

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION  
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THE MADRID 3/11 BOMBINGS, JIHADIST NETWORKS  
IN SPAIN, AND THE EVOLUTION OF TERRORISM  
IN WESTERN EUROPE

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. RIEDEL: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Brookings Institution, temporarily moved one building over. Welcome also to Carnegie and thank you to Carnegie for allowing us to hold this event here. This is the latest event in the Brookings Intelligence Project which I think some of you are familiar with. The Brookings Intelligence Project spends a lot of its time looking at the issue of terrorism and counterterrorism.

That is why I am particularly glad today to have as my guest, my friend and colleague Fernando Reinares, Spanish scholar, to talk about the issue of terrorism in Europe. You have his biography in the handouts that we gave you. He is a professor. He is also a Senior Analyst at the Elcano Royal Institute in Madrid and he is also the author of a fantastic new book. I am not going to read the title in Spanish and humiliate myself in front of all of you. The title translates as *Kill Them! Who Was Behind 3/11 and Why Spain Was Targeted*.

I believe that this will be the definitive account of the attack in Madrid in March of 2004. That attack, of course, was the worst terrorist attack in modern European history. Almost 2,000 people were killed or injured, the majority of them obviously injured in that attack.

It is an attack that has bedeviled analysts and researchers for a long time and I think you are going to have the pleasure this afternoon of getting, really, to the bottom of it. The terror threat in Europe, of course though, has not ended. We still live in a world perhaps not of the old Al Qaeda but certainly of Al Qaedaism in all of its manifestations from Morocco all the way to Indonesia.

Attorney General Eric Holder was in Europe this weekend and if you paid any attention to what he said there, he portrayed a terror threat environment which is

quite alarming with the establishment of the Islamic state in Iraq and Syria and the transmission of terror technology between the various Al Qaeda franchises. He said in one of his events that he has never seen a threat environment as worrisome in the five and a half years he's been Attorney General as he is seeing it today. And the greatest manifestation of that threat is, of course, in Europe.

So today what I'd like to do is spend some time looking backwards to 3/11 and trying to find out what really happened in Madrid in that attack. And then moving forward and looking at the current situation and hopefully at the future threat situation in Europe and in Spain in particular. So with that as our game plan, let me ask you to do two things. Think of whatever questions you want to have because I'll open it up to you in about a half an hour. And secondly, please turn off your cell phones so we don't have any embarrassing moments when we all listen to your ringer.

With that as introduction, let me start with 3/11. There was a lot of confusion at the time as to who did it, who was responsible. There was a narrative that developed afterwards that this was a local plot or at most a Spanish Morocco plot. That it was -- had really no connection to the larger Al Qaeda universe.

Tell us where you come out on that, that very interesting question.

MR. REINARES: Well, first of all, thank you for having me. And thank you very much, indeed, for supporting my research since the very moment that you first heard about it and thank you all for coming here today.

The 3/11 attacks in Madrid which caused 191 fatalities and over 100 and -- sorry 1,800 people injured were the product of 10-13 terrorist members of a network mainly composed by three main clusters. And that network was directly linked to Al Qaeda's external operation command headed in those days by Hamza Rabia through an individual whose name was Amer Azizi, a Moroccan who used to be member of the Al

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Qaeda cell established in Spain in 1994.

And actually without knowing about the Al Qaeda cell established in Spain in 1994, it is almost impossible to make sense of the 3/11 attacks in Madrid. And I emphasize that because still today many American friends and colleagues who were fully aware of Al Qaeda's whereabouts in London or in Hamburg, missed the point that Al Qaeda also established cells and circles in Milano and Madrid before 9/11.

And after 9/11, it became clear to the police and intelligence services investigating the attacks in New York and Washington and Pennsylvania that there was a connection between the Mohammed Atta led cell in Hamburg and the Al Qaeda cell in Spain led in those days by Abu Dahdah. Still many Americans, for instance, even if interested in 9/11 are not familiar with the fact that Mohammed Atta came to Spain just a few weeks before the attacks to complete preparation for the attacks, among other things to pass Ramzi bin al-Shibh the precise date that bin al-Shibh was charged with handing over to Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan which bin Al-Shibh did.

And by the way, he did so traveling once again from Germany to Pakistan, Afghanistan via Madrid where he got the fake documents he used for his successful travel back to the South of Asia.

Now, if you allow me just a couple of minutes. I say that the terrorists were a part of a network. By network I mean that the individuals who belonged to this terrorist network, some of them were moving by themselves. But others were members of groups and organizations. So the case of Madrid is different in the sense from the London case.

And the three main components of this network were, first of all, the cluster of individuals who were formerly members of Al Qaeda's Abu Dahdah led cell in Spain. After information confirming that Mohammed Atta had these contacts with Abu

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Dahdah and his cell in Spain, Spain decided to dismantle the cell. That was November 2001, November 2001.

Spain arrested over 30 people belonging to this particular cell. The six people, six individuals were not arrested. One of them was not arrested because he was in Iran in those days managing the trial that individuals he used to radicalize and (inaudible) in Europe following to reach Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. He was Amer Azizi.

But five other individuals, latecomers to the cell actually, they joined the cell throughout 1999 and the year 2000, were not arrested despite long investigation on the part of the security forces in Spain. They were not arrested because under the legislation that Spain had in those days, most of the now terrorist offenses they were involved in were not considered crimes.

And what happened? Those individuals were not only those who started the Madrid bombing network but also the individuals who played key roles in the local operational cell.

The decision to attack Spain was adopted in Karachi on December 2001 by Amer Azizi who from Iran since he wasn't able to go back to Spain, they were waiting for him moving to Pakistan and he was with a Moroccan operative, Abdellatif Mourafik, the way that he took the decision. This decision was ratified in a meeting held in Istanbul on February 2002, a meeting attended by delegates from the Moroccan Islamic combatant group, the Libyan-Islamic fighting group and the Tunisian combatant group.

Why those delegates? Why those groups? Because those were the groups that lost everything in Afghanistan and had to change strategy and they decided as from now on, we will target not only inside conflict zones but there where we live, where militants reside. That decision was critical for Morocco first and for Spain

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afterwards. Morocco May 16th, 2003 when, by the way, one of the targets was a Spanish highly symbolic Spanish target, Spanish house, a Spanish restaurant in Casablanca and it was also critical for Spain.

And you know that individuals linked to the Casablanca attacks were also linked to the Madrid attacks by means of the Moroccan Islamic combatant group. So as a result of this, the individuals who were not arrested in Madrid despite being members of the Abu Dahdah cell, started the formation of the terrorist network with the determination to target Spain on March 2002.

Throughout the year 2002, as a result of the Istanbul meeting, the network incorporated a second component, a second cluster that was introduced by the Moroccan Islamic combatant group. Now, not from Morocco (inaudible) the structures that the Moroccan Islamic combatant group had in those days within Western Europe and in particular in France and Belgium. It is not by accident that within two weeks after the Madrid bombings on 11 March 2004 the Moroccan Islamic combatant group cell in France and the Moroccan Islamic combatant group cell in Belgium were both dismantled.

And there was a third component in this network. But the third component was not introduced until the summer of 2003. That is when the plans were already there, when the network was already present. The third cluster was totally unexpected. I am referring to a group of individuals, 10 individuals who were members of an ordinary criminal gang led by a Moroccan known as the Chinese. He wasn't Chinese. He was Moroccan but they called the Chinese. The Chinese, Jamal Ahmidan, and he was in prison in Morocco. He left prison in June 2003, came back to Spain although he wasn't allowed to do so. Resumed contact with his former followers and he was by then extremely radicalized, extremely radicalized.

It's not that it all started with him in Morocco while in prison. He was

already radicalized when in Spain in 1997, '98. He was already showing, exhibiting radical -- Islamist radical behavior. Among other things, he used to tell prison authorities in Spain that he had been chosen by Allah for an important mission to lead Muslims.

And so, he came back to Spain and gathered his people and decided and convinced them and radicalized them in a very fast manner to join the network which was already, as I say, which already there established and ready to act. I like to emphasize this first because for a long time, the Madrid train bombings had been reduced to this third last unexpected component. But this component only added logistical capabilities, manpower, financial possibilities and also helped to find explosives.

The network before this last cluster was introduced to it, the idea was to use TATP to perpetrate the attacks. It was only when the Chinese and his gang joined the network that they say, why to explore or why to take risks with that. We can find explosives because we have contacts. We were in prison. We know individuals who are trading explosives and we have drugs in vast amount for this purpose.

So they acquired the explosives and that was one of the main furnishings they had. But as I say, by then the decision was taken. The network was organized in the two main clusters, the one coming from the Abu Dahdah cell or the remnants of the Abu Dahdah cell, and the one coming from the Moroccan Islamic combatant group.

I note that the decision was adopted and the network initiated this formation long before the Iraq War and long before the general elections were called in Spain.

MR. RIEDEL: That's exactly -- you've anticipated what I wanted to ask you next. A decision then to attack Spain is made in Karachi two plus years before the attack. But by coincidence or whatever, it turns out the attack is on the eve of the Spanish national elections. And arguably may have changed the outcome of those

elections.

There's been a lot of speculation that that was the intent of it. I think your research conclusively proves that that's reading backwards in history. But would you say there was no correlation? Did the network see an advantage in doing this at this particular time? Or was it purely by coincidence that they ended up doing it that way?

MR. REINARES: It was by a coincidence that the elections were finally called just three days after the attack's date. The date was decided in or before October 19th, 2003. We know that because one of the documents -- I used a number of sources for the book; police resources from seven different countries, intelligent sources for up to 10 countries, Al Qaeda documents, and one of the documents I have in the book comes from the investigation the Belgian authorities conducted after the arrest of the individual who was the Moroccan Islamic combatant group known with the Madrid bombing network, Youssef Belhadj.

At the time of his arrest, there were two cell phones over his night desk, two cell phones. And those cell phones were operated with SIM cards, prepaid cards. In those days, not in Spain but in Belgium it was already compulsory when you buy a prepaid card to provide your identity. However, he managed to fill the request providing a false birth date.

And while purchasing the prepaid card using one of the two cell phones, on October 19th, 2003 he wrote down a fake birth date and he wrote down 11 March. Interestingly, the other cell phone was acquired just a couple of weeks after that and he again gave another fake birthday. This time it was May 16th.

So he wrote down the date for the past Casablanca attacks --

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MR. REINARES: -- and the date for the coming attacks in Madrid. Now,



this is the first notice that we have about the precise date for the attacks in Spain to be decided, the decision to attack in Spain. The decision dates back to December 2001.

So on October 19th, 2003 the elections, the general elections were being called in Spain. Now, by then, Al Qaeda's senior leadership had endorsed, approved the ongoing plans. Why? Basically for two reasons.

Amer Azizi, remember the individual who was a key member, a core member of the Abu Dahdah's Al Qaeda cell in Spain, was not arrested because he was in Iran and he escaped to Pakistan. There in Pakistan he went to join Al Qaeda central. They knew him very well. He had been in Pakistan -- in Afghanistan several times. At (inaudible) training camp and at Al-Farouq camp.

He was very well known among his peers in Afghanistan and within Al Qaeda. So he has no problems to join Al Qaeda. Over 2002 he became a field commander in Afghanistan under the command of individuals, very well-known Al Qaeda commanders. Then he joined the propaganda apparatus working alongside Mohamed Bahaiah. The only, if I believe it's the only 9/11 terrorist who is not arrested, not his death.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MR. REINARES: Interestingly, Mohamed Bahaiah is now married to Amer Azizi's wife, from Amer Azizi died on December 1, 2005 and I should explain you the circumstances surrounding his death very quickly. So the Amir, Osama bin Laden who was extremely pleased with his work, he was a bright guy, very smart, college-educated Moroccan who had spent time in Madrid doing business.

So in addition to managerial skills and operational skills, he knew Europe. He had been in Europe. He was established in Europe. He became the contact between Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda's operatives in Europe and the Amir decided that he

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was to be Hamza Rabia's second or they call it adjunct. So Amer Azizi became adjunct to Al Qaeda's operation, eastern operation commander at some point in early 2003.

So this made it possible for him to offer the ongoing plot to Al Qaeda's senior leadership. And Al Qaeda's senior leadership decided to support the plot after the Iraq War started. What initially was a decision adopted by revenge, by vengeance, vengeance against Spain, remember that Spain after 9/11 no other country made -- became so harsh in prosecuting Al Qaeda and jihadis in Europe as Spain. The dismantling of Al Qaeda cell, I mean, I know that in America it's easier to know and Azizi were known in London, in Germany, in France but no other country was as strong and tough against Al Qaeda and jihadists as Spain.

The year before 2004, the year before, only the year before nearly 50 individuals were arrested in Spain for jihadist terrorism offenses and the Al Qaeda cell dismantling was the strongest blow to Al Qaeda in Europe post-9/11. So this revenge on the one part and the fact that Al Qaeda senior leadership understood that the ongoing plot could have important strategic outcomes for Al Qaeda is what led the Amir and Ayman al-Zawahiri to finally endorse and support the plans, the terrorist plans.

And they thought that there was a formula to, in addition, to revenge and vengeance, there was a formula if successful to create divisions within the international lines in Iraq. To generate divisions between populations in Europe and their own governments with respect to Iraq and Afghanistan and other places. And what they do was something unusual. The very day of the attacks, the very date of the attacks at 7:30 p.m. Al Qaeda sent a message to someone who was used to receive message from Al Qaeda, Abdel Bari Atwan, the editor of Al Quds in London.

And the message was claiming responsibility for the attacks in Madrid. Interestingly, it says blaming Spain for two things. First, we have old scores to settle with

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this country, an interesting clue concerning --

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MR. REINARES: -- persecution of Al Qaeda and (inaudible). And then, Spain being part of the US led alliance against Islam as they literally quote. So with Al Qaeda this was to seize the opportunity. They usually don't come forward with statements of this kind that quickly but after the elections, the elections were to be held three days following the attacks. After the elections on a document dated March 15th, elections were March 14th, they again sending a message to Al Quds but also posting this on a global Islamic media web site.

They say the reason why we took the decision that we normally would not use to claim responsibility so quickly is because something -- circumstances changed with respect to the moment we took the decision about the date. And what is it that changed? Elections. So we intervened to make the most of the attacks carried out successfully in the country.

MR. RIEDEL: I think this is very clear in the narrative you developed but I'll make it even more explicit. What we see here is an Al Qaeda core and an Al Qaeda cell in Europe planning intensely for a long period of time with a very strategic thinking. I think that that is a lesson that the 3/11 incident should be seen for understanding Al Qaeda in general.

That it is not an organization of bloodthirsty maniacs. They may be bloodthirsty maniacs but who would just take any opportunity they can but rather a very deliberate and strategic thinking organization.

Now, you mentioned the demise of the mastermind. Where and how did he come to an end?

MR. REINARES: Amer Azizi was killed as a result of a drone strike in

(inaudible) near Miranshah, which is very much in the news these days, on December the 1st, 2005. The decision to strike, I mean, Azizi was not the target. The target was Hamza Rabia. Why was I believe authorize the action against Hamza Rabia?

Because this is not that I believe, it's in one of the documents I quote in my book. Because Hamza Rabia was planning something similar to London and Madrid in public transportation system of a major US city. Hamza Rabia and Amer Azizi were both already training operatives for that purpose. This is when or shortly after was is when intelligence services for at least two countries knew about Amer Azizi. Until that moment no one had any idea that Amer Azizi was so high in Al Qaeda's external operations command. And he was referred to as alias as al Maghraby, al Andalusi but no one knew exactly.

And in fact, that the first and I don't know if I ever told you about this but it was late 2008 that is two years after the criminal proceedings in Spain were completed and one year after the convictions were handled by the national court in Spain, late 2008 I was in the UK and got news about an Al Qaeda director of operations, as they call it, and his assistants were being convicted by a crown tribunal in Manchester.

And among other things, the sentence says that those individuals were in contact over the year 2005 with the purpose of perpetrating an attack in South Africa with top Al Qaeda members including Hamza Rabia and alias the Spanish. That was found written in invisible ink in one of the notebooks that those individuals had at home when the British police arrested them.

Alias the Spanish. Rusi director was called to testify and say that alias the Spanish was likely Mamoun Darkazanli, an individual formerly related to Abu Dahdah's Al Qaeda's cell in Spain. But I was surprised about that because I knew Darkazanli was in Germany and was on welfare and was not possible for him to leave the

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country because he's being claimed by many countries including Spain. And he was not handed over to the Spanish authorities because of a problem that the Germans had with implementation of the Euro order in the country.

So can't be Darkazanli. So who was alias 'the Spanish'? And I finally found out that alias 'the Spanish' was Amer Azizi. So that helped me to go back to the criminal proceedings, to the Casablanca proceedings and many other sources throughout five years to now being able to confirm that not only he was the mastermind of the Madrid bombings but he even travelled from Pakistan to Spain via Turkey in late 2003 to finalize the preparations for the plot for the attacks.

And by the way, if -- here in the US a lot of people is asking me why then if Al Qaeda was so much involved into this, was is it that the attacks were not suicide attacks? First of all, the Madrid bombings were part of the plan but the plans were not finished. The terrorists, they rented a safe house in Leganes near Madrid where they had, I found they had the idea to stay for one month or one month and a half. But they rented a house, you know where? A full house. You know where? In Granada.

The most emblematic of all Al-Andalus cities. And the last to be lost. And this Al-Andalus idea is provisory (sic) in the (inaudible) meetings that the Madrid bombing that had in Madrid time and again. Besides we have at least, we recover at least two testamentary letters by two members of the network. When they were surrounded by the police on April 2004, weeks after the attacks, they took the decision to call their fellow (inaudible), their family and say, we are ready to become martyrs. We are ready to become martyrs. So this is the time for us.

And those who escape, you know what they did? They went to Iraq. They joined Al Qaeda in Iraq and at least three of them perpetrated suicide attacks in Iraq claimed by Al Qaeda in Iraq. The way they -- they went -- they escaped from Spain to

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Iraq using the networks established for that purpose by -- for the purpose of sending recruits or bring recruits to Iraq by the Moroccan Islamic combatant group in association with Ansar al-Islam.

MR. RIEDEL: I think the audience, I hope by now, knows what I've known for a long time about Fernando. He is a detective par excellence in taking the key pieces of information and then being able to put them together to explain the bigger story. And I think that not only does this shed enormous new light on 3/11, it sheds important new light on 9/11 as well.

But I want to fast forward now a little bit. As I said at the beginning, Attorney General Holder said we have -- that he has never seen threat reporting of a nature that we are seeing today. You look very closely in your hat at the Elcano Institute at the status of jihadist volunteers flowing from Spain, other European countries to Iraq and Syria. How do you see that picture and how is it developing in front of you?

MR. REINARES: The picture is certainly a worrisome one. And if I have to emphasize a couple of issues perhaps during question and answers I will be able to add new ones. To underline a couple of things concerning the jihadist threat to Europe nowadays, I would say this.

Coming back for a moment to the Madrid bombings, after 9/11 we got it wrong with respect to Al Qaeda threat and jihadist threat. We got it wrong. I still don't understand why it became so popular to say that following 9/11 Al Qaeda was nearly out. Global jihadism became an amorphous movement and the threat was coming mainly from independent cells and individuals.

Even the intelligence community thought that way. Remember after the London bombings? All the authorities came to say there was an independent cell unrelated to Al Qaeda central which proved wrong. And it took me a bit longer to find out

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the connection with Al Qaeda central with had been under other conditions that was not my duty, my way as a member of a think tank but the duty of the security services in Spain which should have been continuing investigations on this particular issue after the criminal proceedings were closed and the sentence decided by the national court in Spain.

So and in the Madrid bombings we have individuals, in the Madrid bombings we had individuals who were in Bosnia, who were in Afghanistan, who were in other conflict areas before they joined the network. So first lesson, we know that it might take time but individuals train, who are in there with experience abroad might become over time key players in preparing and executing plots inside Europe.

And secondly, same as when the Madrid bombings took place and the London bombings took place, we got it wrong with respect to the nature of the threat. Nowadays, Bruce, I think that we are overestimating maybe because it's fashionable to do so the threat coming from independent jihadist, from the so-called... I don't think we should call them that way because it provides them kind of a glamorous, you know, the 'lone wolves'; independent jihadist individuals with no historical personal organizational connection with other jihadist actors.

We are overestimating this because the main threat over the past year, the major threat over the past year came from individuals linked to organizations or belonging to cells linked to organizations. And for instance, take the case of Spain. Since the first jihadist was arrested in 1995, the year the first jihadist attack took place in Europe and by the way, against commuter trains in Paris; not against the Metro, against commuting trains. Until the present close to 100 individuals had been convicted in my country for jihadist terrorism offenses or died as a result of a one act of suicide terrorism on Leganes.

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Now, none of them is a lone wolf. Not even one. We have no isolated independent individuals. 80 percent of them, sorry 60 percent of them were part of cells linked one or the other way to Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, the Moroccan Islamic combatant group, Ansar al-Islam and so on and so forth. 20 percent were members of organizations apparatus, Al Qaeda, Moroccan Islamic combatant group and so on. And some 20 percent were members of independent cells, members of independent cells.

So 80 percent of all those competed in Spain belonged to something which was well articulated and organized although sometimes policemen and judges have trouble to understand the way that they articulate themselves. And they are doing so many different changes from the old fashioned terrorist. Like the Madrid bombers, you know, how -- why is it that -- many of the Madrid bombers were known to the police. They were following their phones and so on but they were not using those phones for that purpose.

You know what they did? Why every time one of those individuals was arrested and say the police found a huge number of cell phones. Why? Well, they were using huge numbers of cell phones and huge numbers of prepaid cards and changing those constantly. Why? So as to become opaque to the security services. Or the -- you know the way they used to communicate by email?

MR. RIEDEL: No. Tell us.

MR. REINARES: They use email a lot but the idea was they all had the idea, I mean they notes (sic) within the network. That means three people plus Azizi. The way they do it was you type a message into the draft box. You leave it there. Someone will open the email at a different location, will read the message in the draft box, will erase that message and will write a reply in the draft box.

So you never have email traffic. Very smart individuals.



MR. RIEDEL: Very smart.

MR. REINARES: So they learn this where? Probably Al-Farouq. But among the many people I had the opportunity to interview and they were very, very (inaudible) people. For instance, I had the fabulous occasion to interview with witnesses, of course, to interview Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq, the leader of the leading Islamic fighting group, the very day he was released from prison in Tripoli.

Used to get his confirmation about his relationship with the Tunisian, the local ringleader with the Madrid train bombing cell, the Madrid train bombing network which he acknowledged. He didn't want to talk that much about him. He say, well, those were social relations. So the Tunisian, an independent unrelated individual was talking over the phone to in the two months before the attacks with Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq and this is not relevant?

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MR. REINARES: And Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq was speaking from Hong Kong. He was arrested in Bangkok on April 2004 but in the months before he was talking about -- now, the British intelligence found out about this and because he was using a British connection and wrote a report saying that most likely the Tunisian's interlocutor in Asia was Abdullah al-Sadiq.

So I had the opportunity to interview Abdullah al-Sadiq to know whether he was or not the case and it was the case. But speaking of things that the terrorists know and how important it is for them to all -- out for training in conflict areas such as Syria will act today.

You remember the Bali 2002 attacks? I was, my last interview for this book was with the Deputy Director of Indonesian's anti-terrorist and counterterrorism police. Why? Because I knew that he was, now in the year 2011 when the Bali bomber,

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the man who fabricated the Bali bombs was arrested by the Pakistani authorities, you remember?

MR. RIEDEL: Umar Patek.

MR. REINARES: Exactly. He was allowed to interrogate him in Pakistan. So I talked to him and say, so he told you where he learned to use mobile phones for bomb-making purposes? And he says, yes. So I named the camp where Azizi and another member of the Madrid bombing network, Sajid Baraq, used to go and that was the camp.

And was -- and why it's important for me because in the Madrid bombings the terrorists used for the same purpose the same brand and the same model of Mitsubishi cell phones as in the 2002 Bali bombings. Isn't that interesting?

MR. RIEDEL: They're the connections. The connections of the training, the training camps, the globalness of the global jihad. I'm going to ask for questions from you in just one minute, one minute. I have one more question for Fernando myself. I can't help, however, point out that the Indonesian you were talking about was arrested by the Pakistani authorities in Abbottabad, Pakistan just a few months before Osama bin Laden met his deserved death in Abbottabad, Pakistan. And Umar Patek was in Abbottabad because he was looking to find Osama bin Laden. It seems that Indonesians knew where Osama bin Laden was hanging out even if we are led to believe the Pakistani government had no idea that he was in the front yard of their most important military academy.

My last question is a very simple one. Can you -- what is your estimate of the magnitude of fighters now going from Spain and other European countries to Syria and Iraq versus previous such migrations that we saw to Afghanistan back in the 1990s to Bosnia or even to Iraq itself in the 2006 period?

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MR. REINARES: Well, jihadist mobilization nowadays with respect to Syria and Iraq among jihadists, general jihadists in Europe is far greater than, far, far greater than what we knew with respect to Chechnya, Bosnia and Afghanistan, far greater. You know, even Mali attracted significant numbers but Syria and Iraq are -- that joint scenario is very different and is having a dual impact on an individual and a micro and a (inaudible) level.

On an individual level, Islamic State is providing motivations for joining the jihad based not just on emotions, hatred and so on, not just on identity which is also the case but based on rational calculations. Many young people, many young Muslims in Europe are galvanized by the Islamic State. They see the Islamic State as having success expectations, as winning territory, as winning things.

An individual who was arrested recently in Spain, not the last operation. And I should say something about the last operation concerning a network of individuals radicalizing, individuals in Spain and sending them to the Islamic State in Iraq. But the previous operation affected an individual who was based in Malia, in a Spanish enclave in Morocco. And he used to tell the police during his declaration, you know, Al Qaeda is just propaganda. They reach nothing. They talk a lot but they reach nothing.

We might say well, they are different strategies and tactics. They don't speak about the caliphate. They speak about emirates and we might discuss about it but to them, it's too much talk, too little accomplishments. Whereas the Islamic State, you see these guys, they are even now reestablishing the caliphate, our ultimate goal. So this is galvanizing people on an individual base and not just on other types of motivation but also in tradition these very powerful motivation based on rational expectations, rational calculus which adds to the other more salient motivations among individual jihadists in Europe which is identity search.

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Didn't you notice that the countries in Europe most affected by these jihadist mobilization are those not Spain and Italy but the UK, France and Germany—particularly France? Those where you have Muslim populations made up mainly by second and third generations. In those countries, chiefly among them France nowadays, is where the jihadists are more successful at mobilizing people.

And this might sound (inaudible) but the last police operation in Spain conducted a few weeks ago dismantled a cell which was connected to the Islamic State and the leader of this cell was a former member of Abu Dahdah's Al Qaeda cell who evaded arrest because on November 2001 he was in Afghanistan. So he was arrested shortly afterwards but not by the Spanish police, by American troops. Sent him to Guantanamo and then brought back to Spain to face justice.

But since judges in Spain decided not to accept evidence coming from Afghanistan or Guantanamo as judicial evidence, he was set free. And he then went on to gatherings organized by Amnesty International over the past years to speak about Guantanamo and Afghanistan and so on. And finally, he was captured a few weeks ago and is now in prison. And interesting thing; he was no longer sided with Al Qaeda. He was sided with this Islamic State.

Now, between in northern Africa between Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Algeria, you have at most 50 percent of the foreign jihadist contingent in Syria and Iraq. Now, add 2,000 individuals around from Europe. So the large majority of individuals, not -- I mean, we know the single country providing more jihadists to Syria and Iraq is Saudi Arabia. But as a geo-political region, the Maghreb goes first and then Europe.

So where the epicenter of global terrorism taking into consideration the competition between Al Qaeda and the Islamic state, the epicenter of global terrorism is moving now to the Middle East. But the operationalist (sic) scenario for that terrorism

focus is likely to be in the coming years North Africa and Western Europe.

MR. RIEDEL: Please identify yourself before you ask a question and there's a microphone that'll come to you. This gentleman right here.

MR. APSHENKA: My name is Alexis Apshenka and I have -- can I ask two questions? Okay. The first question is I have been to Spain after 2004. I have many friends and it is my analytical observation, I might be wrong and I would like to ask if I am wrong, but many Spaniards reacting on these events said we are innocent bystanders in the war between the United States and terrorists. And basically we have nothing to do with it and the results of the elections after March 11 when the government of Aznar lost it abysmally is sort of proving that Spaniards, that the terrorists achieved their goal, the regime changed in Spain.

Tell me, please, that I am wrong. This is my first question and the second one is completely different. You mentioned about Iraq and Al Qaeda, Iran and Al Qaeda cooperation and I'm following this issue for a long time and I'm completely confused. I mean, we know that Al Qaeda is vehemently anti-Shia and Al Qaeda and Shia jihadists kill each other today in Iraq. However, they perfectly cooperate outside of it. Where is the border? Why do they cooperate in one place and kill each other in the other one? And when they decide to kill or cooperate? Is there any pattern? Thank you.

MR. REINARES: Thank you very much for these two questions. If the second one relates to the fact that starting with that Amer Azizi was in Iran, working in Iran when the Al Qaeda cell like he belonged to was dismantled in Spain, the fact is in those days Iran was turning a blind eye towards Al Qaeda operatives. And we know about Al Qaeda individuals who were on house arrest there and prominent.

So it was a geo-political calculation on the part of Iranian authorities affecting nearby countries. But it is well-known that Al Qaeda operatives were moving

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across Iran. Actually the common route was to Afghanistan via Turkey and Iran.

You see, when I had to travel throughout Spain since my book was published last -- late last February, to talk about the book. One of the most amazing facts that I realized is that Spaniards knew nothing, had no awareness of anything related to jihadist terrorism before 2003 or before 2004. When I asked the public in Spain, I mean if they come to a presentation of my book it is by definition an interested audience.

When I ask them do you know that one of the focal points for Al Qaeda in Europe before 9/11 was Spain, Madrid, Granada, that's where the Al Qaeda cell was established, very few people knows about that. Do you know that the Al Qaeda cell in Spain was dismantled in a huge, this huge operation, the largest by far against Al Qaeda post-9/11?

So from time to time, yes, I know because I read in your book. So it's, I mean, do you know that the first cell, the first jihadist cell was dismantled in Spain on 1997 in Valencia? Not even in Valencia I found a person who knew about this. And by the way, you know, again with this issue of an independent cell made out of one of these self-radicalizing individuals was, you know, one of the members of the Madrid bombing network was arrested in Valencia in 1997 as part of this GIA cell which was moving towards what later will be the ESPC.

I'm referring to Alekem al-Amari. He was convicted 14 years. He was un-incarcerated by a mistake on 2002 and you know what? As soon as those who were managing the formation of the Madrid bombing network knew about this, they went down to Valencia by car, broke him and co-opted him into the network because they knew he had knowledge about explosives. I mean, he had been a member of the Algerian police.

And so, my fellow countrymen had no sensitivity to this. Had no awareness whatsoever. This was not -- it was a different case from the British one. So

what happened? When the Madrid bombings took place, for my countrymen, that came out of the blue. And the way for them to make sense of this massacre was to relate it, to frame that into known things. What were those known things?

ETA on the one side. It got to be ETA. Who else? Or Iraq on the other side. This should be because of Iraq. So this is why the issue became polarized and politicized from the very beginning. Now, my book shows very clearly that it was not ETA, which makes ETA no less a terrorist organization than it has been for all its criminal trajectory.

On the other hand it shows that the attacks against Spain were decided long before the elections and long before Iraq as revenge. Revenge. Even though the public in Spain was not aware of this, the police was very active against Al Qaeda and jihadists. And a small part of what now is the structure that my country has preventing and combating international terrorism, in those days it was in a small unit and a small central unit with some people also working in Barcelona. Some in Valencia but that was not considered a nationwide problem.

Now, we have those units in every single province and major town -- especially in the areas now more affected by, for instance, this Syria-Iraq related jihadist mobilization. Madrid, Catalonia, Catalonia is a real serious problem within Europe as a whole and the city of (inaudible) in the other Northern Africa Spanish enclave.

So this is the reason why the issue was politicized from the very beginning. Now, yes, Al Qaeda and jihadists in general present the Madrid bombings as a victory. The 'blessed battle of Madrid, our victory,' yes, I know. And you cannot doubt that the attacks had an impact on the elections. There's no -- not a huge impact. It was just a few percentage points, not a huge, just a few, enough for one of the parties to gain a relative majority of seats in the Parliament.

Now, you know, that party, I don't want to politicize this issue because that party had in its electoral program this promise of withdrawing troops from Iraq in case of electoral victory. And it was to comply, the decision to withdraw troops was intended to comply with that electoral promise. By the way, neither the Popular Party nor the Socialist Party had any point in the respective electoral programs concerning the threat of international terrorism. That was not in the public agenda. That was not in the political agenda. Interesting, isn't it?

So why is it that Al Qaeda, and this is a real fact, so please if you are sympathetic to one or the other party do not misunderstand me on this point. You can say they all disregarded a threat which was real and, you know, I -- at the beginning of 2003, February 2003 I completed a book which was titled Global Terrorism. And this book was intended to familiarize my country, fellow people, with this real threat for our societies. And it is in this book that I wrote that the way I was seeing a sort of police operations in Spain, the way I was seeing jihadism evolving, marked a departure from logistical supportive activities to increasingly operational capabilities, among other things because of the number of individuals who are being sent abroad to learn and practice terrorism.

And my conclusion was Spain was to be targeted by these people inside the territory. Long before that I would -- no, just my last point. Why is it that Al Qaeda is selling this as a victory? Because of a political mistake I think. Which was the mistake?

The new Prime Minister, as a result of the elections following the attacks, decided that his -- he never had any office. He was just a Parliamentary man. He was never city mayor. He was never regional governor. He was never in a ministry. So you might attribute to his lack of experience internally on international affairs what he did. Although I know that he was following an ethic of conviction. What Max Berber used to



call ethic of conviction so it's nothing to blame him in this respect.

However, the first decision that he took after taking office, the very first decision and he did -- he took the decision solemnly was to announce that we will withdraw our troops in Iraq. No problem with that except that he did so five weeks after 191 people killed in Madrid. Only five weeks afterwards.

Without referring then to the allies in Iraq, the US, the British and so on, so it is difficult for people outside Spain, unfamiliar with particulars of Spanish politics not to establish a causal link between the attacks and the decision.

MR. RIEDEL: Sure.

MR. REINARES: And so, regardless of what the new Prime Minister had in mind, out of Spain it became not only for jihadists, for my colleagues, a given that Al Qaeda succeeded because Spain withdraw troops following the 9/11, sorry, the 3/11 attacks in Spain.

MR. RIEDEL: I can't help but note that there was another party that had an interest in the mythology of the lone wolf and the self-radicalized and that Al Qaeda was dead and that was, of course, the American government which had proclaimed the demise of Al Qaeda in the winter of 2001 and 2002. Even when the London bombings took place in 7/7 in July 2005, the argument was made by the Bush Administration, this is another self-radicalized cell.

Now, of course, when Ayman al-Zawahiri here was able to produce the martyrdom videos of two of the bombers it became harder and harder to live with the notion that they weren't in any way connected to Al Qaeda. I think we still have a lot of problems on this issue.

MR. REINARES: Bruce, if I might add something with respect to this: just before I mentioned what Iraq and Syria, how this is all impacting jihadist mobilization

and the macro level, micro level of the motivations. But if I were to say that at the (inaudible) level, where you can tell from within Europe is that events in Syria and Iraq and particularly action on the part of the Islamic State is providing jihadists with renewed leadership, organization and strategy.

I mean, individuals who go radicalize, they don't want to become lone wolves. What they want it to become part of that big thing which is taking place, the Islamic State of whatever -- so they don't want to be independent jihadists.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MR. REINARES: They want to be part of it. They value, they really value now organization, leadership and strategy. That's what the Islamic State in particular, but not only, is offering them.

MR. RIEDEL: This gentleman right here.

MR. REGENBOGEN: Thank you very much. Herbert Regenbogen. Globalization of terrorism. If we fast forward towards today's conditions in Spain and we look over the last two years as authorities have dealt with criticism of Islam and of the ideology that is a part of this terrorism, there are individuals who have been, over the course of the two years, in the case of a Pakistani seeking asylum in Spain, to be deported because of his publications of portraying Islam as something which is categorized as a hate crime.

I forget the individual's name at this moment. But my question is how does these authorities in Spain want to deal with these kind of civil unrest and are they in a position of denying the real conflict which will emerge between these kind of portrayals of Islam because the authorities are primarily interested that the country would not become a target of Islamic terrorists especially in light of some of their own citizens returning from the Middle East?

MR. REINARES: I will not be speaking about civil unrest and I'm not sure I followed properly the meaning of your comment and question. But Spain is not a country where survey data shows that Islamophobia is prominent. In this case you have other countries where the problem is more real, France, for instance.

Spain is having a hard time dealing with Muslim communities. But the main reason for this is the division between Muslims in the country. Most of the Muslims in Spain are foreigners. They come from Morocco. They come from Algeria. They come from Pakistan. By the way, among all those who are arrested and convicted, Moroccans are well under-represented despite the large majority of Muslims living in Spain and Algerians and to a lesser extent Pakistanis are well overrepresented.

Algerians and Moroccans basically tie when it comes to individuals arrested and convicted. And yet, we have in Spain 17 times more Moroccans than Algerians. But this, obviously, this goes back to the trajectory of jihadism in Spain as in Italy as in France, the Algerians play a prominent role since the '90s.

So Spain is having trouble dealing with the Muslim communities and therefore, with engaging the Muslim communities in preventing radicalization within the country mostly because of these internal divisions. Very difficult issue to solve, very difficult issue to solve.

Now, the problem, the problem is basically nowadays with three segments of the Muslim population. Those who are first immigration, first generation immigrants aged between 30 and 40, those who are second generation, emerging second generations. It is only from last year that I have students at my university in Madrid who are the sons or the daughters of Moroccans or Algerians in the country. But there's a vulnerable segment of these people between 15 and 25 or so. And then now we are experienced precisely as a result of the Iraq-Syria conflict, the conflict in Syria and

Iraq.

We are now seeing how jihadist terrorism in Spain is becoming a real homegrown phenomenon. Why? Because we see Spaniards by birth or individuals who went -- underwent socialization, the school socialization process in the country now engaging in jihadist activities and being arrested or being sent to Syria and so on. That was not the case before.

The Madrid bombings, I mean, that was not a homegrown threat. I mean, a homegrown plot. Those individuals were foreigners radicalized before -- even before the 9/11 attacks, 70 percent of them before the Iraq War and only those delinquents from the delinquents as were radicalized as from the start of the Iraq conflict.

It is expected for the Spanish government to announce within days officially the Spanish strategy against international terrorism and for radicalization prevention. In my country, contrary to what the Home Security culture is in the US or in Canada or in the UK or in the Netherlands, that strategy even till now is secret. And this is a real problem obviously because a secret document is not a good basis for you to go out and engage civil society, right? Something secret or (inaudible), huh? I don't want to be engaged.

So we go out to (inaudible) actually we have insisting on the importance of having these open to the public because look at our experience in Spain. I mean, you have to educate people on the real threat not to alarm, not to exaggerate, to keep real facts about the threat. And then you have to educate people on what are the measures and why are you taking those measures and how those measures will you finance and evaluated in order to prevent now, in particular, this home, increasing homegrown threat.

So this document is about to be, we guess it's about to be public and probably will be writing something also in English at the Elcano Royal Instituteweb site to

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help American and English speaking audiences to make sense of that particular initiative on the part of the Spanish government which is still perhaps the case in my country. That, you know, we tend to -- my fellow Spaniards when thinking about jihadists, they think about (inaudible).

So they quickly associate terrorism and social exclusion and poverty and so on. And Spaniards should be the last ones, the last ones in the world to associate terrorism and social exclusion, marginalization and poverty. Why? Because ETA members, members of ETA terrorist organizations were middle class, well-educated individuals from rather well-to-do families of the richest region in the country. So we should be the last one -- this means that we learn our institution when analyzing the radicalization process, the where, the when, the how of radicalization, jihadist radicalization process in the country, we know that socioeconomic aspects are significant but not determinate.

We have as many individuals college educated as having no formal education. We have as many businessmen as unemployed individuals. This diversity is telling you something. This and the fact that all jihadists in my country come from just five cities is telling us something. The phenomenon is not uniformly distributed.

So when it happens it is because an ideological agent is operating at a particular place, usually a metropolitan area. And therefore, exposition to jihadist ideology— intense and durable— is far more important to understand jihadist radicalization and recruitment than socioeconomic conditions.

MR. RIEDEL: We have time, I'm sorry, for just one more question. Back here.

QUESTIONER: Thank you for your time. Very quickly, looking ahead to future threats in the global jihadist realm, what areas of the world do you think are primed

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to be a part of this hub that we aren't currently thinking about? I'm thinking about the recent BBC News report of French activity in the Sahel region of Africa and the proactive measures they're taking to try to stem Islamist threats in that area. Is that -- would you agree that that is a valid concern by the French to proactively move in that region and are there other locations that we should be thinking about as well?

MR. REINARES: Thank you. A very interesting question. I should reply from a European perspective. The Middle East, the Syria-Iraq is for Europeans becoming the focus of jihadist terrorism threat departing from South Asia as it used to be in the past.

But the intervening variable, not the focus, the source, is to be found among jihadist organizations in the Maghreb and Sahel. And this is incidentally, it is -- I believe it is we should expect in the Maghreb and Sahel the current competition between Al Qaeda and the Islamic State to be reproduced with more intensity than in any other region of the world.

Yes, you may find pro-Islamic State organizations in South Asia but still they are like little side, the Taliban at Afghan, the Pakistani Taliban, they are more likely to side with Al Qaeda. That will also hold true for the Horn of Africa. So the place where that competition is going to reproduced is there in -- is just across the border from my country and from Italy and from France.

Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia, Ansar al-Sharia Libya already sided with Islamic State. Al Qaeda in the Islam in Maghreb is sided with Al Qaeda but we already have some sub-commanders and not that significant individuals, but they are ready to spread that they prefer the Islamic State. And it is the Islamic State as a whole galvanizing the vast majority, for instance, those individuals who deported from Morocco. The vast majority are with the Islamic State particularly after April 2003, sorry April 2013.

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The vast majority of those individuals who were recruited in Libya are sided with Islamic State. The vast majority of individuals recruited in Tunisia, which is a very interesting, are sided with Islamic State. And 60 percent approximately of those individuals radicalized and recruited in Algeria which is Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb home. Now, even there Al Qaeda is winning the hearts and minds of these young people. The Islamic State is becoming prominent.

And therefore, we already know, huh, we already know and the Algerian authorities already know that al-Baghdadi has named the person who already moved from the Middle East to somewhere in the Maghreb and Sahel area with a mission to articulate in Europe in connection with Northern Africa the following for the Islamic State. And I guess the Spanish, the French intelligence, the Italians and the Maghrebians are now trying to track this particular individual and his purposes.

MR. RIEDEL: I want to tell you all the good news which is my understanding is this is already translated into English and will be published hopefully next year in English so that those of you who are Spanish deprived will have your opportunity to get all of the details.

Fernando, I want to thank you very much for a most stimulating, I think we could go on -- I know I could ask you questions for the rest of the afternoon. Thank you again for coming here and thank all of you for joining us. And I promise when we go back to Brookings in the fall, the air conditioning system works better over there. Thank you.

MR. REINARES: Thank you very much, Bruce. Thank you very much.  
Thanks a lot.

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