

# "Combating Separatist Terrorism: Assessment of Past Lessons, Future Outlook, and 'Best Practices' Response Strategies"

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**"Combating Separatist Terrorism:  
Assessment of Past Lessons, Future  
Outlook, and 'Best Practices' Response  
Strategies"**

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**Dr. Fernando Jimenez**

Thank you Yonah and many thanks also to the Potomac Institute.

It is an honor for me to be here today so that I may share some of my thoughts and worries on the matter of secessionism.

Spain is the fifth safest country in the world. This year, it has the capacity to create about 1 million jobs. Throughout 2014, it received more than thirty five billion euros in foreign investment. It is the economy with the fourth greatest investment where several multinational companies have their headquarters, and two of the most important banks of the world are located there. It is the third greatest tourism powerhouse and the second in Europe in car production. Furthermore, it is a leader in wind power. It represents 12% of the Eurozone's GDP and is its way to become the member state with the most growth in 2015.

And most importantly, it is a historic and important ally to the U.S. It contributes material and human resources in operations against terrorism, marine piracy and maintains a close political, diplomatic and strategic coordination against any and all forms of destabilization with an emphasis in the Mediterranean basin.

Achieving and maintaining this is no easy task. Spain, a unified country with a very rich and complex history, has experienced, and continues to experience, ongoing challenges. Some were of great violence and have fortunately been overcome. Others, of a political nature- are still faced at present.

The first requires a continued maintenance and vigilance of antiterrorist policies against ETA, a group which is in the list of terrorist organization of the Department of State. A group that tried on many occasions to jeopardize Spain's democratic system as well as its constitutional approved principles.

The second is a clash of separatist groups in Catalunya who the Spanish government is now facing with consistency and the strict application of the rule of law.

The fight against ETA's terrorism is, as we all know, nearing its culmination since the 2011 ceasefire. This allows us to confirm without a shred of doubt that this terrorist and separatist organization which caused so much grief to hundreds of families, has been successfully vanquished by the Spanish people. It goes without saying that this victory could not have been possible without the great aid and professionalism of our security forces, our independent judiciary, the great international cooperation, and the blocking of the complex and funding sources for the terrorists as well as the decisive cooperation led by international organizations.

However, let us not forget that, while this is all crucial, it was the force of the united Spanish population who, without any distinction of class or region, decreed that ETA needed to be eradicated.

He was not the only one, but the martyr that made masses of Spaniards take the streets through cries of “Basta ya!”, or “Enough is enough!”, and “ETA asesinos”, or “ETA: murderers”, was the young elected municipal representative Miguel Angel Blanco. A man, as others, who gave his life in exchange for the stability we all longed for, though many only dared comment on the political situation from the secrecy of their homes given the dangerous circumstances of doing otherwise.

ETA had a grim inventory of more than eight hundred murders. ETA’s terrorism affected all Spaniards because their deeds made us *all* their victims. ETA destroyed our infrastructures, our energy policy...

It attacked every Basque representing even a sliver of possibility of a union between regions or even daring to feel proud to be Spanish.

It attacked the police, the Civil Guard and our Armed Forces countless times.

It tried to sabotage our entry into NATO by serving Soviet interests at the time.

It received checks through intermediary entities in France such as Mohammad Al-Ghadafi, with the aim of permanently disrupting the nuclear power plant of Lemoniz to continue Spain’s energy servitude to the oil producing countries.

There is proof that ETA received training in Yemen as well as in the police school in Algeria. Etxarras even trained beside members of Peru’s Sendero Luminoso and we have evidence of their connection with the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and Palestinian terrorist organizations. In fact, ETA aided the Colombian FARC with cocaine shipments to Spain.

At the domestic level, it was a well-known fact that the totalitarianism and cockiness of the ETA mafia could be found in all geographical corners of the Basque Country. They had their own news media, the judicial power was very shy in its proceedings (including the Prosecution). But let us also remember the many Magistrates and Prosecutors that perished by their bullets.

In the 70s and 80s we were fighting to maintain a sense of normalcy for the service of the Basque population. It was also a tragic time in which my presence at funerals and the consolation of victims’ families would become another very painful, but regular duty.

During that time, the Government asked that I go to the Congress. But it was not to explain or describe the terrible situation that I, as Governor, was faced with in defense of the State. Rather, it was to humiliatingly respond before a ‘Commission of Abuse and Torture’ who, paradoxically, didn’t want to hear anything regarding the one hundred and three victims, including children, of the terrorist actions we suffered in 1980. It was to demand accountability both to me and to the leadership of the Civil Guard for the alleged ill-treatment and torture that, according to the members of parliament, was inflicted upon the detainees. I was scrutinized, but I left very proud after demonstrating the flawless professionalism of those who risked their lives day after day in defense of the Country under the rule of law.

That was the situation that we found ourselves in.

But as I told you before, everything changed dramatically thanks to the mobilization of the Spanish population. Let us not forget that none of the three powers, neither the Executive, the Legislative,

nor the Judicial, would have begun to walk the correct path if they hadn't been pushed by the population outcry to do so.

In closing, ETA has been vanquished, but it has yet to relinquish its arms to the State. Because of this, the only rational way to go is to guarantee the rule of law and constitutional public policy to all of our citizens with fairness and transparency.

Now we see organizations and groups whose aim is to organize conferences, events and seminars about coexistence, conflict resolution and international mediation. We must be thankful for all of these initiatives and welcome them, but we shall not forget the past struggles.

Spain is aware of the support it has through its civilian population as well as the international cooperation and the Security Forces. We have no doubt that, until ETA doesn't yield its arsenal stockpile, officially surrender and ask for forgiveness for past grievances, then the role of law enforcement will continue to be capital in this fight at all levels, with fairness and transparency.

### **Catalunya and the question of self-determination**

Catalunya has the status of an autonomy politically, socially, and financially. A status greater than any federal state in the U.S. or any German lander. It is one of the most autonomous regions in all of Europe.

If we were to apply the right of self-determination to every people with some differentiated language, the world would have between four and eight thousand more countries! Enough to make it impossible to maintain an appropriate international political order.

In accordance with the Spanish Constitution, the sovereignty of the nation is dependent on the freedom of choice of all of the Spanish population, and never on the decisions adopted on a whim by specific groups or even regions. The Constitution of 1978 was created by consensus, at the end of a dictatorship, by all of the political groups in Spain. Albeit right wing, left wing and even nationalists. This Constitution, approved by the overall majority of the Spanish people, including those in Catalunya and by referendum, has been the cornerstone of Spain's progress and the reason for its newfound growth thanks to its consolidated democratic system.

### **I- Exclusion and Economics**

As we know, Spain is a free country, therefore anyone may be granted political responsibilities through voting processes, but to change the political sphere in any way, it is essential that they come prepared with detailed financial plans. Anything is possible in politics, but nothing is free. Therefore it is elementary that thorough evaluations be made on whatever projects that the parties or individuals wish to implement. I bring this up because it is precisely what Catalonian separatists have not done in the past and still do not do.

Those who are in positions of responsibility of the government of Catalonia and wish to continue on the path of separating the region from Spain, will also have to calculate and clarify the economic benefits, or even possibility, of doing so. Because the fantasy of becoming fully autonomous and

taking advantage of the benefits of being in the European Union is not improbable, it is impossible. If they were to leave Spain, they also leave the European Union, the Eurozone of course, and vanish into the outlying darkness. This would include their exclusion from NATO and the United Nations as well

They could still ask and negotiate to rejoin, but it would be dependent on the unanimous decision of all European member states.

## II- Corruption

Catalonians political elite has been soiled in recent months by a succession of corruption and conflict of interest scandals. One of the biggest is the money laundering in Andorra and other tax havens involving the Pujol family, President of Catalunya during the last 30 years. Critics also said that Mas, the current President of Catalunya has collaborated on a system in which 3% of the value of public contracts and awards should be paid outside of public channels. .

## III- Integration of Islamists for the separatist cause

There exists an organization named “Nous Catalans” (“New Catalans”) that, according to data from the Spanish Ministry of the Interior, hides a serious jihadist danger. Proof of this danger can be found in the data: out of the 1264 mosques registered in Spain, 98 are Salafists. And out of those 98 Salafist mosques found in Spain, 50 are in Catalunya.

The arrests that took place this past April prove that terrorist groups had an impending wish to commit bloody attacks.

In 2012, the Spanish Ministry of the Interior had already alerted officials in the government of Catalonia of the progression of these dangerous Salafist into the territory. More concretely, the President of the Generalitat was warned that the mosque being built in Salt was aimed to become a reference center for European Salafism.

Among the radicals officials were warned about in Catalunya, is a man named Nouredine Ziani, executive of the foundation of this separatist party “Nous Catalans” (CDC) and deported from Spain in 2013.

The representative body of Spanish muslims is called the “Islamic Community of Spain”. However, a denominated “Federation of the Association of Islamic Culture”, fueled by fundamentalists, hinders the role of the first organization.

The radical promoters of a project to construct a grand mosque in the town of Salt, radicals who happen to have clear connections with the separatist cause in Catalunya, were deemed to be a threat to national security according to Spanish intelligence.

We also found two men of Moroccan descent named Mohammed Attaouil, a representative of the ‘Al Hilal’ society, and Allal Kaaouachi, from ‘Maghrebins pers la Pau’. In 2013, the Prosecution opened an investigation for alleged money laundering on Attaouil, in order to determine where the two hundred and eighty thousand euros out of the three hundred thousand funds it cost to build the

mosque proceeded from, knowing that it could not have all been from the pockets of the muslim community in the region.

Our concern is evident. We do not intend to demonstrate that Salafism leads the process of self-determination in Catalunya, but it is clear that it *does* exploit the weaknesses of an autonomous government who prioritizes matters of separatism. A government that exchanges the safety of its population for the votes of an immigrant minority in the region of Islamic origin solely in order to maintain its positions. It does so at a great risk not only for Catalunya, but for Spain and Europe, and the general security of the Western Hemisphere.

To conclude, I want to convey to all of you a clear message of reassurance and optimism: no part of Spain is going to be submitted to isolation, and rest assured that the Kingdom of Spain will comply with its constitutional obligations at all times.

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Established in 1994, the activities of IUCTS are guided by an International Research Council that offers recommendations for study on different aspects of terrorism, both conventional and unconventional. IUCTS is cooperating academically with universities and think tanks in over 40 countries, as well as with governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental bodies.

## International Center for Terrorism Studies (ICTS)

Established in 1998 by the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, in Arlington, VA, ICTS administers IUCTS activities and sponsors an internship program in terrorism studies.

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