless, I can point to many elements in his description that anticipated what was to happen, at least in Spain. One could mention his affirmation that small groups of leaders play a disproportionate role in the decision-making phase. There are also his references to the fear of civil war as an incentive for gradualism; to the importance of political consensus in what he describes as the decision-making phase; or his statement that education for the masses and the welfare state are the consequences of democracy rather than a precondition for democracy itself.

The notion of process and division into phases is a starting point in the contributions by O'Donnell and the group of academics he and Philippe Schmitter brought together to research *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* at the Woodrow Wilson Centre in Washington. From his assessment of what had happened in several countries in

[7] Rustow 1970: 346.