

Domestic Security Overview

There are currently no major conventional military threats to the country but the threat from international and domestic terrorism remains very real.

Situated firmly within Europe's political, economic and security institutions, the perceptions of external threat by many within Spain had traditionally centred on 'soft' security concerns (primarily, the increasing numbers of illegal immigrants crossing the narrow Straits of Gibraltar from North Africa). However, this perception of security was shattered by the March 2004 multiple bombings on the rail network, which had profound effects on both domestic politics and Spanish foreign policy.

In its December 2004 Defence Paper, the Spanish government outlined the changing nature of threats facing the country and, in particular, the 'indiscriminate' threat of international terrorism. Spanish involvement in international military operations in Afghanistan and Somalia means Spain is likely to remain a target for Islamic extremists, despite the high-profile withdrawal of troops from Iraq in 2004.

Domestic Terrorism

In September 2010, ETA declared a unilateral ceasefire. This is not the first time that this has happened, and the group has broken such ceasefires in the past. However, there have been no deaths attributed to it in over a year, AP reports, and there have been suggestions from both Batsuna (the political wing of ETA), and current ETA operatives that there may be the possibility of an internationally verified de-arming. This may be due to that fact that ETA is now weaker than it has ever been before – a rhetoric which has been repeated by several senior government ministers. However, this may need to be viewed in the light of a hopeful, unpopular Government.

The summer of 2009 saw ETA violence return to the streets of Spain with a spate of attacks that left three police officers dead and scores of civilians injured. This new ETA campaign has the primary aim of putting the group back on the 'political map' after the Spanish and French security forces arrested a string of senior ETA leaders. The defeat of Basque separatist parties in the regional elections appears to have riled ETA into proving it can still strike at the Spanish state. (*See Latest Developments for an in depth look.*)

However, the Spanish government's political crackdown against Basque nationalism was successful enough to see the Basque region elect a non-nationalist government in April 2009, for the first time in more than 30 years. A coalition between Spain's ruling Socialist Party and the regional Popular Party (PP) means that the Basque country will be run by a government that supports unity with Spain. Basque Socialist leader Patxi López will head the new government. He has already stated his hard-line approach to ETA, calling the election, 'a great opportunity to defend the freedom of all, to defeat ETA', as reported

in Agence France-Presse (AFP). In total, the PP and the socialists have a majority of 38 seats in the 75-member assembly. This compares to 30 seats for the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). The PNV also rejects ETA's violent campaign for a Basque homeland. In the long term, this will be positive for Spain's internal security situation, although it may provoke a backlash from hardliners.

There now seems to be a trend against autonomy movements in Spain. Galician Nationalists have recently lost power in Galicia. Indeed, Spain's refusal to recognise the independence of Kosovo is thought to be due to a centrist counter-revolution, which is emerging in Spain. The right of regional autonomy was enshrined in the Spanish constitution after the death of Franco – who vigorously suppressed regional nationalism. However, the feeling is now that devolution has gone too far, with Spanish speakers complaining about regional legislation forcing languages such as Catalan, Galician and Basque to be spoken in schools and the civil service.

In a bid to push the peace process forward, the Spanish government is planning to move jailed members of ETA closer to their homes and families in order to persuade the group to opt for peace. In total, Spain and France hold more than 700 convicts. Traditionally, convicts are kept away from the Basque region. However, only those prisoners who have renounced violence are to be moved. A recent transfer includes Santiago Arrospe, the former military leader of ETA, who was sentenced to 3,000 years in prison for planning a bombing in a supermarket in Barcelona, which killed 21 people. Such moves are part of a policy by Prime Minister Zapatero to strengthen non-violent factions within the movement. Hardliners, meanwhile, are being moved to prisons in the south of the country.

On February 9 2005, a car bomb exploded close to a conference centre in Madrid, injuring over 40 people just hours before a royal visit. In the months that followed, a number of blasts occurred in and around the capital, and although no casualties were sustained it was feared ETA had stepped up its terrorist campaign.

These attacks came at a sensitive point in Madrid's relations with the Basques. Basque premier Juan José Ibarretxe had been planning to hold a referendum on the right of the region to self-determination and to form a 'free state associated with Spain'. The Spanish government was also under pressure from the Catalans, who wanted far more autonomy. The Spanish parliament had rejected the Ibarretxe plan for greater autonomy for the Basque region but there were concerns among many Spanish commentators that the latest developments pointed to regional ambitions that posed the greatest threat to Spanish unity since the civil war.

Nerves had been heightened after arrests of suspected ETA members following the February 9 attack revealed that suspects were also in possession of explosives and a list of potential targets, suggesting plans for imminent attacks. However, other commentators took a more optimistic approach, arguing that

despite ETA's recent retaliation, a series of high-profile raids and arrests over the last couple of years had severely weakened the terrorist organisation.

A total of 17 people were arrested, including two suspected leaders of ETA. Mikel 'Antza' Albizu Iriarte, ETA's presumed political leader and chief theoretician, was arrested and indicted for 'leadership of an association of terrorist criminals', facing a 20-year sentence if convicted. Albizu's long-time girlfriend, Soledad 'Antobo' Iparragirre Genetxea, a suspected former military leader of ETA, was arrested with him. Iparragirre faced similar charges and was suspected of collecting, managing and distributing money accumulated through kidnappings and extortion. She was considered by Spanish authorities to be the highest-ranking woman in ETA.

During this joint operation, French and Spanish anti-terrorist police seized about 1,200kg of explosives, 40,000 rounds of ammunition and dozens of firearms and grenade launchers in seven separate caches, an arsenal that showed ETA was still equipped to carry out serious attacks. The weapons also included two Russian-made surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), weapons ETA had never used before. The discovery of such weapons suggested that the organisation may have been planning to attack aircraft, which would have marked a serious escalation in its campaign. Whether the intended targets were military or civilian aircraft was not known, but terrorist groups have used SAMs on a wider scale over the last two to three years, primarily in Iraq, Kenya, Colombia and Chechnya.

Zapatero called the operations 'a major step towards ending the violence of the terrorist group ETA,' and showed that he would continue taking a hard line, saying that 'ETA's destiny can only be its demise'. Overall, the arrests robbed ETA of its main sanctuary and may result in ETA fighters struggling to escape the authorities.

On November 21 2005, the largest ever ETA trial opened in Madrid, with 56 people facing charges of belonging to or collaborating with the group.

On December 30 2005, a Spanish court sentenced ETA member Diego Ugarte López de Arkate to 100 years and three months in prison for the murder of the socialist leader Fernando Buesa and his bodyguard in February 2000. Buesa, the provincial head of the anti-Basque separation Basque Socialist Party, died in a car bomb attack in the regional capital of Vitoria.

Ceasefire

However, the prospect of a long drawn-out battle against ETA appeared to disperse on March 22 2006 when the separatist group announced a permanent ceasefire. The announcement paved the way for a wider political settlement in the Basque country, something that would lead to a significant reduction in threats against Spain's homeland security. The warming of relations was controversial – Spain's main opposition party, the PP, broke all relations with the government on June 7 2006 because of the former's

plans to meet Basque separatists. This was followed by at least 200,000 people marching through Madrid on June 10 in protest against the planned peace talks. It was a dangerous political game for Zapatero to play but it was one that he hoped would yield significant positive consequences for Spain's security.

On July 6 2006, a top official from Spain's governing Socialist Party sat down to talk with the banned Basque separatist group Batasuna, the political wing of ETA. Since the unilateral ceasefire announced by ETA, Rodríguez Zapatero had been moving slowly towards negotiations. The prize – to achieve a definitive peace after four decades of conflict, which has led to the death of over 840 people – was a significant one but so were the risks, including being seen making unacceptable concessions to terrorists on matters of principle. In May, the government said it would negotiate with Batasuna, the banned political wing of ETA, after the party said it was willing to accept a permanent truce. The PP opposed this step, arguing that talks should not progress until ETA permanently and verifiably disarms. In early June, the opposition party supported a 200,000-strong protest demonstration against the talks in Madrid, organised by relatives of ETA victims. Mariano Rajoy argued that 'the government has the people's support to defeat ETA, but it has no support to negotiate for political gains, or to allow killers to achieve political gains that have cost so many lives'.

Table: Background Brief – ETA

Origin and purpose	ETA or Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom) was founded in 1959 during the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco and evolved into an armed movement seeking independence for the Basque country. Although it defends traditional and sometimes conservative Basque culture, the organisation has described itself as Marxist-Leninist.
Under Franco	Support for ETA to some extent can be seen as a reaction to a sustained onslaught against the Basque language and culture during the dictatorship of General Franco. During this period, speaking Basque in public, displaying the <i>ikurriña</i> , the nationalist flag, or baptising children with non-Spanish names were all prohibited. ETA was responsible for the assassination in 1973 of Franco's strong man and prime minister, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco.
Military campaign	In the 1968-2007 period, ETA's military struggle caused a total of 821 deaths, the result of bombings, targeted political killings and shoot-outs. In the post-Franco period ETA suffered various internal tensions, including a division between 'political-military' ETA (ETApM) and 'military' ETA (ETAm), with the former accepting individual pardons from the elected Madrid government and joining peaceful political activity. ETA, however, remained committed to armed struggle. The organisation lost significant support in 1997 after it kidnapped and executed a local PP councillor, Miguel Angel Blanco. The execution went ahead even though millions of people had demonstrated across Spain, including in the Basque country itself, demanding his release.
Structure	ETA is organised into small groups responsible for conducting military operations in specific geographical areas, although there are also itinerant groups or commandos that are considered more difficult to detect by the security forces. The organisation also operates a network of safe houses, known as <i>zulos</i> . The groups are co-ordinated by a military command, the <i>cúpula militar</i> . ETA's political wing Batasuna (previously known as Euskal Herritarrok and then as Herri Batasuna), is banned under existing Spanish legislation, but has traditionally gathered 10-15% of the popular vote in the Basque region when able to present candidates.

Table: Background Brief – ETA

Ceasefire	From March to December 2006, ETA observed a ceasefire, and from June of that year was involved in talks with representatives of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero on a possible political settlement. However, on December 30 2006 ETA detonated a bomb at Madrid airport, killing two people. Zapatero responded by saying that from the government side, the talks, and the truce, were over. During the early 2008 election campaign, Zapatero vowed not to talk to ETA during the next legislature. In June 2007, ETA formally said it was lifting its ceasefire.
Current strength	In early 2009, sources in the security services said ETA was at one of its weakest points in recent years, with many of its members, known as <i>etarras</i> , arrested and the French authorities cracking down on its bases across the border from Spain. Analysts said there were signs the organisation was having difficulty intimidating businesses and individuals to contribute money within the Basque country. However, the summer has seen several ETA attacks across the country which have killed three police officers and injured tens of civilians. This could be viewed as a direct response to the aforementioned perceived public weakening of the group due to the arrests.

Source: Reuters, AP, The Guardian, BMI

Peace Talks Over

Progress and controversy aside, an ETA-claimed car bomb at a Madrid airport on December 30 2006 put an end to nine months of dialogue. The bomb destroyed several levels of the car park at Barajas Airport, killing two people and injuring at least 19 more. Spain's interior minister Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba responded by saying that the peace process between the government and the Basque separatists was 'finished' and Prime Minister Zapatero suspended all initiatives for dialogue with ETA and vowed to stamp out violence. Zapatero subsequently admitted he made a 'clear mistake' by being too optimistic about the ETA peace process. Since that time, the group has committed around 30 attacks, killing six Spaniards. In May 2008, a car bomb was detonated by a lodging for the Gardia Civil, killing policeman Juan Manuel Piñuel Villalón. Also in May 2008, several military leaders were arrested in France including the group's military chief Francisco Javier López Peña. He had been on the run since 1983. It is reported that he was responsible for ending the peace talks and ordering the attack on Barajas airport.

Corruption

Spain has been fighting high levels of corruption which have besieged the country. Since 1996, when the then Socialist government was brought down amid corruption scandals that reached the very highest areas of bureaucracy, levels of incidents have noticeably declined. A report published by Transparency International at the end of 2008 ranked Spain as the 28th least corrupt nation in the world, marking a huge improvement in what was until recently deemed a significant domestic security threat. Three factors are thought to have led to the reduction in bureaucratic corruption. Firstly, the defeat of the Socialist government in 1996 when the electorate voted against them in view of the corruption cases that came to light. Secondly, the work of the Spanish media, who have been quick to investigate and report cases of corruption, has made it harder for shady politicians to commit unlawful acts. Finally, there is the introduction and implementation of the Anti-Corruption Fiscal Act. While isolated cases of low-level corruption still occur, they no longer pose a major internal threat.

Latest Developments

Over the course of H210, there has been renewed talk of a permanent, political situation with regards to ETA. There have been no killings in over a year, and a ceasefire was announced in September. However, the last of these was broken by ETA with the Madrid bombings – which has led many commentators to be suspicious of this. Many media reports, including Reuters and AP, have reported on this being the potential end of ETA as a group, with these sentiments being repeated by senior members of the Government. Furthermore, there have been several suggestions from the ETA leadership that this may be a different kind of attempt at peace. There is, however, fear that the group may have been so weakened by both arrests and other interventions into its organisation that the central leadership no longer has the power to control all of its divisions, which may lead to different factional approaches to the peace process.

The process is being largely aided by the role of the outlawed Batasuna party (considered the ETA political wing), which is widely believed to want to achieve legality in time for 2011 regional elections. This has allowed some leverage to be applied by the Government, as a requirement for their participation in the electoral process is a rejection of ETA, or a total cessation of its violent campaign. However, additional soft elements have been employed, such as the return of ETA prisoners to jails closer to home in return for the promise of renouncing violence.

Timeline: Internal Threats

Q210

Security operations aimed at weakening ETA have continued, with the announcement of two arrests in connection to the killing of a local police chief in 2003. In the night-time operation the two men were detained under suspicion of having taken part in the killing. This comes after the organisation is suspected of having begun to move its base of operations from France to Portugal. This shift to Portugal comes after the increasingly close coordination between the French and Spanish governments, who both deal with Basque minorities in their territory. However, the Portuguese government has cooperated with Spanish authorities and has arrested and extradited suspected ETA militants.

Spain is still a major target and base for Islamist militants, according to the US State Department. A 2010 report states that Spain is still considered to be a major base of operations for European Islamist activities. The State Department complimented Spanish counter-terrorism efforts and noted the new Lopez government in the Basque region. Spain's large immigrant population as well as its geographic position makes the country an important 'crossroads' for international terrorism.

As European governments begin to rein in public spending, political problems have also started to mount. European unemployment is already high and established groups such as unions and leftist parties have the capability to organise protest movements which, in view of past experience, have the potential to cause

social unrest. This unrest will likely jeopardise austerity programs, forcing governments to perform a very tight balancing act to avoid both political chaos caused by unrest and economic chaos caused by uncontrolled spending.

Q110

One of Spain's first acts on taking over the EU Presidency was to 'seek a harmonised EU approach' - on the installation of body scanners at European airports following the bomb attempt on a Detroit-bound aircraft on Christmas Day. According to José Blanco López, Spain's transport minister, it made 'no sense' for passengers to be subjected to different requirements depending on their EU airport of departure. But by saying that each member state had a 'sovereign' right to decide whether and how to introduce body scanners, and that any agreement reached among ministers was not likely to be binding, any combined and unified EU policy on this aspect of security enhancement has already been undermined.

In late February 2010, the leader of ETA, Ibon Gogiascoechea, was captured in a joint Spanish-French dawn raid near Cahen in Normandy, northern France. This followed a considerable weakening of the group with 32 arrests in just two months and the seizure of two tonnes of explosives. The fifth ETA leader to be caught since 2008, Gogiascoechea is wanted for an attempt on the life of King Juan Carlos in 1997 and is reportedly connected with the 2008 assassination of a small-town Socialist Party politician, Isaias Carrasco.

Earlier in February, a leading member of Batasuna, ETA's political wing, called for an end to the armed struggle. Elements of Batasuna are trying to follow in the footsteps of Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland and launch a legal political party to campaign for Basque independence. At times, up to 15% of Basques sympathised with the armed struggle but this support has been waning since the Basque Country began to experience a degree of political autonomy from Madrid.

Q409

During the last quarter, there were no major attacks by ETA on targets in Spain, indicating the Basque terrorist group does not have the human and material resources to sustain a long-term campaign. After a spate of attacks in the first half of the year, it appeared that ETA was set to escalate its campaign of violence, but this did not materialise. In October 2009, there was further success against ETA with anti-terrorism police capturing Aitor Elizaran Aguilar, a key policy-maker and ideologue for the terrorist group. The arrest was the latest high-profile triumph of joint Spanish and French policing efforts. So far in 2009, 84 people have been arrested connected to ETA violence and according to local reports this concerted pressure has seriously weakened the group's operational capacity. Some of the arrests, however, were of non-affiliated leaders and amount to a lower number apprehended than in 2008.

The group, while still nominally active, poses a sporadic rather than constant threat. However, not unlike the dissident Republican groups undergoing a resurgence of activity in Northern Ireland, the threat is ongoing and unpredictable. Other similarities include the group's current tendency to recruit young untrained militants following the arrests – mainly from leftist, Basque nationalist youth groups rather than its hardcore political following. Also, similar to the Real IRA, operational capability is lacking which means attacks are smaller in number and may fail to claim their targets.

In December 2009, the Spanish interior minister, Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba, warned that Madrid's EU presidency period, which commenced on January 1, could provide ETA with an opportunity to launch a 'spectacular' or kidnapping to reassert its aims and prove it is still capable of inflicting attacks despite the recent arrests. This would signal to its own supporters that ETA is still in business.

In particular a kidnapping is feared, as it may provide lengthy media coverage and attention for the group rather than be carried out in order for it to attain ransom money. A bomb attack is less likely, the government's warning may be viewed as 'tempting Providence' – that no one can precisely predict what terrorists are going to do from one week to another (as witnessed by the alleged, unpre-empted attempt to blow up a Detroit-bound aircraft on Christmas Day 2009).

Q309

Despite the successes in the first half of 2009 (its 50th anniversary) against ETA by the Spanish and French security forces, including the arrest of four of the organisation's heads of operations, the group launched a series of bloody attacks on targets across Spain in June and July. ETA was blamed for a series of small bombs that caused damage but no injuries, These included a homemade bomb that went off outside a policeman's home near Bilbao on June 5; a bomb that exploded in a local office of the conservative PP in Olivenza on June 7; and a homemade bomb detonated in front of a UGT trade union office in the city of Ponferrada on June 15, causing extensive damage. Two days later, ETA was blamed for planting a bomb in the car of a railway worker in Vigo.

The campaign escalated on June 19 with a bomb attached to the car of a police detective inspector in the Basque town of Arrigoriaga. The 49-year-old victim was killed instantly in the attack outside his home, which was large enough to destroy several other vehicles in the car park. This was ETA's first fatal attack since December 2008. Just over a month later, a powerful car bomb caused extensive damage to a police barracks in Burgos and slightly wounded 65 people, including 12 children. The device left a huge crater in the road and damaged underground water pipes in the area. Walls in the police barracks were blown down and all its windows blown out, causing many to suffer from flying glass injuries. No warning of the attack was issued.

In July 2009, ETA struck again on the tourist resort island of Palma de Mallorca, killing two Civil Guard officers in a car bomb attack. Tourists in the town of Palma Nova reported seeing a huge plume of smoke

from what remained of the officers' car. Spanish police sources described the weapon used as a 'limpet bomb', which had been attached to the underside of the officers' vehicle.

Immediately after the attack, Spanish authorities closed Palma de Mallorca airport and ordered cruise liners to remain at anchor in the city's harbour. Some 660 flights were delayed or cancelled in the attempt to stop the bombers escaping to the mainland. Spanish King Juan Carlos had been due to holiday on the island in the days after the attack but he was not thought to be the target, which was likely an attempt to disrupt tourism. The attackers escaped the police dragnet.

The day after the attack, the Spanish police issued photographs of six suspected ETA bombers who they blamed for the spate of attacks across the country over the previous two months. The six suspects were linked to cars that had recently crossed into Spain from France. A week later, two small bombs exploded in restaurants in Mallorca causing some minor damage but no fatalities. On the same day, ETA issued a statement claiming responsibility for killing three policemen and injuring 65 civilians over the previous two months. The inability of the Spanish police and intelligence agencies to apprehend the culprits suggests the organisation has evolved and reorganised itself. Previous Spanish and French successes have proved only temporary and a new group of hardened and skilful ETA operatives, particularly bomb makers, appear to be operational. Its attacks against the Spanish tourist industry show that it wants to hit one of the country's main economic assets. The next month will be crucial in determining whether the authorities can put a lid on ETA or whether the group once again becomes a major terrorist force.

Despite a series of political and military setbacks, ETA continues to be able to launch terrorist attacks on Spanish targets, the most recent being the blowing up of two telecommunications towers at Castro Urdiales on May 6 2009. No casualties were reported in the incidents that were timed to coincide with the taking of office of the new non-nationalist regional government in the Basque region.

The government put 44 members of banned Basque separatist parties on trial due to their alleged links to militant group ETA. Meanwhile, Spain's Supreme Court has ruled that two further nationalist groups are to be barred from regional elections due to their links to ETA and outlawed political party Batasuna. As a result, critics claim that up to 15% of the Basque electorate are disenfranchised.

Q209

April 2009 saw the arrest in France of ETA's military chief Jurden Martitegi Lizaso and high ranking cell leader Alexander Uriarte. This led to the media reports of the emergence of four new leaders of the group, Iratxe Sorzabel and Izaskun Lesaka – both women – as well as Iurgi Mendineuta and Andoni Sarasola. They are reportedly hardliners who are determined to continue the armed struggle.

In April 2009, ETA threatened the new government elected for the Basque region, claiming that it lacks legitimacy. In the recent elections, the Basque region elected its first rulers in 30 years who support unity

with Spain. In a statement sent to the Basque newspaper Gara, ETA claimed that, 'as long as there is no change in behaviour, the political leaders of that imposed structure will be ETA's priority target'.

As reported in April 2009 in The Telegraph, ETA planned to assassinate King Juan Carlos in a missile attack as he holidayed with his family in Majorca. The plans were revealed in a French intelligence report after they seized materials from an ETA safe-house in the south of France in 2004. The plans were reported to be detailed and advanced. Meanwhile, also in April 2009, French police claimed that they had arrested the head of ETA's forgery unit. Ekaitz Sirvent Auzmendi was arrested in Paris, after being on the run from Spain since 2002.

Q109

Small ETA bomb attacks in Hernani, Salamanca, Amurrio, Errenteria, Madrid, Barakaldo, Gipuzkoa, Gasteiz, Amorebieta and Vizcaya cause minor damage but no fatalities.

Q408

Spanish and French police captured 35-year-old Mikel de Garikoitz Aspiazu in November, initially describing him as a leader of the commando unit of ETA, but later saying he was actually the head of the entire organisation. He was arrested after a raid on a flat in the French border town of Cauterets, along with a woman identified as Leire López, also believed to be an ETA member. Interior Minister Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba publicly described Aspiazu, known by his alias Txeroki (Cherokee), as the head of ETA, in charge of overall strategy. Government officials described him as a representative of the 'next generation' in the decades-old military organisation, which they said was young, extremely violent, disinclined to enter peace negotiations and with little or no ideological training, unlike the older generation that described themselves as Marxists.

In October and November, Spain debated whether to reopen the cases of over 100,000 people who were killed or disappeared during the 1936-1939 civil war. The issue was brought back to attention by one of the country's most senior judges, Baltasar Garzón, who ruled on October 16 that he intended to investigate the disappearances of 114,266 people during the civil war at the request of families of the victims. Judge Garzón followed this by ordering the opening of 19 mass graves, including one near Granada where one of the country's most famous poets, Federico García Lorca, a Republican supporter, is thought to have been buried.

In mid-November, the Cabinet approved a bill to reform Spain's Penal Code. Deputy Prime Minister María Teresa Fernández said its aim was to close 'loopholes of impunity'. The changes included the introduction of supervised parole for reoffending terrorists and paedophiles, which could extend for as long as 20 years after the completion of their prison sentences. There was also an emphasis on a battery of preventative measures, including court appearances, electronic tagging, re-education and rehabilitation

programmes, and even chemical castration as a voluntary option for those guilty of sexual violence and the abuse of children.

Q308

In mid-September, the Constitutional Court rejected plans by the autonomous Basque government to hold a non-binding 'consultation' in October on the region's future. Spain's highest court said that the issue could only be decided by all of Spain through a referendum and under the 1978 Constitution only the central government had the powers to call a referendum.

The government said it would set up a register of people sentenced, wanted, or on trial for paedophilia, to come into effect from the beginning of 2009. The decision followed an outcry over the light punishment handed down by a judge who allowed a convicted paedophile to remain free; the man then went on to kill a five-year-old girl.

In early September, Spanish police said they had arrested one of Colombia's top drug barons, Edgar Vallejo-Guarin, also known as Beto el Gitano (Beto the Gypsy). He was seized at a luxury hotel in Madrid following a tip-off from the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

With economic growth cooling sharply and unemployment beginning to increase, there were strong signs in Q308 that the government's attitude to immigration was hardening. At the beginning of September, labour minister Celestino Corbacho said that the government would reduce the number of new work visas issued in 2009 to 'around zero'.

The Nuclear Safety Council (CSN), the country's nuclear watchdog, served notice that the effectiveness of safety plans would play a key role in its decision to renew – or not – the operating permits needed by commercial reactors for the 2009-2011 period. The CSN had earlier indicated its dissatisfaction with safety procedures at the 1,000MW Asco I plant in Tarragona, operated by Endesa.

In early September, the police said they had arrested two more people in the Basque-speaking area of the Navarra region, as part of a crackdown on ETA-linked violence, bringing the total to seven. They were being investigated for participating in *kale borroka*, the Basque-language description for 'acts of urban violence' often including the throwing of Molotov cocktails.

Q208

ETA claimed responsibility for five small bomb explosions in northern Spain on July 20. Warnings were given before the bombs went off, with police consequently evacuating parts of four seaside resorts in the Cantabria region, each of which was targeted.

Prime Minister Zapatero faced a dilemma in his relations with the Basque regional government in mid-2008. At the end of June, the Basque Country regional assembly voted in favour of consulting the local electorate on whether to seek greater independence from Madrid and in addition, on whether to seek peace talks with the separatist guerrillas in ETA. A vote on both issues would be scheduled for October 25. The prime minister insisted, however, that the central government would block the move by seeking a court order against it, as the central government opposes the use of referendums on these questions, and has ruled out peace talks with ETA after the failed attempt to negotiate a settlement in 2006.

Spain's Nuclear Safety Council (CSN) said in June that it would press for sanctions against the Asco I plant, operated by power company **Endesa**, which stands accused of improperly handling a radioactive leak that could have exposed over 2,600 people to radiation.

Interior minister Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba said at the end of May that the government would recruit an extra 500 police over the next four years to fight ETA and Islamist militants. The new recruits, he said, would take to 1,800 the number of extra anti-terrorism officers recruited by the current government since it took office in 2004, just after Islamist extremists bombed Madrid's central train station, killing 191 people.

Q108

The Spanish general elections on March 9, won by Zapatero's ruling PSOE, were the target of disruption by the Basque separatist group ETA. ETA struck two days before the March 9 election, assassinating Isaiás Carrasco, a former PSOE town councillor, who was shot outside his house in the Basque town of Mondragón. The organisation did not initially claim responsibility for the killing, but police said it bore all the hallmarks of an ETA operation. Both the PSOE and the opposition PP responded by immediately closing their election campaigns. At Carrasco's funeral, held the day before the elections, his eldest daughter called on everyone who wished to show solidarity with her dead father 'to go massively to the polls to show the assassins that we are not retreating one step'. In the elections, the PSOE won 169 seats, seven short of an absolute majority in the 350-seat Cortes, meaning that Zapatero would need to govern with smaller regional parties like Catalan CiU which won 11 seats, and the Basque Nationalist Party, the PNV, which won six.

In March, the French authorities sent three alleged members of ETA back to Spain where they were wanted by the courts for 'membership in an armed group and terrorism'.

In early March, police announced that they had arrested 38 people, including several Latin Americans, for being part of a gang that smuggled illegal African immigrants into the country, offering them marriages of convenience with Spanish citizens in exchange for money.

International Terrorism

A draft of a new National Defence bill was put to the Spanish parliament and for the first time included the participation of the armed forces in the 'war on terror'. The bill included the establishment of the National Defence Council to act as an advisory body to the prime minister and to oversee parliamentary approval before ordering any foreign operations not related to the defence of the country.

Until now, the deployment of the armed forces in anti-terrorist operations has only occurred in exceptional cases, although these 'exceptional cases' have occurred all too often recently, with the Madrid train bombings in March 2004 and a failed attempt to blow up a high-speed train later the same year. The draft bill circulated to political groups for prior consultation provides a legal framework for any future deployments, specifying that military involvement in combating terrorism will be 'in support of state security forces and bodies' and to 'preserve the security and wellbeing of citizens'.

Madrid Bombings, March 2004

The attack involved 10 bombs on four trains, all timed to explode within three minutes of each other. The precise timings were intended to inflict maximum casualties during the morning rush hour, with the bombs located on packed trains as they entered the city. The total death toll numbered 191, with a further 1,400 injured. Although ETA was originally blamed for the attack, consistent denials by the separatists, along with a claim for responsibility by 'a military spokesman' for al-Qaeda in Europe, shifted the focus of the investigation to international terrorism. Furthermore, the attempt by the government to portray ETA as the perpetrator without any firm evidence quickly became seen as political opportunism and the consequent public backlash played a major role in the election of the opposition PSOE party within a week.

A group with an international agenda, most probably linked to al-Qaeda, carried out the attacks. Spanish police, initially following clues gained from a mobile phone attached to an unexploded bomb, had arrested 14 suspects by the end of March 2004, the majority being of Middle Eastern descent. As the net tightened, police surrounded the suspected ringleaders in an apartment near Madrid in early April. After a shoot-out with the security forces, those inside blew themselves up. Among the remains, the authorities found over 200 detonators and bags of fertiliser. June 2004 saw the alleged mastermind of the bombings, Rabei Osman Ahmed, arrested in Italy, along with the arrests of 15 other men across Europe, who were described as under his command and ready to carry out a bombing campaign in an undisclosed European city. In addition, on March 8 2007, a Syrian-born Spanish citizen, Moutaz Almallah Dabas, who was charged with recruiting the Madrid train bombers, was extradited to Spain from the UK. He was arrested in the UK in March 2005 under a European arrest warrant.

On April 11 2006, a Spanish judge charged 29 suspects with involvement in the attacks on March 11 2004. The accused included five Moroccans charged with 191 murders and 1,755 attempted murders, and a Spaniard accused of 192 murders and 1,755 attempted murders.

Beyond Madrid

Recent quarters have witnessed a number of other arrests of suspected Islamic militants in Spain. On November 23 2005, Spanish police detained 10 people suspected of supporting the Algeria-based al-Qaeda-linked Islamist extremist group, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat. A further seven people, non-Spanish, were arrested on December 9, suspected of aiding the same Islamist terror group, and another 14 people were arrested on similar grounds on December 19. It is suspected that the latter group sought to recruit militants to send to Iraq. However, these suspects are not at present linked to the Madrid bombings.

The networks exposed since the March bombings have heightened Spanish concerns that more attacks are likely in the future, a fear compounded by the discovery of a further bomb on a Spanish rail line in April 2004. A full inquiry into the massacre started on June 13 and has proved the role played by al-Qaeda in the bombings, as well as the poor co-ordination within the Spanish secret services and the security forces at large, both before and in the aftermath of the attacks.

Several motivational factors could explain the choice of Spain as a terrorist target in Europe. The country's proximity to North Africa and the ease with which individuals can cross the Straits of Gibraltar makes it a softer target than those countries further from the EU's borders. Furthermore, the support of former prime minister Aznar for US foreign policy in the 'war on terror' and in Iraq, along with the timing of the attacks (three days before Spain's general election), suggests that the goal of the attacks was to shift Spanish foreign policy through influencing the nature of its government. Should this have been the intent, those responsible could see subsequent events as a sign of their success in this regard. After the election returned a victory for Zapatero, his stated intention to withdraw Spanish troops by the end of June 2004 was in fact fast-tracked, with the last troops crossing the border into Kuwait by the end of May.

While the events of Madrid 2004 may have been something of a wake-up call for the Spanish authorities, their response has been tireless, with co-ordinated counter-terrorism operations continuing throughout the country. Their efforts remain fruitful, with a number of arrests occurring during the last quarter. On December 9 2005, Spanish police arrested seven people on suspicion of helping to fund the Algerian-based al-Qaeda linked GSPC. Just 10 days later, 14 people were arrested on suspicion of being members of an Islamist extremist group, allegedly with links to al-Qaeda, which was tasked with indoctrinating and recruiting militants to send to Iraq. A further 20 suspected militants were arrested on January 10 2006, who were again thought to be responsible for the recruitment and training of people to join the insurgency in Iraq. Those arrested included three Spaniards, one Turk, one Algerian and a number of Moroccans.

Latest Developments

In November, the Financial Times in London reported that Spain had accused Venezuela of being involved in training ETA and Basque separatists. Whilst the Venezuelan government denies this, it comes in the midst of ongoing concern concerning accusations about Venezuela's relationship with terrorist organisations, including ETA and FARC. Several ETA operatives were granted asylum in Venezuela in the late 1980s, at the request of Spain. The supposed leader of this group, Arturo Cubillas, has held a senior position in the Agriculture ministry since 2005, and is accused by Spain of being the regional leader of the group. It is in this light that Spain has asked for him to be deported. However, as he is a naturalised citizen of Venezuela, it seems unlikely that this will come to pass, as constitutionally Venezuela cannot extradite its own citizens.

At a NATO summit in November, the Spanish president, Zapatero, highlighted Afghanistan as "one of the areas of risk for collective security", whilst also suggesting that he may begin drawing down troops in 2011, with the aim of having Afghan security forces taking control of the nation's security by 2014. In a separate speech, during a surprise visit to Afghanistan, reported by The Reader, a Spanish online newspaper, he also stated that Spanish troops were there to ensure that Afghanistan did not again become a safe haven for terrorists, as well as for making sure that the Taliban does not return to "full power" within the country.

In November 2010, a string of arrests were made across Europe due to a plot, from a jihadist organisation, to launch a large scale attack in Belgium. Whilst the majority of arrests were made in Belgium and Germany, the Telegraph in London reported that previous arrests had been made in Spain. No targets were specified, but this continues a trend for Spain to act as a partial base for Jihadist groups, due to the ease of access from North Africa, and well established communities making it easy for rapid assimilation.

Timeline: External Threats

Q310

The Cuban government released the first six of 52 political prisoners on July 12 under an agreement with the Catholic Church. It is the country's biggest release of jailed dissidents since 1998. The 52 were imprisoned in 2003 in a government crackdown on those it viewed as US-backed mercenaries working to topple the communist government. The released dissidents are flying to Spain after the Spanish government agreed to accept them. A total of 20 prisoners so far have accepted Spain's offer.

Tensions between Spain and Morocco have grown as the Moroccan government has become increasingly bitter after a dispute over Madrid's response to Moroccan concerns regarding the treatment of illegal

immigrants by the Spanish police. Rabat has accused the Spanish police of racism in abandoning sick immigrants in the sea as well in addition to claims of police brutality against a group of Moroccan men over a three week period. Whilst previous allegations of this sort have not produced such anger in Rabat, this time the Moroccan government has vented its concerns publicly. *Reuters* reports that according to sources close to both governments, the real reason for Morocco's anger concerns the King's recent visit to Melilla and Ceuta and the cool reception given to Morocco's new ambassador in Madrid.

Q210

Meanwhile, Spain continues to contribute naval forces to international anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean. In early April the minister of defence, Carme Chacón, told the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence that the latest anti-piracy operation, Operation Atalanta, had reduced piracy, based on a reduced number of maritime attacks, most notably the kidnapping of ships. In announcing the deployment of a Spanish ocean patrol vessel to the Indian Ocean, she also called for enhanced surveillance of ports used by the 'mother ships' of pirates, but stressed that piracy had to be tackled from land, the main challenge being the total lack of security and governance in Somalia.

Q110

Links between al-Qaeda and the bombers who struck at Madrid's railway system in 2004 appeared firmer after Pakistani troops discovered a passport belonging to the wife of one of the bombers in a Taliban compound in Shelwasti in South Waziristan in late October 2009. The Spanish passport in the name of Raquel Burgos García, who was married to the Moroccan bombing suspect Amer Azizi, was shown to journalists by Pakistani troops. The passport had entry stamps that appeared to tally with the known movements of García. She disappeared in 2001 and was reportedly last heard of heading for Pakistan's border region. The find, along with other passports from militants including one from a German national accused of being part of the so-called '9/11 Hamburg Cell', is seen as a strong element in the case linking al-Qaeda to Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Claims have long been made that ETA is working alongside the Colombian guerrilla group, FARC (which has already benefited from IRA training). Indeed, it is claimed that Italian investigators have evidence of ETA obtaining part of its funding through the Colombian drug trade, and that ETA operatives, having acquired cocaine from the FARC then take on responsibility for its safe passage to Italy.

Q409

In late 2009 was concentrating on supporting the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR). Its force elements assigned included the frigate Canarias and a P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft. However, early on the morning of October 2, Somali pirates gained control of the Spanish tuna fishing vessel *Alakrana*, which, with a crew of 36 people on board, was midway between the Seychelles and the Somali port of

Kismayo. At the time of this attack, the *Canarias* was in company with a number of other tuna fishing vessels to provide protection.

However, the following day as the *Canarias* approached the *Alakrana*, a number of the pirates fled the fishing boat in a small boat and were pursued and captured by the Spanish warship. One of the pirates suffered light injuries. Two pirates were detained on the warship. Other pirates remained onboard and a stand-off ensued for several weeks. The pirates threatened to kill three of their hostages unless the two captured pirates were released. The Spanish government refused the pirates' demands until 17 November, when the *Alakrana* was released by the Somalis, who were paid US\$3.3mn ransom money – having held the boat and its crew for almost two months.

Only weeks later, on November 29 a Spanish fishing trawler, the *Ortube Berria*, was attacked by pirates in the Indian Ocean using small firearms and an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade). The attempted attack was repelled by gunfire from private security guards on board the vessel. According to the trawler's captain, the pursuing pirate skiffs were sailing rapidly enough to have pulled alongside his vessel. At the time of the incident, an anti-piracy operation was being staged by an EU naval task force in the Indian Ocean, which had summoned a Portuguese frigate and patrol plane into the area.

In response to demands by Spanish ship owners for the government to follow French policy and deploy troops on Spanish fishing vessels in this beleaguered Ocean, Spain passed a decree in late October which allows fishing crews to incorporate private armed security guards to resist attacks by pirates but not armed forces – as the military, according to Spanish law (with the country's history in mind), are not allowed to be used to protect Spanish private property. Whether security guards aboard all Spanish vessels off Somalia will be able to protect fully the vessels and their crews remains to be seen in likely future incidents.

Q309

As reported by The Guardian, Spain's intelligence chief Alberto Saiz resigned on July 3 2009 after a spate of leaks from inside the National Intelligence Centre (CNI) accused him of abusing his official position. Disgruntled agents accused him of misusing air force aircraft and foreign visits to take personal hunting trips. They also alleged he used CNI personnel to redecorate his home. Despite a secret parliamentary inquiry that reportedly cleared Saiz, he eventually resigned after accusations were made that he could not control the agencies' 3,000 staff. Saiz is credited with rebuilding the CNI after six agents were killed in Iraq and its failure to detect the March 2004 Islamic plot that led to 191 people being killed in the Madrid train bombing. Saiz, however, was viewed as being a political appointee of Socialist Prime Minister Zapatero. This led to elements in the CNI being disgruntled at Saiz's 'politically correct' directives. His replacement, retired general Félix Sanz, will have a tough task restoring discipline and balance to the CNI in the wake of Saiz's turbulent reign. A top priority will be retaining relationships

with his French counterparts, which have been instrumental in the success of Spanish efforts to contain and defeat ETA.

Spain is a strong supporter of maritime security operations in the Indian Ocean/Gulf of Aden area, providing warships and P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft on a regular basis since 2001. The first deployments took place under the banner of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom in response to the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001. The former French colony of Djibouti hosted the Spanish forces. More recently, Spain supported the EU Operation Atlanta with frigates and NATO Allied Protector anti-piracy operations off Somalia in November 2008 and March 2009, respectively. Spanish ships were scheduled to serve in the NATO force off Somalia between June and December 2009, after the SPS Blas de Lezo completed its three-month deployment with Standing Maritime Group 1.

Spain took command of the European Naval taskforce in the Indian Ocean during the summer of 2009, with Commander Juan Garat Caramé running the international mission from the Spanish frigate SPS Numancia. Spanish participation in the international naval mission off Somalia is a major commitment for the country's navy and demonstrates that interoperability with NATO and EU allies remains a key element in future Spanish naval modernisation efforts.

Q209

In April 2009, a Spanish court rejected attempts to bring criminal cases against former US officials for their role in Guantanamo Bay. The six officials were: Douglas Feith (former under secretary of defence), David Addington (former chief of staff to Dick Cheney), John Yoo (a justice department official), Jay Bybee (a justice department official) and William Haynes (a Pentagon lawyer). Under Spain's policy of 'universal justice', the country can arrest people for crimes committed outside of the country. This led to a warrant for the arrest of General Pinochet in 1998. Among the allegations against the former US officials were that they had advised George W Bush how to circumvent the Geneva Convention in establishing the prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, while providing legal protection for the use of controversial interrogation techniques such as 'water boarding'.

Q109

In February 2009, Spanish foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos indicated after talks with the new US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that Spain might be willing to take in several of the prisoners held on the US-run jail at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. To date there has been no indication of the identity of the prisoners the Spanish would take, nor of the number involved. The talks indicate that relations between Spain and the US were improving after the election of US President Barack Obama.

However, in April 2009, Spain's Attorney General requested help from the US and Interpol to locate Mustafa Setmariam Nasar, a Spanish citizen of Syrian descent, who is accused of being involved in Al-Qaeda attacks in Spain. Nasar was reported to be fourth in al-Qaeda's command structure when he was arrested in Pakistan in 2005 and handed to the US. There are doubts about his current whereabouts, with reports that he is being held by the US in one of their secret prisons. With President Obama pledging to close the secret prisons, there are hopes that Nasar can be bought to Spain to face trial.

Q308

According to reports from Europol, there were 515 terrorist attacks either planned or executed in 2008 in the European Union. Of this total, some 317 were by separatist movements, of which 97% were located in either France or Spain. As a result of the attacks in 2008, four people died, with one of these deaths being caused by ETA. However, Islamic terrorism is still thought to be the greatest threat to the EU with 187 arrests made in France, Spain and the UK in the year. On a positive note, total terrorists attacks declined by 23% compared with 2007.

In November, Spain called for a new counter-insurgency strategy against the Taliban in Afghanistan, where around 800 Spanish soldiers are fighting as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). In a report to the Spanish parliament's defence committee, defence minister Carme Chacón said that military action alone would not bring peace to Afghanistan. She was speaking after insurgents killed two Spanish soldiers in an attack on November 9. She called for a greater security role for Afghan government forces, better co-ordination of ISAF under UN leadership, avoidance of civilian casualties, more involvement by neighbouring countries such as Pakistan in stabilisation efforts, and greater pressure for change to be brought to bear on the Kabul government. If the West abandoned Afghanistan, the Taliban would probably return to power, with an upsurge in organised crime, drug trafficking and international terrorism, Chacón said.

In mid-September, foreign minister Miguel Moratinos said Spain would send a small group of Civil Guards, perhaps around 10, to monitor the pullback of Russian troops in Georgia under the terms of the agreement negotiated by French President Nicholas Sarkozy and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev.

Q208

In June, the Madrid government extradited Monzer al-Kassar, a 62-year-old Syrian and long-time Spanish resident, to the US, to face charges of planning to supply weapons to FARC rebels in Colombia. Spain agreed to the extradition after receiving US assurances that if convicted, Kassar would not receive the death penalty or a life sentence without chance of parole.

Relations between Spain and Italy's new centre-right government under the re-elected Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi were strained in May and June, after Madrid criticised a toughening of Italy's immigration regulations. Spain's Deputy Prime Minister María Fernández de la Vega had been publicly critical of Berlusconi's new immigration proposals, saying that, 'the government rejects violence, racism, and xenophobia and therefore cannot agree with what is happening in Italy'. However, Franco Frattini, the Italian foreign minister, retorted that her statements were 'not acceptable', adding that, 'frankly, it is time to stop these (political) pitch invasions'.

Q108

In what was regarded as a sign of rapprochement after four years of cool relations, former US president George W Bush phoned Zapatero in mid-March to congratulate him on his party's recent victory in the Spanish general elections. In the telephone conversation both men agreed to meet at the NATO summit scheduled for April 2-4 in Bucharest to discuss 'matters of mutual interest and international events'.

Madrid would retain its opposition to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos said after the general elections on March 9. Spain would, however, continue to support the peacekeeping effort there and urged its European partners to sign a stabilisation and association agreement between the EU and Serbia. Spain's position, analysts noted, was influenced by its own separatist movement that wants independence for the Basque country. Madrid would not recognise the independence of Kosovo for fear of setting a precedent that could be applied to its own domestic situation.

At the end of February, interior minister Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba said Spain had signed agreements with Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Gambia designed to curb illegal immigration. The accords were in addition to those already signed with Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal and Cape Verde.

Q407

Spain's relations with Venezuela cooled in Q407 after an incident in the Inter-American Summit held in the Chilean capital Santiago in November, during which Spanish King Juan Carlos told Venezuelan nationalist President Hugo Chávez to 'shut up'. The incident occurred during a speech by Zapatero; he was heckled by President Chávez, who described his predecessor José Maria Aznar as a 'fascist'. Zapatero replied that although Aznar was a political opponent, he had been voted into office democratically by the Spanish electorate and should be respected; at that point King Juan Carlos, who

was on the same podium, leant towards Chavez and said 'why don't you shut up?' The Venezuelan president later said he considered the King's intervention an insult and that it could have consequences for Spanish companies with investments in Venezuela, naming banks such as **Grupo Santander** and **BBVA**.

Morocco recalled its ambassador to Spain in early November 2007, in protest at the announcement of a visit by Spanish King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia to Ceuta and Melilla, Spain's two North African enclaves that are disputed by Morocco. Visits by senior Spanish officials to Ceuta and Melilla are relatively rare and tend to raise sensitivities over the long-standing territorial dispute.

Spain continued to receive a flow of illegal immigrants from Africa during the course of Q407. In December, it was reported that around 40 West African immigrants were feared dead from hunger and thirst after their boat spent 12 days at sea in an unsuccessful attempt to reach the Canary Islands. Police in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, said the boat had set out from Casamance in the south carrying 90 people on board, but failed to make its destination. The flow of illegal immigrants from West Africa to the Spanish Canary Islands rose sharply in 2006 to 30,000, up from around 5,000 in 2005. However, as a result of agreements with the relevant African countries and increased sea patrols, it was reported that in 2007 the flow was cut back by as much as 70%, implying a total of around 9,000 illegal arrivals.

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