For much of Spain's modern history, the organization that has defined its experience with terror is ETA, which stands for Euzkadi Ta Azkatasun (Basque Homeland and Liberty). ETA, which was founded in 1959, has a clear political goal: it wants to set up a separate nation, comprising the Basque provinces, in northern Spain, and parts of southern France. Although ETA has killed some eight hundred people, it has developed a reputation for targeting, almost exclusively, politicians, security officials, and journalists. Over the years, the terrorists and the Spanish police have come to a rough understanding about the rules of engagement. "They don't commit attacks on the working class, and they always call us before an explosion, telling us where the bomb is situated," an intelligence official in the Spanish National Police told me recently in Madrid. "If they place a bomb in a backpack on a train, there will be a cassette tape saying, 'This bag is going to explode. Please leave the train.'" And so on March 11th, when the first reports arrived of mass casualties resulting from explosions on commuter trains, Spanish intelligence officials assumed that ETA had made an appalling mistake.

At 7:37 A.M., as a train was about to enter Madrid's Atocha station, three bombs blasted open the steel car, sending body parts through the windows of nearby apartments. The station is in Madrid's center, a few blocks from the Prado Museum. Within seconds, four bombs exploded on another train, five hundred and fifty yards from the station. The bombs killed nearly a hundred people. Had the explosives occurred when the trains were inside the station, the fatalities might have

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE TERROR WEB

Were the Madrid bombings part of a new, far-reaching jihad being plotted on the Internet?

BY LAWRENCE WRIGHT

THE NEW YORKER, AUGUST 2, 2004

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tallied in the thousands; a quarter of a million people pass through Atocha every weekday. The trains at that hour were filled with students and young office workers who live in public housing and in modest apartment complexes east of the city. Many were immigrants, who had been drawn by the Spanish economic boom.

As emergency crews rushed to the scene, two more bombs demolished a train at the El Prat del Tío Raimundo station, three miles away. By then, José María Aznar, the Prime Minister, had learned of the attacks, which were taking place at the end of an uneventful political campaign. The conservative Popular Party, which Aznar headed, was leading the Socialists by four and a half points in the polls, despite the overwhelming opposition of the Spanish population to the country’s participation in the war in Iraq. It was Thursday morning; the election would take place on Sunday.

At seven forty-two, one minute after the El Pazo bomb, a final bomb went off, on a train at the suburban Santa Eugenia station. Emergency workers arrived to find mangled bodies littering the tracks. The Spanish had never seen anything like this—the worst ETA atrocity, in 1987, killed twenty-one shoppers in a Barcelona grocery store. At Santa Eugenia, there were so many wounded that rescue crews ripped up the benches in the waiting area to use as stretchers. In all, there were a hundred and ninety-one fatalities and sixteen hundred injuries. It was the most devastating act of terrorism in European history, except for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Aznar, who survived an ETA car bomb in 1995, had made the elimination of the group his biggest priority. His security forces had decimated ETA’s ranks, but they were aware that remnants of the organization were attempting to stage a retaliatory attack in Madrid. The previous Christmas Eve, police had arrested two ETA commandos who had planted backpack bombs on trains, and in February the Civil Guard intercepted an ETA van that was headed to the capital carrying eleven hundred pounds of explosives. A top Spanish police official, a political appointee, told me that authorities had planned a major strike against ETA for March 12th, the last official day of campaigning. Such a blow might have boosted Aznar’s party at the polls. ETA, however, had seemingly struck first.

At 10:50 a.m., police in Alcalá de Henares received a call from a witness who pointed them to a dusty white Renault van...
that had been left that morning at the train station. "At the beginning, we didn't pay too much attention to it," an investigator told me. "Then we saw that the license plate didn't correspond to the van." Even that clue, though, struck a false note. When ETA operatives steal a car, they match it with license plates from the same model car. I had been years since ETA had made such an elementary mistake.

The lack of warning, the many casualties, the proletarian background of many of the victims, and ETA's quick disarmament of the crime all suggested that there was reason to question the assignment of blame. The police no longer considered ETA capable of carrying off such an elaborate attack. Moreover, the telephones of known ETA collaborators were bugged. "The bad guys were calling each other, saying, 'We got it! It's covered!'" a senior intelligence official said.

That afternoon, detectives looked more carefully at the white van. They collected fingerprints, and under the passenger seat they found a plastic bag with seven detonators matching the type used in the bombings. There were cigarette butts, a woman's wig, and a Psicodo Domingo cassette. In the tape player was a different recording—it bore Arabic inscriptions, and turned out to be Koranic recitations for religious novices. By that time, police had learned that the explosives used in the bombings was Goma-2, which ETA no longer used. "We told the government that there was something odd, that it was possible not ETA," the intelligence official told me.

That evening, however, Aznave, an editor of Spain's newspaper, "ETA is a front for the attacks," he assured them. Then he called José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, his Socialist opponent, to tell him about the van and the Arabic tape. At the same time, he insisted that "there is no doubt that did the attacks."

The case broke open in the middle of the night, when a young police officer, sorting through belongings recovered from the train, opened a sports bag and discovered twenty-two pounds of Goma-2, surrounded by nails and screws. Two wives ran from a blue mobile phone to a detonator. It wasn't clear why the bomb had failed to explode.

Police officers realized that a chip inside the phone would contain a record of recently dialled numbers. By tracing these calls, they were quickly able to map out a network of young Arab immigrants, many of whom were known to Spanish intelligence. Data stored on the chip revealed that a calling plan had been set up at a small telephone and copy shop in Lavapiés, a working-class neighborhood near the Atocha station. The store was owned by Jamal Zeouagam, a Moroccan who had been previously under surveillance because of alleged connections to Al Qaeda. He was soon arrested.

Information began leaking to the public about the direction of the investigation. By Friday afternoon, demonstrators in front of the Atocha station, holding signs that linked the tragedy to the war in Iraq. It was clear that the election would overshadow the questions of whether Islamists or ETA terrorists were responsible for the bombings. That day, the Interior Minister, Angel Acebes, insisted that "I believe that we are not talking to a single terrorist group."

At midnight, some eleven million Spaniards assembled around the country to protest the violence. In rainy Madrid, the umbrellas stretched for miles down the Paseo del Prado. The anger of grief of the marchers was compounded by confusion about the investigation. "We walked with a million people in Madrid's streets," Diego López Garrido, a Socialist deputy in the Spanish congress, told me. "Many people were saying, 'Who is the author of these attacks?' And they wondered, 'Why is the government lying to us?'"

The day of the bombings, analysts at the University of Navarra's Research Institute, a Norwegian think tank near Oslo, retrieved a document that they had noticed on an Islamic website the previous December. At the time, it was considered a joke, but now, in light of the events in Madrid, it read like a terrorist road map titled Jihadi Iraq: Hopes and Dangers. It had been prepared by a previously unknown entity called the Media Committee for the Victory of the Iraqi People (Muslahudin Services Centre).

The document, which is forty-two pages long and appears to be the work of several anonymous authors, begins with the proposition that although Coalition forces in Iraq, led by America, could not be defeated by a guerrilla insurgency, individual partners of the Coalition could be provoked to desert; leaving America more vulnerable and discouraged as casualties in Iraq increase and the expenses become unsustainable. Three countries—Britain, Spain, and Poland—formed the European backbone of the Coalition. Poland appeared to be the most reliable, because the populace largely agreed with the government's decision to enter Iraq. Britain, in the war was generally deployed, "before the war, in February, about a million people were out on a huge march filling the streets of London," the document...

"There's no business like show business..."
notes. "This was the biggest march of po-
litical protest in the history of Britain.
"But the authors suggest that the British
would not withdraw unless the casualty
count exceeded 100,000.
Spain, however, presented a striking
opportunity. The war was almost univer-
sally unpopular. Aznar had plunged his
country into Iraq without seeking a con-
sensus, unlike other Coalition leaders.
"If the disparity between the government
and the people were at the same percentage
rate in Britain, then the Blair government
would fall," the author of this section ob-
serves. The reason Aznar had not yet been
called to account was that Spain is an
immature democracy and does not have a
firm tradition of holding its rulers ac-
countable. Right-wing Spanish voters
also tended to be more loyal and orga-
nized than their leftist counterparts.
Moreover, the number of Spanish casualties
in Iraq was less than a dozen. "In order to
force the Spanish government to with-
draw from Iraq, the resistance should deal
painful blows to its forces," the writer pro-
poses. "It is necessary to make utmost use
of the upcoming general election in Spain
in March next year. We think that the
Spanish government could not tolerate a
situation in which resistance fighters, after
which it will have to withdraw as a re-
SULT of popular pressure. If its troops still
remain in Iraq after these blows, the vic-
tory of the Socialist Party is almost se-
cured, and the withdrawal of the Spanish
forces will be on its electoral program."[9]
Once Spain pulled out of Iraq, the author
therefore stated, the pressure on Tony Blair,
the British Prime Minister, to do the same
might be unbearable "—laid hence the
formula title would fall quickly.
The document specifies that the at-
tacks would be aimed at Spanish forces
within Iraq—there is no call for action in
Spain. Nonetheless, the authors' read-
ing of the Western political calendar
struck the Norwegian researchers as par-
ticularly keen. "The relation between the
text and the bombings is unclear," Thomas
Heggeman, a researcher at Forsetværet
Forskningsinstitutt, told me. "But, with
one text, we were still being asked, 'Is this
a coincidence?'
That day, Heggeman forwarded a
copy of the document to Hatim Aminah
Fernandez, a colleague at Madaris Real
Instituto Elcano. Aminah was shocked.
Until now, the announced goals of Al
Qaeda had been mainly paraded, directed
at purging the Islamic world, especially
Saudi Arabia, of Western influence; over-
turning the established Arabic govern-
ments; and entering the sphere of the
ancient caliphate; and purifying Islam by
returning it to the idealized time of the
Prophet. In an audiorecording aired on the Ara-
bic satellite channel Al-Jazeera in February
2003, Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al
Qaeda, had identified Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan,
Saudi Arabia, and Yemen as "the
most qualified regions for liber-
ation." (Iraq was notably absent
from his list.) A terrorist was often written
no political platform—no plan, for
instance, for governing Saudi
Arabia on the morning after the
revolution. As for the rest of the
world, bin Laden's goals seemed to be
motivated mainly by revenge. In 1998, he
had decreed that it was the "duty of every Mus-
lim" to kill Americans and their allies. The
spectacular violence that characterized Al
Qaeda's attacks was not a means to a goal—
it was the goal. Success was measured by the
body count, not by political change.
The Internet document suggested that
a new intelligence was at work, a ra-
son why a terrorist in Al Jazeera's docum-
ent of the before. The Mujahideen Services
Center, whatever that was, appeared to oper-
ate as a kind of Islamist think tank. "The
person who put together those chapters had
a clear strategic vision, realistic, and
well thought out," Aminah says. He told
Heggeman, "This is political science
applied for jihad."[10]
Although the document was posted on
the Internet in December, 2003, the au-
tors note that a draft had been written in
September. In October, assassins shot a
Spanish military attack in Iraq, Jose An-
tonio Bernal Gomez, near his residence in
November, seven Spanish intelligence
agents were ambushed and murdered
south of Baghdad. Photographs of the
killers standing on the agents' bodies cir-
culated on Islamic Web sites. Another In-
ett document soon appeared, titled
"Message to the Spanish People" signed
by the Information Committee for the
Help of the Iraqi People (Department of
Foreign Propaganda), which threatened
more attacks. "Return to your country and
live peacefully," it demands, or else "the
battalions of the Iraqi resistance and its
supporters outside of Iraq are able to in-
crease the dosage and will eclipse your
memory of the rotten过去,"
Variations in the Arabic translations
of English words in the "Jihadul Iraq" doc-
ument suggest an ambition to write in the
style of various national and tribal influ-
ences. For instance, in one case the "T" in
Tory Blair's name was transcribed with the Ara-
bic "t" and in the instance, about Spain, the
author used the "shaa," which is the same
typical of the Moroccan dialect.
Also characteristic of Morocco is the
use of Arabic numerals (the style used in the West) in place of the
numbering system that is said. He identified from clips by Al Jazaa-
rie Gulf. Those clues, plus cer-
pertainly particularly Moroccan po-
tical concerns expressed in the
document, such as the independence
movement in Western Sahara, suggested
that at least some of the authors were disas-
pondent Moroccans, probably living in Spain.
The link between the Internet docu-
ment and the bombings soon became
clear. There is a reference early in the
document to Abu Dujana, a companion of
the Prophet who was known for his feroc-
ity in battle. His name had been invoked
by other jihadis, notably in the suicide
bombing of the American consulate in
Jakarta in August, 2003. On Saturday ev-
ning, a television station in Madrid re-
ported a call from a man speaking Spanish
with a Moroccan accent, who said that a
video tape had been placed in a trash bin
near the cny's main mosque. "We declare our responsibility for what has occurred in
Madrid," exactly two and a half years after
the attacks on New York and Wash-
ington," a masked speaker on the videotape
said. He identified himself as Abu Dujana
al-Alghimi, "the military spokesman for
Al Qaeda in Europe." He continued, "It is a
response to your collaboration with the
criminal Bush and his allies. You take life
and we love death, which gives an example
of what the Prophet Muhammad said. If
you don't stop your injustices, more and
time, blood will follow.
" Until this tape appeared, even those in-
vestigating who were arguing that the
bombings were the work of international ter-
rors, not ETA, had been troubled by the
fact that there were no "martyrs" in the at-
tacks. It is a tradition of Al Qaeda to sac-
cifice its killers; this practice has provided a
scanty moral cover for what would other-
wise be seen simply as mass murder. But,
“We're going before the Supreme Court in an hour, Ben. Would it kill you to sit on my lap?”

The Al-Qaeda cell in Spain is old and well established. Mohamed Atta, the commander of the September 11th attacks, came to Spain twice in 2001. The second time was in July, for a meeting in the coastal resort of Sitges, which appears to have been arranged as a final go-ahead for the attacks. After September 11th, Spanish police estimated that there were three hundred Islamic radicals in the country who might be affiliated with Al-Qaeda. Even before then, members of the Spanish cell had been monitored by police agencies, as is evident from the abundant use of wiretaps and surveillance information in indictments that were issued in November, 2001, when eleven suspects were charged with being Al Qaeda members—the first of several terrorist roundups. And yet, according to Spanish police officials, at the time of the Madrid attacks there was not a single Arabic-speaking intelligence agent in the country. Al-Qaeda was simply not seen as a threat to Spain. “We never believed we were a real target,” a senior police official said. “That's the reality.”

At four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, sixty hours after the attacks and the day before the election, Interior Minister Acebes announced the arrest of Jamal Zougam and two other Moroccans. Still, he continued to point at ETA. By now the Socialists were publicly accusing the government of lying about the investigation in order to stay in power.

It was opened the next morning at nine. Thirty-five million people wound, more than eight percent of the electorate, eight and a half percent more than expected. Many were young, first-time voters, and their votes put the Socialists over the top. As José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero declared victory, he again condemned the war in Iraq and reiterated his intention to withdraw troops.

Four days later, the Atocha High-line Basque, a group claiming affiliation with Al-Qaeda, sent a bombastic message to the London newspaper Al-Quds al-Dawleh, apologizing responsibility for the train bombings. “Whoever will be at rest!” the author taunts. “in a Japan, America, Italy, Britain, Saudi Arabia, or Australia.” The message also addressed the speculation that the terrorists would try to replicate their political success in Spain by disrupting the November U.S. elections. “We are very keen that Bush does not lose the upcoming elections,” the author writes. Bush’s “idolcy and religious fanaticism” are useful, the author contends, for they stir the Islamic world to action.

On April 2nd, two weeks after the election, a security guard for the AVE, Spain’s high-speed train line, discovered a blue plastic bag beside the tracks forty miles south of Madrid. Inside the bag were twenty-six pounds of Goma-2. Four hours and fifty feet of cable had been draped across the security forces and attacked, incorrectly, to the denouement. Had the bomb gone off when the AVE passed by—at a hundred and eighty m.p.h., carrying twenty-three hours—its effects could have been far more catastrophic than those of March 11th. Spanish citizens asked themselves if the three terrorists of March 11th had accomplished the goals set by Al-Qaeda, what was the point of April 2nd?

Gustavo de Arístegui is one of the leaders of the Popular Party in Spain’s Basque country. For years, he represented Donostia—San Sebastian, the region that houses the Spanish congress. A lawyer and former diplomat, Arístegui has been preoccupied for many years with the rise of Islamic terror. His father was Spain’s Ambassador to Lebanon and was killed in Beirut in 1989, when Syrian forces shifted his diplomatic residence. “Al-Qaeda has four different networks,” Arístegui told Rolls in Madrid, the day after the Socialists took power. “First, there is the original network, the one that carries out its own missions. And people it has recruited and trained. Then, there is the ad-hoc terrorist network, consisting of fractious organizations and others who actually—often are—place one or two bloodied enough in countries like the Philippines, Jordan, and Algeria.” The third network, Arístegui said, is more subtle, “a strange mix of like-minded companies.” Since February, 1998, what Osama bin Laden announced the creation of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Crusaders and Jews—an umbrella organization for Islamic groups from Morocco and Iran—Al-Qaeda has expanded its doctrine by making alliances and offering funds. “Hamas is in, or almost in,” Arístegui said. “Bin Laden is trying to tempt Hezbollah to join, and many Sunnis are opposed to them.” Finally, there is the fourth network—“initiators, emulato rs,” who are ideologically aligned with Al-Qaeda but are less tied to it financially. “These are the ones who competed Madrid,” Arístegui said.

Until the Madrid attacks, the Al-Qaeda operation—Dhahran, Nairobi, Die floppy Saarim, Aden, New York, Washington, John, Karachi, Bali, Mombasa, Riyadh, Casablanca, Jakarta, and Istanbul—had been political failures. These massacres
committed in the name of jihad had achieved little except anger, grief, and the deaths of thousands. Soon after September 11th, Al Qaeda lost its base in Afghanistan and, along with that, its singular role in the coordination of international terror. New groups, such as the bombers in Madrid, were acting in the name of Al Qaeda, and although they may well have had the blessings of its leaders, they did not have the training, resources, or international contacts that had bolstered the previous generation of terrorists. Some operations, such as the 2003 attack on Western compounds in Riyadh, which killed mainly Muslims, were such failures that it appeared that Al Qaeda was no longer able to exercise control.

"Al Qaeda is not a hierarchical organization, and never was," Marc Sageman, a psychiatrist, a former CIA case officer, and the author of "Understanding Terror Networks," told me. "It was always a social movement." The latest convert to the cause didn't train in Afghanistan, and they approach jihad differently. "These local gays are reckless and less well trained, but they are willing to kill themselves, whereas the previous leaders were not," Sageman said. Moreover, as the Spanish attacks showed, the new generation was more interested in committing violence for the sake of immediate political gain.

The kind of short-term tactical thinking displayed in the "Jihadi Iraq" document and the March 11th bombings is decidedly out of step with Al Qaeda's traditional world view, in which history is seen as an endless struggle between believers and infidels. It is the mind-set of fundamentalists of all religions. This war is eternal, and is never finally won until the longed-for Day of Judgment. In this context, the first goal is to provoke conflict. Bold, violent deeds draw the lines and arouse ancient resentments, and are useful even if they have unse sought consequences. Polarization is to be encouraged, radical simplicity being essential for religious warriors. So Al Qaeda's statement posted on the Internet after the March 11th bombings declared, "Being targeted by an enemy is what will wake us from our slumber." Seen in this light, terrorism plays a sacramental role, dramatizing a religious conflict by giving it an apocalyptic backdrop. And Madrid was just another step in the relentless march of radical Islam against the modern, secular world.

Had the Madrid cell rested on its accomplishment after March 11th, Al Qaeda would probably be seen as an organization now being guided by political strategies— by an entity closer in spirit to ETA, with clear tactical objectives. April 2nd throws doubt on that perspective. There was little to be gained politically from striking an opponent who was complying with the stated demand: the government had agreed to withdraw troops from Iraq. If the point was merely humiliation or revenge, then April 2nd makes more sense; the terrorists wanted more blood, even if a second attack backfired politically. (The Socialists could hardly continue to follow the terrorist agenda with a thousand new corpses along the tracks.) April 2nd is comprehensible only if the real goal of the bombers was not Iraq but Spain, where the Islamic empire began its retreat five hundred years ago. Spain is a target because we are the historic turning point," Aristegui said. "After this, they are going to try to hit Rome, London, Paris, and the U.S. harder than they did before.

Juan Aviles, a history professor at Madrid's Autonomous University and an adviser to the Civil Guard, told me, "From our Western point of view, it doesn't make sense that the killings of Atocha are meaningless. In Spain, we expect ETA to behave in certain ways. With Al Qaeda, the real dimensions of the threat are not known, and that produces uneasiness."

In the weeks after the March 11th attacks, Spanish police cordoned the immigrant neighborhoods outside Madrid, carrying photographs of suspects. "We didn't have them perfectly located, but we knew they were in Leganes," a police official told me. Leganes is a bland suburb of five-story red brick apartment complexes. The wide streets are lined with evenly spaced, adolescent oaks. In the noontimes, the sidewalks are full of commuters rushing for the trains; then the place is vacant, except for grandparents and errand runners. In the evenings, the commuters return and close their doors.

At three o'clock on the afternoon of April 3rd, the day after the discovery of the bomb on the AVE tracks, police approached an apartment building on calle Carmen Martin Gute. They saw a young Moroccan man with a baseball cap on backward who was taking out trash. He yelled something in Arabic, then ran.

"Five hamburgers with buns, three hamburgers without buns, and two buns without hamburgers."
away at an impressive pace. (He turned out to be a truck-champion the police did not catch him, and he remains at large.) A moment later, voices cried out, "Allahu Akbar!" and machine-gun fire from the second floor of the Spanish press house raked the street, scattering the cops. Over the next few hours, the police tactical units, Grupos Especiales de la policía, evacuated the residents of nearby apartments. Tanks and helicopters moved in, and the siege of Lejía began.

Fakhr was a young man from the Morroco, who had come to Europe seeking economic opportunity. They had gone through a period of becoming "West-erized"—that is to say, they had been drinkers, drug dealers, and wannabe-celebs. They hung out in cybercafés. They talked to the ethnic mix of urban Madrid. But they also lived in the European underground of Islamic radicalism, whose members were recruited more often in prison than in the training camps of Afghanistan.

Their leader was Sarsone Ben Abdelmadjid Fakhr, who was thirty-five years old and had a patchy beard. He was a real-estate agent who had come to Madrid eight years earlier on a scholarship to study economics. His boss told the Spanish press that Fakhr "was a wonderful salesman," who held the record for the number of apartment sales in a month. Yet he did not talk to his co-workers or make friends with other Spaniards; he remained sequestered in his Muslim-world.

"He was very witty and well educated," Monier Mahmoud Aly al-Messery, the imam at the principal mosque in Madrid, told me. The mosque—a massive marble structure, built with Saudi money—is the center of Muslim cultural life in the Spanish capital. It overlooks the M-30, one of the main freeways feeding into Madrid. When Fakhr was arrested, he was working in the restaurant that is attached to the mosque, and he sometimes came to Messery's weekly religious class. In the beginning, the imam noticed that Fakhr spoke familiarly to women as well as to men. "Then, for three or four years, I sensed that he had some extremist thoughts," Messery recalled. After class, Fakhr would ask telling questions, such as whether the imam believed that the leaders of the Arab countries were true believers, or if Islam authorized the use of force to spread the religion. Last year, he married a twenty-year-old Moroccan girl who veiled her face and dressed entirely in black, including gloves. His performance at work declined, and he eventually requested a transfer back to police, he attended meetings with a small group of fellow-Muslims at a bar in the center of town, drank holy water from Mecca. Police believethat this ritual was aimed at absolving the men of the sin of suicide, which is condemned by Islam.

Soon after the attacks of September 11th, the imam had a dream about Fakhr. "Sarsone was in his kitchen, cooking on the stove," he recalled. "I saw what he was cooking was a big pot of worms. He tried to give me a plate of the food to eat. I said no, I said, 'Please clean the kitchen.'" Days later, the imam confronts Fakhr. "This is a message from God!" the imam said to him. "The kitchen is the thought, and the thought is dirty." Fakhr didn't respond. "He's a very cold person," the imam told me.

Fakhr was not the only young man in the M-30 mosque who had taken a turn toward extremism. Amer Azizi, a thirty-six-year-old Moroccan who was a veteran of Jihad in Bosnia and Afghanistan, had been standing by a group of young Muslims to plan the September 11th attacks. (He was accused of setting up the jet, July 2001, meeting between in Madrid, where one man would drink holy water from Mekka). Among people who frequented the mosque, Azizi had the reputation of being a drug addict, although he attended some classes on Islam along with Fakhr.

In June, 2000, when the Arab countries' ambassadors to Spain came to the mosque to mourn the death of the Syrian dictator Hafez al-Assad, Azizi insulted them, yelling, "Why do you come to pray for an infidel?" Police charge him with being a senior member of Al-Qaeda and the leader of the Moroccan Islamic Combat Group, which was responsible for five bombings in Casablanca in May, 2003. He fled Spain just before his sentencing.

Another of Fakhr's friends was Jamil Almihna, a drug dealer who police say finessed the March 11th bombings with seventy pounds of hashish. Messery blamed an Islamic cleric in London, Abu Qatada, a radical Palestinian from Jordan who was deported to Britain as a refugee in 1994. After September 11th, police in Hamburg found eighteen tapes of Abu Qatada's sermons in Mohamed Atta's apartment there. British authorities arrested him in October, 2002, but he still wielded great authority among Islamists across the western world, "We told him, "It was as if there were black hands behind a curtain pushing these young men."
Although many Spanish historians have painted Moorish Spain as something other than paradise for Jews and Christians, for Muslims it remains not only a symbol of vanished greatness but a kind of alternative vision of Islam—one in which all the ills of present-day Islamic societies are reversed. Muslim tourists, including many heads of state, come to Spain to imagine a time when Islam was at the center of art and learning, not on the fringes. "The Alhambra is the No. 1 Islamic monument," Malik A. Roiz Callejas, the emir of the Islamic community in Spain and the president of Granada's new mosque, told me recently. "Back when in Peru and London people were being eaten alive by rats, in Córdoba everyone could read and write." The civilization of Al Andalus was probably the most just, most unified, and most tolerant in history, providing the greatest level of security and the highest standard of living.

In rural Andalúsia, strung between the plains and the mountains, the Alcázar of Seville has been a symbol of Muslim rule since the 8th century. Its elegant simplicity and graceful lines are a testament to the artistic genius of its builders. The Alcázar's architecture is a fusion of Moorish and Roman elements, with intricate designs and elaborate carvings that reflect the ingenuity of the builders. It stands as a reminder of the glory of Al Andalus, a reminder of the golden age of Islamic Spain.

The mosque of the Alcázar is a magnificent example of Islamic architecture. It is a large, open space, with high ceilings and graceful arches. The mosque is a place of worship for Muslims, and it is open to visitors of all faiths. The mosque is a symbol of the peace and tolerance that existed in Al Andalus.

The Alcázar also houses a museum, which is dedicated to the history and culture of Al Andalus. The museum has a wide variety of exhibits, including artifacts, paintings, and photographs. It is a great place to learn about the history of Al Andalus and the contributions of its Muslim builders.

The Alcázar is a tribute to the art and culture of Al Andalus. It is a symbol of the beauty and grace that characterized the Muslim period in Spain. The Alcázar is a reminder of the glory of Al Andalus, a reminder of the golden age of Islamic Spain.

The Alcázar is a place of awe and wonder, a place of beauty and grace. It is a testament to the art and culture of Al Andalus, a reminder of the glory of Islamic Spain.

The Alcázar of Seville is a symbol of the glory of Al Andalus, a symbol of the beauty and grace of Islamic Spain. It is a reminder of the contributions of its Muslim builders and a testament to the art and culture of Al Andalus.