ALASTAIR DAVIS
Research Associate at Lowy Institute for International Policy

Research Associate at Lowy Institute for International Policy. He specialises in Australian and US foreign policy. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in International Studies from the University of New South Wales and a Master’s in International Law from the University of Sydney.

GARTH PRATTEN
Senior Lecturer in the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University

A historian by training, Dr Pratten has had a varied career. He worked for the Australian Army’s Training Command and taught at both Deakin University and the War Studies Department at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Dr Pratten contributed to important projects in 2010 whilst deployed to Afghanistan as part of his work for the British Ministry of Defence.

In the field of teaching, Dr Pratten specialises in Theory and practice of military operations in the 20th Century and early 21st Century, insurgency and counter-insurgency as well as military and strategic history in Asia Pacific.
Participants

LIAM NEVILL
Principal Analyst at ASPI’s (Australian Strategic Policy Institute) International Cyber Policy Centre

Liam has been working at ASPI since June 2015. He’s published several papers on cyberspace, the cyber-modernisation of the Australian Navy, e-commerce in Asia-Pacific and the occasional article on specialist media outlets.

Liam previously worked at the Australian Department of Defence (foreign policy and defence affairs). In 2011, he was a member of the cyber-policies division, and participated in rolling out a number of related policies. Before that, he held similar positions at the Department of Health and Ageing, as well as working on initiatives for the Aboriginal community.

He has a degree in History, Politics and International Relations from the University of New South Wales in Sydney and a Master’s in Strategy and Security from the University of New South Wales in Canberra.

SUSAN WINDYBANK
Editor of the Centre for Independent Studies’ quarterly journal

Susan was the Editor of the Centre for Independent Studies’ quarterly journal from 2000 to 2004 and resumed the position in autumn 2016.

Susan holds a Master’s degree in International Studies and was the Director of the International Development Research Centre, where she wrote several pieces focused mainly on Asia Pacific. She taught for several years at Sydney University, and has recently developed a growing interest in the history of Muslim Spain.

She owns a publishing business and has participated in projects ranging from corporate training manuals to a vegan cookbook.
During a meeting with the participants in the Leaders Programme, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Ildefonso Castro, highlighted the importance of Australia for Spanish and European interests in the Easternmost corner of the planet. As well as China and India, given the size of their economies, the Secretary of State emphasised that Australia and Japan are among the key markets for Spain in the region.

The meeting also served to review the state of affairs in international politics, analysing both issues concerning specific countries as well as broader international topics such as globalisation, the rise of populism and the fight against international terrorism, “a priority for Spain” according to the Secretary of State. In the field of Defence, the Leaders showed an interest in the role of the Spanish Army and its missions abroad.

Prior to his meeting with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary General of the Spain Australia Council Foundation, Mr Alonso Dezcallar, officially welcomed the participants in the
Programme. He also offered an overview of the main items of the agenda, which was designed, on this occasion, to allow representatives of the main think tanks of the two countries to exchange opinions, strategies and concerns.

“There are close ties between us in many fields despite the distance between our countries, and that encourages us to consider the possibility of collaborating more closely still,” said SACF’s Secretary General. Mr Dezcallar added that one of the Leaders Programme’s main goals is to “open new doors and enable people to get to know each other and bond in the hope that new initiatives will emerge”. He invited the Leaders to be proactive and participative and said he hoped they would find the planned agenda to their liking.

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At the headquarters of the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness, the Leaders met with the Secretary of State for Commerce, María Luisa Poncela, whose department is in charge of promoting trade, internationalisation, exports and Spanish investment abroad, as well as facilitating foreign investment inflows.

María Luisa Poncela went over the main figures of Spanish economy with the participants in the Programme, focusing on the effects of the economic crisis and the structural measures adopted to overcome it.

There are many positive figures that are cause for optimism, such as the 3.2% GDP growth registered in Spain in 2016. This was “the highest growth rate in the main EU countries” according to Ms Poncela, who highlighted the foreign sector as a driver of the Spanish economy during the recession.

Currently, falling unemployment coupled with increasing domestic demand, “suggests that Spanish economic growth is becoming more balanced”. Diversifying external markets whilst also selling to the domestic market “is the best advice we can give to companies”, the Secretary of State explained.

The Australian Leaders were particularly interested in the corporate tax system, as
the Australian Government is considering the possibility of bringing corporate tax rates down from 30 to 25%. Ms Poncela also highlighted the existence of tax incentives such as those for investing in R&D.

During the Q&A, Susan Windybank and Alastair Davis asked questions about unemployment rates in Spain, both country-wide and regionally, and the implementation of EU policies on industrialisation. The Secretary of State singled out Galicia, a region visited by the Leaders during the Programme, as an example of industrial growth driven by the automotive and aerospace sectors. “Galicia’s economic activity is impressive,” she said, highlighting Inditex as one of the region’s drivers.

The Leaders also wanted to hear about the economic impact Brexit will have on Spain and Spanish policies to promote economic activity. It was pointed out that improvements to the energy and transport sectors, among others, are on the agenda for re-industrialisation in Spain, which is evidenced by the fact that the country is now the second-largest automobile manufacturer in Europe following Germany.

In conclusion, the economic outlook presented to the Leaders at the Ministry of Economy was optimistic. In the words of the Secretary of State, “there’s still a lot of work to do, but from a macro-economic point of view we can say we are out of the crisis”.

#AustralianLeaders
The Patrons of the Council Foundation outlined their interests in Australia during a working lunch at Navantia.

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“Despite the distance, Spain and Australia are gradually drawing nearer”. Those were the words used by Navantia’s CEO and the Spain Australia Council Foundation Chairman, José Manuel Revuelta, to welcome the 2017 Leaders to a working lunch with members of SACF’s Board. Mr Revuelta also stated that “bilateral relations between Spain and Australia are excellent. The challenge now is to maintain those relations and create new ties, and SACF will continue to work towards that goal.”

**SACF’s main challenge - strengthening ties between Spain and Australia**
The members of the Board talked to the Leaders about the presence of Spanish companies, as well as social and cultural institutions, in Australia. Among other aspects, they highlighted the participation of these companies in large projects and infrastructure in the country, namely, Navantia’s contracts with the Royal Australian Navy, the Toowoomba highway project, Sydney light rail by Acciona and the acquisition of Broadspectrum by Ferrovial.

In addition to the thriving business relations in place, ties between Spain and Australia are increasingly strong in the fields of education and culture. Eduardo Sánchez Moreno, Head of Strategic Planning at Instituto Cervantes, noted that Sydney’s Instituto Cervantes is “among the most successful centres in terms of impact and profit”. In turn, Amaya Mendikoetxea and Matilde Sánchez, who are the Alliance4Universities representatives and Vice-Chancellors for International Relations of Universidad Autónoma and Universidad Carlos III in Madrid, emphasised the success of the mobility and scientific cooperation programmes with Australian universities.

As Óscar Sáenz de Santamaría, Spain’s Director General of Cultural Industries and Books, pointed out, there are a great many potential areas for cooperation between Spain and Australia. María Antonia López, Director for Institutional Cooperation and Coordination at ICEX, added that Australia was “a priority country where we still have a great deal to do”.

International political issues were also discussed over lunch, with a special focus on Brexit and its consequences for both the European Union and the countries that have traditionally established relations with the EU through the UK, such as Australia and India.

Cyber security was also a key topic, with a special mention of the seminar organised by the Foundation and ASPI in 2016 and the strategic importance of Australia and China in this area, as well as their influence on the economy of the Asia Pacific region after the US pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).
Spain: an example in the fight against terrorism

Victim protection and prevention are two key factors in the work carried out by the Spanish authorities.

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The Australian Leaders 2017 had a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation with Francisco de Miguel, Deputy Director of International Cooperation against Terrorism. Spain is considered a global benchmark in this field.

Having offered an overview of terrorist activity in Spain since the creation of ETA in 1958 until the present day, and of the development of Islamic terrorism in Spain and abroad, Mr de Miguel provided the Leaders with details on Spain’s fight against terrorism, which he described as a “national priority”.

The keys to the fight against terrorism in Spain lie, according to Mr de Miguel, in the defence of constitutional values (pluralism, democracy and human rights), the creation of appropriate legislation, the promotion of international cooperation and, lastly, the protection of victims of terrorism.

All of these ideas are in line with counter-terrorism policies in the EU, where there is “intense cooperation in the areas of justice and police work (Eurojust, Europol)”, as well as compliance with the UN’s positions on the matter.

Spanish counter-terrorism policy was amended after the Madrid attacks.
In 2004, after which security on critical infrastructure was improved and coordination between public administrations and police departments, as well as with the institutions of other countries, was stepped up.

One of the aspects of the fight against terrorism which most impressed the Leaders was the area of prevention, especially Spain’s National Strategic Plan to Fight Violent Radicalisation (PEN-LCRV), which was approved in January 2015 with a view to identifying and neutralising potential radicalisation outbreaks through actions with high-risk groups and individuals. Among other goals, this plan seeks to integrate society values into religious education, especially in higher-risk neighbourhoods and cities.

Susan Windybank and Liam Nevill showed particular interest in the fight against propaganda by organisations such as DAESH, which conveys a poetic, adventurous image of terrorism in clear contrast with the ‘normality’ of life in Western societies, where many Muslims fail to fit in.

For Francisco de Miguel, on top of promoting internal dialogue within those communities, it is essential to establish development plans, ‘to create other focuses of activity for young people’ such as cultural and sports centres. One of the most important ideas to convey, according to the Deputy Director of International Cooperation against Terrorism, is the universal right to life, which also appears in the Quran. “Most of the victims of Islamic State these days are Muslims; that is something worth pointing out. The idea that terrorism threatens the life of Muslims is one of the pillars of this fight,” he concluded.

#AustralianLeaders
The participants in the Programme visited the Inditex head offices in Arteixo, from which the group’s worldwide activity is monitored.

**Inditex - Spain’s global fashion giant**

**A CORUÑA > 28.03.2017**

Since its humble origins back in 1963, Inditex has become one of the world’s largest fashion retailers, with over 7,000 stores worldwide, a 150,000-strong team and an efficient logistics system based in Spain that ships new products to all stores twice a week. The company’s figures speak volumes of its success: in 2016, Inditex revenues totalled 23.31 billion euros.

The Leaders visited Inditex central in Arteixo, Coruña, where the company’s corporate headquarters are located, as well as the Zara and Zara Home headquarters, several textile factories and one of the company’s logistics platforms. In Arteixo, they were welcomed by Jesús Echevarría, Head of Institutional Relations for Inditex, who presented an analysis of the company’s business model and guided the Leaders through the various design, production and logistics processes which culminate with the shipping of products from the group’s various brands to their stores all over the world.

The group’s stores in Australia, among the company’s most recent new openings, fit within the Eco-store concept typical of Inditex’s business model, based on the use of eco-friendly products, efficient water management and the reduction of carbon emissions.

Inditex has now been operating in Australia for six years, and currently has 21 Zara and Zara Home stores in the market.
The Leaders Programme visits Navantia’s shipyards in Ferrol

The listed company’s facilities in Galicia are central to Navantia Australia’s activities.
As well as touring Navantia’s offices in Madrid, the Australian Leaders got the chance to visit the company’s shipyards in Ferrol, where construction of the two Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) vessels that the Royal Australian Navy commissioned last year is set to begin in June.

Navantia’s Ferrol site is key to the company’s activity in Australia, not only due to its capacity as a shipyard but also because it is where engineering, planning and development is undertaken for projects that are subsequently submitted for tenders.

During their visit, flanked by Navantia’s Shipyard Director Julio Martín Ramos, the Leaders learned about the company’s world-leading naval construction technology. Turbines and generators, as well as vessel equipment, are also manufactured at Navantia’s facilities in Ferrol, in addition to the maintenance work carried out at the centre, which is one of the top vessel repair hubs in Europe.

The closing lunch offered by Navantia was also attended by the Armoury’s Chief Admiral in Ferrol, Javier Romero, who gave a brief presentation on the current cooperation between the Spanish and the Australian Navy.

The Australian guests were also given a guided tour of the vessel ‘Cantabria’ by rear admiral Alfonso Pérez de Nanclares, the commander of Group 1 of the fleet, and frigate captain Santiago de Colsa Trueba. The ‘Cantabria’ is the second largest ship in the Spanish Navy, and is the model based on which the Royal Australian Navy’s vessels will be built in Ferrol. The ship visited Australia in 2013, where she took part in several manoeuvres together with the Royal Australian Navy and demonstrated her capacities and versatility.
For Indra, Australia is an example of best practices and business acumen

Indra operates in the transport, defence, aviation and energy sectors in Australia.

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With over 100 professionals in the country, headquarters in Sydney and offices in Adelaide, Indra has a strong footprint in Australia. “We are the best ambassadors for Australia in the world, because we always hold the country up as a great example of best practices and a strong work ethic, which is something we have in common,” said Indra’s Global Director for Institutional Relations, Íñigo de Palacio.

The Leaders visited the company’s headquarters to learn about its global activity and its interests in Australia. Indra started operating in the country in 1992, when it signed a contract with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Since then, it has expanded its activities and its portfolio of clients, which includes both public administrations and private companies.

According to Mr de Palacio, Indra’s business in Australia focuses on the
transport, defence, aviation and energy sectors. Its most recent projects include an update to Sydney’s rail CCTV system. At the end of 2016, the company was also awarded a contract to deploy an aerial surveillance network in the Pacific to serve flights linking Australia and New Zealand to the Americas.

The Leaders asked about the outlook for the areas of the technology sector in which Indra operates. The group’s cyber-security expert, Liam Nevill, was particularly interested in Indra’s activity in this field, specifically in simulators and the recruitment of expert personnel. As was discussed at the meeting, Indra was a cyber-security pioneer in Europe, as it launched the continent’s first cyber-simulator in January 2015. “We make all sorts of simulators: cranes, planes, etc., so it was not hard to do the same for cyber-security”.

Alastair Davis praised both Indra’s work with private companies and particularly its activity with the public administrations. Íñigo de Palacio explained that the company’s work with the public sector “has been underway for decades, and not only in developed countries (…) Companies and industries are calling on public administrations to underpin digitalisation and to be more efficient in this regard. The trend will continue; the process is unstoppable”.

The future of the economy is linked to digitalisation, the Internet of Things and Big Data, and Indra is among the companies spearheading these developments. According to Garth Pratten, such radical changes in the economy could cause some problems, as the automation of work could lead to the disappearance of millions of jobs. However, Indra’s Global Director for Institutional Relations was optimistic about the future: “Most will adapt to new technologies and new opportunities will be created. It is true that every time a new technology is introduced in the world, value is lost somewhere, but it is also created somewhere else. Societies and economies will find new strengths”.

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Founded in 1942, Talgo is one of the leading companies in the Spanish railway industry and specialises in the design, construction and maintenance of high-speed trains. Over the past 10 years it has stepped up its international expansion: 82% of its revenue now comes from international markets. Geographical diversification continues to be a priority in Talgo’s strategy for the future, and the company sees Australia as a potential market.

At Talgo’s headquarters in Madrid, the Leaders met with Guillermo Martínez Acero, Business Manager for Russian-speaking countries and Australia; Salvador Enrique Vidosa, Head of Business Projects in Europe and Asia; Javier Oriol, Head of Investor Relations, and Fernando Puente, Head of Communications.

As Javier Oriol told the Leaders, “the company has been involved in innovation” from its inception, focusing “on clients and countries that need to cut costs and improve speed without investing in new infrastructure”. Talgo’s USP lies in the use of two wheel sets instead of four and the distribution of carriage weight in columns over the wheels instead of rigid structures. This allows for a reduction of carriage weight, and in turn, of the impact on the tracks. The result is greater speed, less energy use, cheaper maintenance and outstanding safety.

Among other achievements, Talgo’s unique system allowed for a reduction in travel time of two hours on the Madrid-Barcelona route.
Technical visits

Technical visits in Kazakhstan by 38% compared to previous vehicles. Almost all trains in Kazakhstan, the world’s 9th largest country, are manufactured by Talgo.

“This is the key advantage we can offer Australia,” Talgo’s representatives explained. “In our simulations, travelling time from Sydney to Canberra is reduced by 40 minutes, and this could be as much as 55 minutes simply by changing the carriages, not even the tracks or the engines,” which would represent massive savings in infrastructure investment.

The Leaders also visited Talgo’s factory, where they were able to witness the manufacturing process from beginning to end as well as observing maintenance work, which is one of the company’s most important lines of business. The special machinery used to maintain Talgo trains is not only used for its own vehicles, but is also sold to other companies for the maintenance of their own fleets.

Finally, the Leaders got to see the inside of a completed train which was in the final inspection phase before being sent to Saudi Arabia to cover the Medina-Mecca route. This project is one of the most complex, acclaimed works of engineering in the past few years, and a dozen Spanish companies, including Indra, OHL, Adif and Talgo are participating.

#AustralianLeaders
Meetings with think tanks

Elcano explains key issues for Spain for the coming months

The think tank experts gave an overview of the situation in Spain from an economic, political and social standpoint.

MADRID > 27.03.2017

The first time the Leaders came into contact with Spanish think tanks was at Elcano Royal Institute, where they met with analysts Federico Steinberg and Ignacio Molina. Together, the two experts gave an overview of the current situation in Spain from an economic, political and social standpoint which the Leaders found “very interesting and instructive”.

In order to help the Australian participants get a comprehensive picture of Spain, the analysts at Elcano Royal Institute gave a brief presentation on the country’s recent history, from the end of the crisis and the current economic challenges, especially in the labour market, to changes in the political arena with the rise of new political parties. They also mentioned the various factors influencing politics in Catalonia and Spain’s position regarding Brexit as a member of the EU.

Federico Steinberg and Ignacio Molina highlighted that Spain is currently “one of the EU’s most pro-European countries” and will therefore defend EU unity, although it might suggest some flexibility due to its special relationship with the United
Meetings with think tanks

Kingdom, which sends 18 million tourists a year to Spain. A large number of British citizens are also resident in the country.

The changes in the political arena over the past few years caught the interest of Alastair Davis and Susan Windybank, who asked the experts about the rise of new political parties and their impact on traditional politics. According to Ignacio Molina, their presence “has put many issues on the table which were not discussed before”. Unlike the right-wing populist parties that have emerged in other European countries, in Spain they have not been stigmatised as undemocratic; they have been integrated into the system and do not constitute a destabilising factor.

The system, he added, “has changed”. Since there no longer are two strong parties with the capacity to take turns to rule, regional parties have ceased to be the key to obtaining a majority. The key now lies in the parties’ ability to create coalitions, in what is “the only country in Europe where there has never been a coalition government”.

The coming months, the analysts emphasised, are set to be “interesting” for Spain, both domestically and abroad. They do not expect any issues within Spain to generate political instability and both this domestic stability and external factors will favour economic growth in the country, which will gradually increase its weight in the international arena.

#AustralianLeaders
Thoughts on politics and economics at the Spain-Australia dialogue

Experts from the two countries gave an overview of the main issues for both parties.

Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) and Alastair Davis, Analyst at the Lowy Institute for International Policy. The Spanish representatives were the Communication and Institutional Affairs Director at GESTAMP, Miguel López Quesada, and Enrique Vedeguer Puig, Director of ESADE Madrid.

In his introduction, Antonio Garrigues praised the work of the Spain Australia Council Foundation and pointed out that “until the Foundation was created, relations between the civil societies of the two countries were virtually non-existent.” Australia is, in Mr Garrigues’ opinion, “a crucial country” for Spanish interests in the Pacific.

The session focused on four main areas: Donald Trump’s administration, the impact that his election has had on the globalisation of the world’s economy, China’s growing influence and the consequences of Brexit for Australia and the EU.

The two Australian analysts agreed that relations between the US and Australia will not be affected by the new Administration, given that “the alliance between the two countries is far more important than anything a single person might do”.

Regarding Donald Trump and his economic and foreign policy, Susan Windybank emphasised the US President’s opposition to large free trade agreements. In her opinion, the US preference for bilateral agreements will give rise to crossed interests, and “many of the benefits implied by free trade will be lost”. Alastair Davis remarked that “we will see greater moderation in time” in the positions of the US Administration and Antonio Garrigues, who believes Trump’s extreme positions will be softened by pressure from American civil society, agreed.

Trump’s election, together with Brexit, the economic crisis and other factors, has brought about a change in the image of globalisation, a concept which, as stated by Enrique Vedeguer, was seen in the 90s as “something that would have a positive impact on nearly the entire world”. Although ESADE’s Director believes this process is “irreversible”, it could be impacted by these events in the short term.

Miguel López Quesada talked about how global companies such as Gestamp, which is present in many countries all over the world, will face those challenges. He believes the current state of affairs represents “a great opportunity for Spain”, explaining that the country is well-positioned in Europe and Latin America, and that its strong relationship with Japan and Australia stand it in well to improve its position in Asia and face the question of the big world player’s interests, China.
Meetings with think tanks

China has become an all-important element for the world’s economy. Alastair Davis emphasised that, although Xi Jinping took the world by surprise at Davos and presented himself as “a champion of globalisation”, “China sees the world as concentric circles with China at the centre”, so we should not assume the country will take a leadership role “beyond its most immediate interests”.

The last topic to be discussed at the roundtable was the UK’s exit from the EU, as the day before the event British Prime Minister Theresa May had triggered Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty to initiate Brexit. The process will have a serious impact on trade which, according to Miguel López Quesada, “we will start to see in the coming years”.

The analysts agreed that it is too soon to judge the consequences of this process, but they do see a certain degree of moderation in the British position. They all interpreted Brexit, the US election and the rise of extreme populism in Europe as symptoms of the world’s current situation, caused by a sense of loss of legitimacy among institutions, a legitimacy that Alastair Davis believes “we must rebuild”.

Despite all these problems, Antonio Garrigues’ conclusion was optimistic. The Foundation patron argued that we are living in “fascinating times, wonderful times to think”, and times when no social player can keep doing “what they have been doing until now”; they must all redefine their roles in society.

#AustralianLeaders
Meetings with think tanks

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Following the second session of the event “Spain-Australia Dialogue: Thoughts on a Changing World”, it became clear that international terrorism and US defence policy are key security issues for Australia and the European Union alike. The round table was moderated by the Director General for Foreign Policy for North Spain-Australia dialogue: international cooperation is key to fighting terrorism.

Common challenges were analysed by the participants. The topic of the round table, “Challenges to stability and security in Asia-Pacific and Europe,” was addressed by Australian Leaders Liam Neville (ASPI) and Garth Pratten (SDSC) as well as by General Enrique de Ayala Marin, an analyst at America, Asia and Pacific at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Fidel Sendagorta.
Fundación Alternativas, and Fernando Delage, a lecturer on International Relations at Universidad Pontificia de Comillas ICAI-ICADE.

The analysts explained that now is a delicate time for US relations with Australia and Europe. According to Garth Pratten, “the challenge for Australia is to keep some distance from Trump while protecting its alliance with the US.” For him, the best policy is “to wait and see what happens”.

As for US-Europe relations, General Enrique de Ayala advocates for “preserving transatlantic relations”, but says “that doesn’t mean they should remain unchanged.” The current situation was established after World War Two and “the circumstances have changed (…) US interests no longer mirror those of Europe.”

Garth Pratten said North Korea was the most pressing security challenge for Australia in the Pacific. The interests of China and the US converge there, and Fidel Sendagorta referred to it in his introduction as “the first major crisis Donald Trump could face”. The speakers agreed on the unpredictability of the situation in Korea, both because of Kim Jong-Un (“a man we do not understand,” according to Pratten) and US foreign policy, which in the words of Fernando Delage might be “more conventional than we think, but we don’t know yet”. Delage also stated that “neither the US nor China will risk confrontation, which would be catastrophic for both”.

In discussions around China, the speakers agreed that the country’s main interest is maintaining stability in the region so that trade does not suffer. Liam Nevill said that China’s “main priority is economic and domestic security”.

With regard to tensions around the South China Sea, General Enrique de Ayala said China’s position “is no different from what the UK did in the Mediterranean during the 19th century: they settled on a number of islands to guarantee maritime traffic.” In his opinion, there will most likely be some kind of “agreement” to balance “freedom of navigation, crucial for trade, and China’s maritime security”.

Fernando Delage asked his Australian peers about the possibility of a cooperation alliance between Australia, Japan and India in the face of pressure from China. Liam Nevill found the idea “appealing” and noted Japan’s interest in reaching security agreements with Australia, despite the legal challenges this would bring about. Garth Pratten, in turn, said India shared this interest, but added that “it is hard; there is a lot of distance and we do not see eye to eye”.

During the Q&A, the Foundation’s Secretary General, Alonso Dezcallar, wanted to know the panellists’ opinions regarding international terrorism. There was a general consensus on the need to fight it, even from Australia, for which it is not currently a serious threat. Enrique de Ayala listed the keys to this fight: defence through international cooperation of intelligence networks and the exchange of information in the short term and, in the long run, supporting the countries of origin in their fight with police training and economic aid and supporting democratic movements to prevent the rise of extreme ideologies.

#AustralianLeaders
Meetings with think tanks

MADRID > 30.03.2017

After the Spain-Australia Dialogue, the Australian Leaders had lunch with representatives of Spanish think tanks, during which they discussed the conclusions of a very productive day.

Representing Spain were General Enrique Ayala from Fundación Alternativas; Emilio Cassinello, Head of Toledo’s International Centre for Peace; Fernando Delage, lecturer at Universidad Pontificia de Comillas ICAI-ICADE; Miguel López Quesada, Communication and Institutional Affairs Director at GESTAMP; Fidel Sendagorta, Director General for Foreign Policy for

Lunch with representatives of Spanish think tanks

An interesting exchange took place around various topics including Brexit and Australia’s relations with China and Latin America
North America, Asia and Pacific at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Enrique Verdeguer Puig, Director of ESADE Madrid; Agustina Brianio, researcher at Club de Madrid; Francisco Márquez de la Rubia, analyst at the Institute of Strategy Studies, and Antonio Marquina, professor of Public International Law and International Relations at Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Both the Leaders and the Spanish participants took the opportunity to discuss issues that had been overlooked during the Spain-Australia Dialogues and emphasise some of the aspects discussed throughout the morning. China, Latin America and Brexit were the most salient topics.

The debate around China’s influence on Australia from an economic and cultural point of view was particularly interesting. Susan Windybank and Liam Nevill discussed Chinese investments in Australia, which were controversial in 2016 as some of them could affect national security. They also talked about the large numbers of Chinese students at Australian universities and the efforts made by Chinese institutions to secure a foothold in Australia, although the Leaders said that Australian public opinion tends to overestimate the importance of China for the country.

Alastair Davis, who studied part of his degree in Mexico, discussed relations between Australia and Latin American countries, which have been broadly overlooked until now. The Lowy Institute analyst was “disappointed by the Australian Government’s lack of ambition in America”, given that the government is more concerned with Asia. However, Australia “is becoming an increasingly important destination for Latin Americans,” which could fuel mutual interest in the future.

Finally, they moved on to analyse - this time from a purely Australian perspective - a topic that has recently hit headlines worldwide: the beginning of the official process that will take the United Kingdom out of the EU. According to the Leaders, the Australian position on this tends to be practical: Brexit is a reality which must be faced with the country’s interests in mind. “It will be tough for the UK, and Spain will be impacted in many ways,” said Susan Windybank, “but it could be positive in the long term.” “Brexit’s main consequence for Australia is that, with the UK’s departure from the EU, the country’s regular gateway to the European market will be lost. “We will lose our point of entry into Europe,” stated Liam Nevill. “New relations will have to be forged.” Simultaneously, “a new agreement will be promoted with the UK. I believe it is an opportunity for Australia”. #AustralianLeaders
Santiago de Compostela: a model for Australian tourism

The Leaders visited the end of the Camino, one of the routes of choice among Australian tourists in Europe.
SANTIAGO DE C. > 28.03.2017

Marta Lois González, Councillor for Equality, Economic Development and Tourism of Santiago de Compostela, welcomed the participants in the 2017 Leaders Programme at Santiago City Hall. The Galician city is considered to be the end of the historic Camino, a pilgrimage that is one of Spain’s major tourist attractions. The Camino attracts hundreds of thousands of foreign visitors every year: over 262,000 people arrived in Santiago de Compostela in 2015.

The Camino is particularly popular among Australian tourists, and the number of pilgrims increased 14.7% in 2016 compared to the year before. Australia is among the top ten nationalities that choose to walk the route, and the number of visitors has increased by 800% since 2004. According to data published by Turismo de Galicia, 5,219 Australians and New Zealanders arrived in Santiago last year.

The interest shown by Australian tourists makes this region one of the markets with the strongest growth potential in Galicia. This month, Turismo de Galicia launched an introductory campaign for its tourist attractions with tour operators from Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland.

The Leaders took a guided tour around the city and visited its tourist hot spots, including the Cathedral, the University and the historical building which houses the city’s Parador, called Hostal de los Reyes Católicos. The city was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985.

#AustralianLeaders

A tour around Madrid

During their stay in Madrid, the Leaders had the chance to take a tour around the city centre together with representatives of the Embassy of Australia in Spain and exchange opinions on the Australian outlook in the country.
Conclusions

The Leaders were impressed with Spain by the end of the programme.
Conclusions

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As is now traditional, the Leaders Programme agenda ended with a closing lunch, during which the participants summarised their experiences over the past week. This lunch took place at the restaurant Puerta 57, overlooking the pitch at the Santiago Bernabéu stadium.

The four participants in the Programme gave a positive overview of the experience, explaining that its varied agenda had allowed them to gain a comprehensive idea of Spain and its place in the world. “The value of the Programme lies in its variety,” said Alastair Davis. They also said they had thoroughly enjoyed some of the activities. Susan Windybank mentioned the meeting with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and appreciated “his candour on all the topics discussed.” She added: “Before taking part in the Programme I was familiar with Spain as a tourist destination. Now I’ve discovered another side to the country, and I must say I’m really impressed”.

Garth Pratten praised the organisers on how balanced the agenda was and the variety of topics covered. Among the various reflections shared throughout the week, he emphasised the conclusion that “Australia has spent a long time looking exclusively at the Pacific” and the fact that “though it may not be among the world’s largest, the Spanish economy has a strong footprint in the industry, economy and technology sectors. My concern is that Australia will not follow suit”.

Alastair Davis said he had thoroughly enjoyed meeting with great professionals, but especially with peers from Spanish think tanks. The rest of the visits made it clear to him that: “In economic terms, Spain’s international footprint is greater than I thought”.

Liam Nevill was the only one of the Leaders who was already familiar with the Foundation’s work, having represented the Australian Strategic Policy Institute at a seminar on cyber-security last year in Canberra. The analyst was “impressed” by what he had witnessed during his first visit to Spain and particularly appreciated the visits to Spanish companies, especially those involved in defence and security (Navantia and Indra).

SACF’s Secretary General closed the third edition of the Programme by thanking the Leaders for their presence, and emphasised their active participation in all the activities, “which goes to show they have found them of interest.” Alonso Dezcullar expressed his wish to continue to work with the Leaders in the future and said he hoped the experience had “helped them to get to know Spain better”.

#AustralianLeaders
Organisation chart

- NAVANTIA
  Chairman
  Mr José Manuel Revuelta

- ACCIONA
  First Vice-Chairman
  Ms Arantza Ezpeleta
  Mr Joaquín Mollinedo

- MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION
  Secretary General
  Mr Alonso Dezcallar

- Honorary Patron
  Mr Antonio Garrigues Walker

- Honorary Patron
  Mr Juan-Miguel Villar Mir

Patrons

- ACCIONA
- ALIANZA 4 UNIVERSIDADES
- CASA ASIA
- DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE POLÍTICA E INDUSTRIAS CULTURALES Y DEL LIBRO. MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN, CULTURA Y DEPORTE
- ICEX ESPAÑA EXPORTACIÓN E INVERSIONES
- INDRA
- INSTITUTO CERVANTES
- MAXAM
- MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES Y DE COOPERACIÓN
- NAVANTIA

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