



## AMBASSADOR DUKE BUCHAN III

United States Ambassador to Spain and Andorra

Richard Duke Buchan III (“Duke”) was sworn in by Vice President Michael R. Pence on December 11, 2017 as the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and the Principality of Andorra. Prior to arriving in Madrid, Mr. Buchan was CEO of Hunter Global Investors L.P., which he founded in 2001 in New York City. Mr. Buchan worked at several large global financial firms based in New York City before founding Hunter. He has traveled, lived, and/or conducted business in over 50 countries including Spain and other European countries, Latin America, and Asia for almost four decades.

Mr. Buchan has been involved in a number of educational and philanthropic causes. As an example, his family established The Buchan Excellence Fund, the largest single endowment at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill focused on Spanish languages, literature, and culture. He also recently served as Vice Chair on The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Arts and Sciences Foundation Board of Directors.

Mr. Buchan is a 10<sup>th</sup> generation North Carolinian who grew up on his family’s tobacco and cattle farms. He, his wife and their children continue family traditions and manage farms that grow over 100 varieties of heirloom tomatoes and vegetables and raise horses.

Mr. Buchan received a BA in economics and Spanish from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1985, and an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1991. He first lived in Spain almost 40 years ago. Mr. Buchan attended La Universidad de Valencia in 1980, and La Universidad de Sevilla from 1983 to 1984. He speaks Spanish and has a working knowledge of Catalan.

# The American Brief

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Designed and launched by the Fundación Consejo España – EE.UU., **The American Brief** releases a monthly series of transcribed interviews on current topics to American personalities from politics, business, culture and academics.

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## What was your reaction to the events of January 6 in Washington, DC?

I am deeply disturbed by what transpired in Washington on January 6. Violence has no place in our political process. Those who participated in such shameful criminal acts in the very heart of our government should be fully prosecuted, and those who instigated them should be held accountable. I stand strongly with those who worked to conduct and to certify the elections, and to ensure a peaceful transition.

It was an important, and reassuring, moment when the Congress returned the same night to continue certifying the results of the election, in which the American people chose Joseph Biden and Kamala

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Harris to represent them in the highest office of the land. Congress confirmed Joe Biden's victory, and he will be sworn in as President of the United States on January 20. As previously planned, I will depart the Embassy on the same day, leaving it in the very capable hands of our Deputy Chief of Mission, and ultimately, in the hands of the next Ambassador. I wish President-elect Biden and the new administration well.

I am sincerely grateful for the messages of support from our Spanish friends in recent days. Our shared commitment to democratic values is the basis of the strong and enduring U.S.-Spain relationship, which continues from administration to administration.

### **What are the main initiatives advanced by the U.S. Embassy in Madrid over the past few years?**

The United States and Spain are partners, allies, and friends. We are nations in which freedom, inclusion, the rule of law, and human rights are protected and promoted. We share the same democratic values and are committed to building economic prosperity for the peoples of both our nations. The United States will continue working with Spain to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic stronger than ever.

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After the pandemic, both countries are committed to restoring our educational and cultural exchange programs to their robust pre-pandemic levels and recuperating the momentum we had built together on bilateral trade and investments. The United States continues to be the largest source of Foreign Direct Investment in Spain and between 2017 and 2019 Spanish investment in the United States increased by \$USD 9 billion. As we recover from this pandemic together, the enduring strength of our historic relationship will enable us to thrive on all fronts. When my friends ask me about the future, I always tell them I am optimistic because I am a realist. Spain and the United States have the people, the know-how, and the will to write our own comeback story, and like Rafa Nadal would say, *¡estamos en la remon-tada!* (we're in the rematch!).

**What aspects of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Spain are you focused on as Ambassador? Do you identify any particular aspect we still need to pay more attention to?**

I set the following areas as priorities during my time as Ambassador to Spain:

- Fostering an environment of excellence, inclusion, equality, and respect for all people.
- Strengthening economic ties through various efforts, including updating our treaty eliminating double taxation that will save billions of euros for companies in Spain and the United States, and create thousands of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.
- Creating and strengthening U.S. cultural and educational connections with Spain and Andorra.
- Empowering women and girls through programs that support entrepreneurship, mentorship, and development in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).
- Maintaining a high level of cooperation with Spain in security and defense, including counterterrorism and law enforcement.
- Promoting democracy, equality, freedom, and human rights, and opposing authoritarian regimes that deny these rights, such as in Venezuela and Cuba.
- Working with allies, partners, and friends to address cyber security issues and the risks of using Chinese technology in 5G networks.
- Advancing U.S. engagement to counter the destabilizing and malign activities of

China, Russia, and Iran in the region and beyond.

- Facilitating legitimate travel and providing consular services to American citizens.

**The U.S. Embassy in Madrid is especially devoted to advancing education, science, and culture, especially through exchange programs between our countries. What have been the main achievements in this regard?**

Thousands of students choose Spain as an educational destination, just as I did myself over 40 years ago. These study abroad programs provide benefits that are numerous and profound. They build deep connections between our people that develop the understanding and appreciation that



allows us to work together so effectively. Americans have a deep affection for Spain, as evidenced by the number of American tourists and students that come here each year. We greatly enjoy the people, the culture, the cinema, the art, the food, the music, the literature, the language. Americans love everything about Spain. The level of interest is tremendous. It is no wonder why: Spain is much more than ham, sun and art. American students can really live a true immersion into a rich culture that knows how to enjoy every ounce of life.

For evidence, just look at the educational exchange numbers: the latest data shows that Spain sent a record-setting 7,954 students to study in the United States in the 2019-20 academic year, a nearly 10 percent increase over the previous year. An equally impressive figure is the 33,849 American students who chose Spain for their studies, an increase of 4.4 percent. In fact, Spain is the third most popular destination in the world for American students. While some of those programs were temporarily paused in 2020 due to COVID-19, we are optimistic to see these numbers continue to grow as we emerge from the pandemic. American students come to Spain in large numbers for the great experience. I did the same in 1980 when I first studied in Valencia and then in Sevilla. And I have not been able to stop coming to this wonderful country.

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We also share a long history as well as strong cultural and familial ties. I have been impressed by the excellent outreach achieved by my counterpart, Ambassador Cabanas, and the entire Spanish Mission team in the United States, who also acknowledges and celebrates the close bond our nations have forged since the American Revolution. I'm thankful to have a counterpart (and friend) in Washington at the Spanish Embassy so dedicated to the success of our bilateral relationship.

**How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected business and trade between the United States and Spain? Is this relationship strong enough to withstand its devastating effects?**

Spanish companies export billions to my country. North American companies have been operating here for years, and the interest in new investments continues to grow. Spain remains a prime destination for American tourism and for our students. I am confident that the millions of American travelers who choose to visit Spain each year will also return when conditions permit. The

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United States will work closely with Spain to rebuild our economies stimulating the innovation and entrepreneurship that increases investment and creates new jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. We will also create vibrant new cultural connections and exciting collaborations through institutions of higher education that attract Americans and Spaniards to study abroad. I know the future of business, trade, and cultural exchange between the United States and Spain is bright. Economic recovery after COVID-19 is a shared priority and task for both our countries. During my years as Ambassador, I have looked in the eyes of many of my Spanish friends and contacts, and what I have seen is resilience and determination for the future. That is what gives me confidence in a worldwide recovery from this pandemic.

Thinking about the future, I value the words from King Felipe's Christmas address acknowledging that nothing, not even the pandemic nor its related economic downturn, will defeat us. The King and Queen Letizia are great assets for Spain. Their vision has been very important for the bilateral relationship, and they always represent the Spanish people impeccably.

**On November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Protocol to modify the Agreement to avoid Double Taxation between the United States and Spain came into effect. How challenging were the negotiations and will it impact relations between American and Spanish companies?**

This was a very significant milestone in our shared economic relationship. We updated the bilateral tax agreement to avoid double taxation for companies that operate in both countries. Companies are saving billions of euros that they can now reinvest in creating new jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. That is not chump change! It also formalized tools and processes to better combat tax evasion. When we signed this agreement, we had no idea that a pandemic was around the corner. But we could not have come up with a better



tool to help both American and Spanish companies recover from these hard times, and that is exactly what this agreement will continue to do.

**With a new Administration coming into office, what will change in the U.S.-Spain relationship, and what do you think will stay the same?**

The U.S.-Spain relationship is a deeply ingrained one, and the broad outlines of this partnership remain steady from one administration to the next. Our shared values are strong. We will continue to collaborate on shared security objectives, trade, investment, educational and cultural linkages, innovation, and cooperation in international fora. As I move on from the role of Ambassador, I leave our Embassy in the very capable hands of our Deputy Chief of Mission, Conrad Tribble and, ultimately, the next Ambassador. They will take up the mantle of safeguarding and growing our vital relationship with Spain, just as I did from my predecessors. A great strength of American diplomacy is that our long-lasting friendships remain steadfast from one administration to the next, and that is what I fully expect from the next U.S.

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Administration regarding Spain. The Embassy will still be here to work with all our Spanish contacts and friends to tackle whatever the future brings. We will work every day to advance our shared values and interests.

And rest assured that while I may be leaving the role of Ambassador, I could never leave Spain behind. My family and I have established roots here. We have bought a house and will continue our philanthropic work in Spain through our foundation. Just as I have for many years, my family and I will remain connected to the Spanish people. Like I said in a speech before King Felipe to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the presence in Spain of the Fulbright Commission, now I feel less of a *guiiri* (foreigner) in your country.

**How do you think the transatlantic relationship will evolve?**

The transatlantic relationship is the cornerstone of our system of shared freedom and prosperity. NATO continues to be an essential element in the defense of our shared values, the protection of all our Allies, and the strength of our economies. The U.S. and European Union are natural partners in addressing many of the global challenges we face. Spain and the U.S. have long been at the forefront of this transatlantic partnership and will continue to articulate a worldview that is bolste-



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red by shared security cooperation, ongoing dialogue, increased exchanges, growing trade and investment, and deepening connections through education and tourism. We have also partnered with Spain in another very important area of the world, Latin America, to continue to work on the promotion and advancement of free societies. Support from Spain and Foreign Minister González Laya has been crucial to continue to demand free and fair elections in Venezuela. I am grateful for her partnership, and I applaud her leadership on this and other issues over the past year.

**In your view, how has Spain evolved since the first time you visited the country? What do you value most about contemporary Spain?**

I have been traveling to Spain for over four decades. My family and I have invested a lot of ourselves into this magnificent country. Like so many other youngsters, I came first to study at the University of Valencia and then at the University of Seville. Since then, I have not stopped coming to enjoy Spanish culture. (Just between you and me, I also couldn't stay away from Spain's amazing gastronomy!). Before becoming Ambassador,

I sent my three children to summer camps in Spain for five years. I also came often on business. Years ago, I set up a foundation in the United States to invest in and to advance various not-for-profit projects related to Spain. I am very proud to have completed, together with my wife, Hannah, and our children, STEM programs (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) for girls from disadvantaged economic backgrounds which will continue in the future through our foundation. When we moved to Madrid, we decided to enroll our children in all Spanish school so they would be well integrated into Spanish culture. Now we even have a house in Cádiz and an apartment in Madrid, and two dogs, from Malaga and Ávila, both very Spanish. After all that, I can proudly say that now I feel like my family and I have put down roots in Spain.

Since I first lived here in 1980, Spain has grown and changed in significant ways. Spain is a leader in strategic sectors such as infrastructure, telecommunications, financial services, pharmaceuticals, education, tourism, and many others. It has been wonderful to witness Spain's growth at the same time I have witnessed the U.S.-Spain relationship flourish. Spain is a great country! *¡Mi querida España es un gran país!*

