



U.S. Embassy & Consulate  
in Spain and Andorra

## Ambassador Buchan's July 4th Interview with ABC

***Duke Buchan, U.S. Ambassador to Spain, grants ABC his first interview.***

**Front Page: THE UNITED STATES IS A HISPANIC COUNTRY AND WE VALUE OUR SPANISH LEGACY**

***During the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, U.S. Ambassador to Spain Duke Buchan emphasizes that 'their Majesties King Felipe and Queen Letizia have been very important in consolidating our bilateral relationship.'***

**Inside Pages: SPAIN PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE FOUNDING OF THE UNITED STATES**

***Trump's man in Spain grants ABC his first interview: "The King and Queen are great assets for Spain," he states, while musing, "in my second life, I will be Spanish."***

- *Google tax:* "Once the pandemic subsides, we are ready to work together with Spain and other OECD members to reach a multilateral agreement."
- *Economic recovery:* "The United States will be key to the creation of jobs as Spain's economy recovers from the pandemic, and Spain will be key to the United States' recovery, as well."
- *State Visit of the King and Queen:* "We continue to work toward making the visit happen. It would be a positive for both countries."
- *Legacy of Spain in the U.S.A.:* "Great historical figures like Fray Junipero Serra and Bernardo de Galvez are part of our DNA."

ESTEBAN VILLAREJO

MADRID

U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra Richard Duke Buchan III (Henderson, North Carolina, 1963) is a great aficionado of our country. He studied at the University of Valencia in 1980 and the University of Seville from 1983 to 1984. On July 4, he gave ABC his first comprehensive interview with a Spanish media outlet.

Buchan sat down with us at a critical moment, eager to discuss a broad range of subjects, including the health and economic crisis caused by COVID-19, the toppling of statues in acts of vandalism in the United States, as well as tariffs, 5G technology, and the situation with Venezuela and Cuba. Our interview took place on Independence Day for the United States, “a country that from its founding to the present day has been greatly influenced by Spain,” Buchan stressed from the outset.

An entrepreneur and founder of the investment firm Hunter Global Investors, L.P., Buchan highlighted the importance of an economic comeback: “The United States will be key to the creation of jobs as Spain’s economy recovers from the pandemic, and Spain will be key to the United States’ recovery, as well.”

He received us in his official residence in Madrid, in the room where he worked during the COVID-19 quarantine. A great horse lover and polo enthusiast, he recently bought a house in the province of Cádiz. Before the interview, he showed us his tomato plants, which included dozens of heirloom varieties grown in the Embassy’s garden.

**-Ambassador, today is not a typical 4th of July in the United States. There have been protests across the country. What do you have to say about that?**

-What is happening in the United States is a public debate, not only about our future, but also about our past. It is not a rejection of our complex history, but rather an effort to recognize and understand the more uncomfortable and complicated sides of the people and events that shaped the United States, including the European legacy in America. This conversation about racial equality, civil rights, police reform, and how we recognize our history has been going on for decades. It has erupted again in the town centers and in public dialogue in the United States and in Europe with the protests following the tragic death of George Floyd. Diversity and inclusion are central issues today in the United States, and I give them the utmost importance in my daily life. Currently, the issues of racial equality and police reform are being discussed at all levels of government, in civil society, and the American public sphere. That debate is widely covered by a free press. When we fail, we have the mechanisms to improve.

**-We have seen acts of vandalism of the statues of Fray Junipero, Cervantes, and Columbus. What exactly is going on?**

-Many Americans are expressing disenchantment at this time. It is important to listen to these voices in order to understand them thoroughly. We have seen that some of this reaction has spilled over onto those who are perceived by some to be symbols of colonialism. In my country, there is a debate about these actions and the historical context in which they are taking place. Peaceful protests and calls for reform

are foundations of the American character, but the rule of law must be respected. As *ABC* reported on its cover a few days ago, President Trump has made it very clear that there will be serious consequences for those who participate in acts of vandalism against statues and monuments in the United States.

At the end of the day, the United States is a Hispanic country. We value our Spanish heritage. Spain played a crucial role in the founding of my country. Spain contributed military and economic aid and enabled us to make our democratic dreams a reality. Big names like Fray Junipero Serra are part of our DNA, as are Bernardo de Galvez and Jordi "George" Farragut who fought bravely for the United States during the American Revolution. Their true legacy is that they began forming what the United States and Spain are today: partners, allies, and friends.

**-So, there is no Hispanophobia?**

-Americans are not toppling or vandalizing statues because they hate Spain. Americans love Spain. Look at the number of American tourists and students that come here every year. We love your culture, your films, your art, your food, your music, your literature, and your language. Americans love Spain.

**-What is the status of the relationship between the U.S. and Spain?**

-As I said before, the United States and Spain are partners, allies, and friends. That means a lot. We are democracies where freedom, equality, the rule of law, and human rights are protected. Spanish companies export billions to my country. They lead in strategic sectors such as infrastructure and pharmaceuticals, but also in education, tourism, and many others. American companies have been operating here in Spain for years, and the interest in making new investments continues to grow. Thousands of students choose Spain as an educational destination, just as I did many years ago. I think there is a lot to gain from that type of exchange.

**-Their Majesties the King and Queen were going to pay a state visit to the United States on April 21. Is there an alternative date being discussed or is everything still on hold until the pandemic is over?**

-King Felipe and Queen Letizia are great assets for Spain. They are well-prepared leaders, and their vision has been very important for the consolidation of the bilateral relationship between two countries who are joined by historical ties. Their Majesties have always been impeccable spokespersons for the Spanish people. They traveled to the White House in 2018 to emphasize the ongoing friendship of Spain in the Americas. They also visited places with strong historical connections to Spain, such as San Antonio and New Orleans. Although the state visit in 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19, we continue to work toward achieving that. This state visit would be very positive for both countries.

**-What was life like for you during the 98 days of the state of emergency? What was your daily life like during the quarantine?**

-Like any other family, we were confined at home. It changed our lives in ways that were unimaginable just a few months ago. We cooked a lot. I saw how my dog Luna lost weight while I gained it! We spent a lot of time helping the children with their online schoolwork and competing with them over who gets to use the computer... But all of that is just anecdotal. On a more serious note, I share the pain of so many Spaniards and Americans who have lost loved ones. I have a lot of admiration for how Spanish citizens have responded to this crisis. From our balcony, my family and I also joined in the daily applause to recognize the heroism of all the frontline workers. I cannot agree more with the decision to grant the Princess of Asturias Award to the healthcare community.

**-Given the situation of COVID-19 in Spain and the rules set by the EU, will it be possible for Americans to visit as tourists this year?**

-It is important to follow the recommendations of the authorities and to be prudent. That said, this country will remain a prime destination for American tourists and for our students in the future. We have seen the "Spain for Sure" campaign, a great effort to promote tourism even more. My family and I plan to stay in Spain this summer for our entire vacation, and I am sure that the millions of American travelers who choose Spain each year will return when they can.

**-Now that we are beginning to emerge from the coronavirus crisis and look toward an improvement in the global economy, what vision do you have for the future of Spain and the United States?**

-I am amazed daily by the ingenuity, drive, dedication, and commitment of the Spanish people. In 2019 the United States and Spain added an important milestone in our economic relationship by updating the bilateral tax agreement to end double taxation for companies that operate in both countries. Now those companies don't have to pay taxes twice for the same product or service, and we can better combat tax evasion. In addition, companies in both countries will save billions of euros that they can reinvest to create new jobs. We need to get back to work to revive the economy. Of course, we should do this with an eye always toward safety, and we should take necessary precautions. The United States will continue to partner with Spain to rebuild our economies. Together we will continue to increase investment, create new jobs on both sides of the Atlantic, stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, forge new cultural connections, and seek collaboration through institutions of higher education to send more Americans to Spain to study and vice versa. I am very optimistic; I have a good feeling about the future. As Rafa Nadal says, comebacks do not depend on a single individual. So, we all must work together.

**-What has been the role of private companies in the United States in the response to COVID-19 in Spain?**

-There has been very strong support by U.S. companies. For example, Gilead Sciences, a biopharmaceutical research company, donated hundreds of thousands of doses of its antiretroviral drug for a study by the Ministry of Health against COVID-19. Pfizer shared real-time knowledge about the coronavirus with the scientific community. IBM and NASA made their supercomputers available to researchers. These are just a few of the hundreds of examples of high-level cooperation between the United States and Spain in the fight against the virus.

**-In economic matters there is a great stumbling block between the U.S. and the EU due to the well-known Google tax or "digital services tax." What response would the Trump Administration give and how could it affect a country like Spain if it were finally implemented?**

-Innovation is essential for a 21st century economy. The narrative on digital services taxes often suggests that they are specifically designed to impose tax burdens on income earned by specific U.S.-based companies, which implies a certain kind of discrimination. This is something we must fix together. The U.S. Treasury Secretary has communicated to the Spanish Finance Minister and other finance ministers that the United States is not withdrawing from negotiations at the OECD. We have only asked for a pause in the talks until the coronavirus crisis has subsided. Once we are through this crisis, we will be ready to work together with Spain and other OECD members to reach a multilateral agreement for a global economy that is becoming more and more digital every year.

**-Another major dispute between the Spanish Government and the Trump Administration: In October 2019, tariffs were imposed by the United States on Spain affecting products such as olive oil, olives, butter, wine, cheese, and pork. Is there any type of negotiation to eliminate those tariffs?**

-In 2019, the arbitration system of the World Trade Organization, an independent and supranational body, discovered that EU subsidies to the aeronautical company Airbus cause \$7.5 billion in damages to the U.S. every year. These subsidies cause unemployment among American workers and harm a significant sector of our economy. We hope to resume talks about this with Europe soon.

**-What can we expect from the U.S. elections on November 3? Donald Trump vs. Joe Biden...**

-Well, we can expect what we see in the United States every four years: an energetic debate, an inclusive electoral process, and, in the end, respect for the electoral results. The economy will be a key issue. This is a decision for all the American people to make.

**-What message would you like to convey on your National Holiday?**

-The United States is with Spain and always will be. The values we celebrate on our national day are not just ours. Spain shares our passion for equality, democracy, freedom, inclusion, and economic prosperity. We must support all those who do not enjoy those things and remember that democracy rooted in freedom and equality is the best system for all people. We will continue working with Spain on the economic recovery. My father taught me that economic prosperity solves many problems.

**-You have a long history with Spain. Can you tell us a little about your experiences in our country over the years?**

-I have been traveling to Spain for 40 years. My family and I have invested a lot of ourselves in this country. Like so many other young people, I came to Spain first to study, at the University of Valencia, and then in Seville. Since then I have not stopped coming to enjoy Spanish culture. (Just between you and me, to enjoy its gastronomy, too)! Before becoming Ambassador, I sent my three children to summer camps in Spain for five years. I also came a lot for business. Years ago, I set up a charitable foundation in the U.S. to advance various projects related to Spain. I am very proud to have created, together with my children, STEM («Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics») programs for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. When I was appointed Ambassador, I decided to enroll my children in a Spanish school. Now, I even have a house in Cádiz and two dogs, one from Malaga and one from Ávila, both proud Spaniards. I can proudly say that now, I feel like I'm only half foreign. In my second life, I will be Spanish.

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**CARVEOUT BOX: 5G AND SECURITY:**

**-What would it mean for the United States if the EU or isolated European countries were to use 5G technology from China?**

-It is very simple. Chinese technology companies are required by law to share the information they collect from their customers with the Chinese government. Period. Whoever has their finger on that control button will have a lot of power. Countries must be able to trust that 5G equipment and software companies will not threaten their national security, privacy, intellectual property, or human rights. If telecommunications providers are subject to an authoritarian government, like China's, which lacks an independent judiciary or the rule of law, there can be neither trust nor security. Governments and companies that supply 5G equipment must be from transparent democracies where the justice system is independent and impartial. Neither the Chinese government nor Chinese companies share these characteristics.

**-Would it jeopardize collaboration on military cooperation, intelligence...?**

-Given the way 5G networks are built, there can be no secure parts of a 5G network that include equipment from untrustworthy vendors. Therefore, allowing telecommunications equipment from untrusted providers into any part of a 5G network creates risks that are unacceptable for any democracy. This is why Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that, starting August 1, U.S. embassies and consulates will have to ensure their computer systems and Internet service go through a clean 5G path that does not touch any equipment from untrusted vendors.

**-How important are the Rota and Moron bases for the US?**

-We are honored that Spain invited the U.S. military contingent to operate on Spanish bases. Joint defense is self-defense. Spain's contribution to the security of NATO and the United States also reinforces the security of Spain. The four guided missile destroyers docked at the Spanish base in Rota carry out a series of missions that benefit Spain, the U.S., and all of Europe. Our Marines in Moron train daily with Spanish forces and operate in the crises that arise in Africa. We appreciate Spain's collaboration and the welcome Spain has given to our forces.

**Could the U.S. increase the number of destroyers based in Rota? Are you in negotiations with the Spanish Government on this?**

-The United States Navy has begun to replace each of the four destroyers currently stationed in Rota with more modern ships. We expect this transition to be complete by the spring of 2022. Both countries are constantly exploring new options for defense collaboration, but at this moment there are no concrete discussions on the possibility of increasing the number of ships based in Rota.

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**CARVEOUT BOX: VENEZUELA/ CUBA**

**-The situation in Venezuela continues without the changes hoped for by the United States. Is there anything else that the international community can do to return Venezuela to democracy?**

-I visited the border between Colombia and Venezuela, in the city of Cucuta, and what I saw there broke my heart. I saw children walking for hours to get food, families leaving Venezuela carrying all their belongings on their backs, and thousands of refugees in search of a better life. The political crisis in Venezuela has forced more than 4.8 million people to flee, and has caused the collapse of the educational, economic, industrial, and healthcare systems in a country that was once prosperous. Today is July 4<sup>th</sup>, a day to

celebrate democracy, human rights, equality and fundamental freedoms, all of which are absent in Venezuela. International cooperation can lead to a peaceful restoration of democracy, economic stability, and the rule of law in Venezuela. Spain has a strong role to play in this process.

### **-And Cuba? Does it still matter?**

-Cuba's influence in Venezuela has created a tragedy. We are going to create incentives for Cuba to see, for the Cuban people to see, that it is not in their best interest to protect Nicolas Maduro. One way we are doing this is through the Libertad Act, which allows U.S. citizens to file lawsuits related to their confiscated property in Cuba. We are following with concern the news about the arrest of the *ABC* correspondent in Havana, and we emphasize the importance of a free press, which does not exist in Cuba.

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### **Long photo caption: A forty year relationship with Spain**

Ambassador Duke Buchan III posed for *ABC* with his wife, Hannah, their three children, and two dogs (from Malaga and Avila), before the celebration of U.S. Independence Day. As the pandemic forced the cancellation of the traditional 4<sup>th</sup> of July party at the Embassy, they will host a special virtual celebration this year instead. Duke Buchan spoke proudly of his relationship with Spain, where he came to study in Valencia and Seville in 1980 and 1983-84. "Since then I have not stopped coming to enjoy Spanish culture," he noted.

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