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Mr. Chairman, Senator Biden, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address the critical issue of U.S.-European anti-terrorism cooperation in the wake of the Madrid terrorist attacks and the Spanish elections. I believe this discussion is all the more timely and important because of the significant potential for misunderstanding of what happened in the March 14 election and what it means for U.S.-European cooperation in the war on terrorism and in Iraq. In particular, I believe that the conclusion that the Spanish people have abandoned the war on terrorism and opted instead for appeasement—a charge heard from a number of American commentators over the past two weeks—is both misplaced and counterproductive. The wrong policy reactions in both Washington and Madrid could end up giving the terrorists the result they wanted by undermining transatlantic cooperation not only in the war on terrorism but across a range of important issues.

The anger and disappointment of many Americans, and in particular supporters of the Bush administration, is understandable. With the defeat of Prime Minister José Maria Aznar's Popular Party, the administration has seen a close, reliable ally in a key European country being replaced by an inexperienced Socialist who is skeptical of recent U.S. policies and who has been highly critical of President Bush. New Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's pledge to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq unless the UN takes over, moreover, is a setback to the effort to build and maintain an international coalition in Iraq. Spain has been one of America's most steadfast allies in Iraq and one of the top foreign troop contributors with 1,300 troops. Its departure could encourage other allies to leave, increasing military burdens on the United States and undermining the mission's legitimacy. Zapatero's election could also be seen as bad news for the United States in that it suggests that leaders who back American policies without the support of their electorate—as Aznar did on Iraq—risk paying the price for those policies at the ballot box. Finally, and by far most seriously, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the outcome of the Spanish election will only encourage the terrorists to strike again, perhaps once again in the capital city of a country that has steadfastly supported the United States on Iraq. Regardless of whether or not Spanish voters were in fact distancing themselves from the war on terrorism, there is a good chance that the terrorists who planted the bombs just three days before the election will conclude that they were, and that is very bad news. It is thus not surprising that some Americans have accused Spanish voters of having given in to terrorism with their vote.

A closer look at what happened in Spain on March 14, however, reveals a more complicated situation. There can be little doubt that the March 11 attacks influenced the outcome of the election. According to the polls published on March 7, the last day polls could be published under Spanish law, the Socialists trailed Aznar's Popular Party by four percentage points (42%-38%). While the gap between the two parties was

narrowing, it seems highly unlikely that the Socialists would have managed to win a 44%-38% victory just a week later had it not been for the attacks. With emotions riding high, voter turnout rose to 77% of Spain's 35 million eligible voters (compared with just 55% in the elections four years ago), and most of the new voters, including 2 million first-time voters, appear to have voted for the Socialists.

Opposition to the Iraq war, many of these voters made clear, played a role in this swing vote. But another key reason for the last-minute turnaround was not voters' desire to distance themselves from Aznar's policies but rather their anger at the government's handling of the terrorist attacks. The government's premature, categorical conclusion that Basque separatists were behind the atrocities, and its stubborn refusal to back away from that conclusion even as information came in suggesting likely al Qaeda involvement, left the government looking manipulative and disingenuous in the eyes of Spanish voters. No less than 67% of the Spanish people, according to an opinion poll published late last week, believe that the government manipulated information during the crisis.

The Aznar government appears to have concluded that an ETA attack would be politically helpful by highlighting its tough approach on Basque terrorism, whereas an al Qaeda attack might hurt the government by underlining its unpopular role in Iraq and its relationship with the United States. Thus, within hours of the attacks, Interior Minister Angel Acebes had declared that "the government has no doubt that ETA was responsible for the attacks." Later that afternoon, Foreign Minister Ana Palacio sent a telegram to Spanish ambassadors confirming this statement and encouraging them to "use every occasion to confirm the authorship of ETA" and Spain began lobbying the UN Security Council for a resolution explicitly blaming ETA for the attacks. That evening, Aznar twice called major Spanish newspapers to insist that ETA was responsible for the attacks and was even denouncing speculation that al Qaeda might be involved as "an attempt by malicious people to distort information." In the first hours after the attack it was perhaps reasonable to suspect ETA, given knowledge of that group's previous plans to place bombs on Spanish trains. But the attempts to rule out other options—even though the attacks bore many hallmarks of an al Qaeda operation and even after a van was found with a tape recording of verses from the Koran in Arabic and bomb-making materials—was seen as an attempt to deceive Spanish voters for political reasons.

Had Aznar right away characterized the mass killing in Madrid as an attack on democracy itself, perhaps not as many voters would have allowed themselves to hand the terrorists the political change they apparently wanted. Instead, the government appeared to try to use the attacks to strengthen its political hand, and outraged voters made it pay a price. The government, after all, already had a reputation for political "spin" after its handling of other high-profile events in Spain, including the oil spill from the tanker *Prestige* off the Spanish coast in 2002, an airplane crash that killed 62 Spanish soldiers returning from Afghanistan in 2003, and the issue of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Whether or not the government really did seek to influence the vote through its handling of the attacks is less important than the strong perception that it did. The government appears to have paid more of a price for misleading the public than for its policy on Iraq.

Finally, and most important, even to the degree that the vote against Aznar's Popular Party was a vote against the Iraq war, it was not, in Spanish eyes, a vote against the war on terrorism. The fact is that while the Bush administration has defined Iraq as the central front in the war on terrorism, the Spanish—and most Europeans—never accepted that argument. More than 80% of the Spanish people were against the war in Iraq and many people believed that the invasion could actually be more a spur to Islamic terrorism than a strike against it. As other hearings in Washington last week demonstrated, there is a serious debate to be had about the link between the Iraq war and the war on terrorism, and at this point any honest assessment must acknowledge that it is too soon to know for certain. But even to the degree that the Spanish vote on March 14 was a vote against the invasion of Iraq, it cannot be said that it was a vote against the war on terrorism, since the vast majority of the Spanish never equated the two. Incoming Prime Minister Zapatero's pledge to make fighting terrorism his top priority and his decision to double the Spanish contingent in Afghanistan underscore the distinction that he and most of the Spanish make about the two issues. Even a brief glance at the implacable stand that Spanish governments, including Socialist governments, have historically taken against ETA in particular and terrorism in general should convince us that appeasement is not their natural inclination.

Understanding these factors does not change the fact that the terrorist attacks in Madrid and the outcome of the Spanish elections were setbacks for the United States, particularly in its desire to sustain international support in Iraq. But it should help us avoid misinterpreting the electoral outcome, and therefore to avoid making policies based on false assumptions. In particular, several general policy guidelines would appear to result from the analysis of the Spanish election presented here:

- The United States should avoid denouncing the Spanish people as “appeasers” and characterizing the Socialists' election as a “victory” for al Qaeda. Spain has lost over 1,000 lives to terrorism over the past 30 years and has stood up to it steadfastly. The new government does not support U.S. policy in Iraq, but it continues to cooperate well with the United States on judicial and intelligence matters, is willing to enhance police and anti-terrorist cooperation within Europe, and it is committed to playing an important role in Afghanistan. American disappointment with the result of the election and some of the new government's policies and statements is understandable, but overreaction could backfire and produce the very split in the global anti-terrorist coalition that the terrorists apparently sought.
- The Bush administration should immediately reach out to the new Spanish government to make clear that the United States still considers Spain a vital and loyal ally whose cooperation it needs in our common interest. In doing so, President Bush should himself consider a trip to Madrid to pay tribute to the victims of terrorism in the same way that countless foreign leaders have visited “ground zero” in New York. Americans rightly felt that Europeans did not fully appreciate the shock of such massive terror attacks on our soil. We must not

make the same mistake; it is important that Europeans understand that we appreciate how painful their losses were when our common enemies killed so many of their citizens during a morning rush-hour commute. The Spanish should not be left to believe that the United States only stood by them when they had a conservative and compliant government. One of the clearest messages for the United States in the Spanish election is that it does not suffice to win the support of governments alone; in democracies the United States needs to win the hearts and minds of the people as well.

- The administration should explore the type of UN role in Iraq that would be necessary for the new government to maintain Spanish troops in Iraq. Zapatero has said that Spanish troops would only stay if the UN “takes control” and the “occupiers give up political control” but there may be some potential flexibility in the Spanish position. It is not impossible that a new UN mandate for the security force, along with a key UN role in making arrangements for the Iraqi constitution and organizing elections, could give Zapatero the political cover he would need to remain part of the Iraq coalition. The Spanish should know, and be reminded, that however they felt about the war in the first place, a Western failure there would be catastrophic for Europeans and Americans alike. Thus the United States should do what it reasonably can to make it possible for Spain to stay in Iraq, not only because we need their 1,300 troops, but because broader European support and legitimacy will be a crucial factor in our prospect for success. If our efforts to persuade the Spanish to remain part of the coalition should fail, a possible alternative might be to get them to adopt a force-protection mission for an eventual UN presence in Iraq. That would not be as good as a full security role, but it would be a useful mission that Spanish politics might permit.
- The United States should also encourage NATO to play a greater role in providing security in Iraq, which could also make it easier for the Spanish to remain involved. Indeed, if the United States effectively transfers sovereignty to a new Iraqi government on June 30, and if that government asks NATO and the UN to get involved, it is possible that not only Spain but even potentially France and Germany could begin to play a greater role in Iraq. The latter two governments have already suggested that under these conditions they would consider extending more Iraqi debt relief, enhanced training of Iraqi gendarmes and security forces, reconstruction aid, and, in the case of France, possibly even troops at some point. These opportunities should be explored, because just as transatlantic cooperation only worked in the Balkans when the NATO allies had troops on the ground, we will only really put our divisions with the Europeans behind us once we are all working together in Iraq.
- The United States should not only encourage but take active steps to promote counter-terrorist cooperation within Europe. Ironically, despite major transatlantic differences over issues like Iraq, transatlantic cooperation on terrorism has been reasonably good, indeed better than cooperation among Europeans themselves. Internal European borders have effectively been

eliminated, but there has been little integration of law enforcement or intelligence capabilities. As a result, it is easier for terrorists to operate and circulate across European borders than it is for the police, intelligence officers or prosecutors who are trying to stop them. While we struggle to improve coordination between the FBI, the CIA, and Homeland Security, Europeans are attempting to coordinate 15 (soon 25) different domestic and foreign intelligence services—who often speak different languages (both literally and figuratively).

Although intra-European coordination is essentially an internal European issue, the United States does have both a stake in its outcome and a role to play in improving it. U.S. intelligence-gathering services, for example, are so advanced that they effectively empower their partners in Europe simply by working with them. The United States should use this leverage to encourage greater cooperation and coordination at the European level by taking seriously and working with the nascent EU-level organizations that have been established, including Europol, Eurojust and the newly appointed (post-Madrid) Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Gijs de Vries. Because these new organizations lack capacity, the temptation is to ignore them in favor of traditional national channels, which currently offer more effective partnerships. While bilateral cooperation must continue, however, we must also recognize a long-term interest in getting Europeans to use their EU-level capacities and coordinate better among themselves. As both 9/11 and 3/11 showed, the terrorists are adept at using different European locations to make their preparations and to hide from authorities. Without better intra-European cooperation, we are fighting them with one hand tied behind our backs.

- Finally, the United States should take advantage of a series of upcoming opportunities with the Europeans—the G-8, NATO, and U.S.-EU summits and the D-Day anniversary—to reestablish a sense of common purpose in the war on terrorism and beyond. Whatever our legitimate differences over Iraq, the fact is that the Madrid attacks underscore that we are all vulnerable to the same threat, and that neither Europeans nor Americans will be safe until that threat is defeated. In particular, the upcoming summits should be used to begin the long-term process of fostering the sort of political change and economic development in the Middle East without which the problem of Islamic terrorism will never go away.