

Background

No. 1871
July 21, 2005



Published by The Heritage Foundation

The London Bombings: How the U.S. and the U.K. Should Respond

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Thursday, July 7, 2005, will go down as one of the darkest days in British history since the Second World War. At least 55 people were killed in a series of bomb blasts in the heart of London, and several hundred were injured.

The July 7 attacks were followed by a series of near simultaneous minor bomb blasts on public transportation in the British capital, involving detonators, on July 21. Although there were no fatalities, the attacks caused widespread disruption to the London subway network.

The July 7 suicide bombings were carried out by four British Muslim extremists.¹ Three of the bombers—Hasib Hussain, Mohammed Sidique Khan, and Shehzad Tanweer—received terrorist training and religious instruction in Pakistan several months before the bombing.² The fourth, Jamaican-born Jermaine Lindsay, is believed to have converted to Islam in Afghanistan.³

Although the first attacks were definitely carried out by homegrown terrorists, the bombers were clearly part of a larger international network. The attacks were likely a sophisticated al-Qaeda operation, masterminded by experienced international operatives with local extremists acting as foot soldiers. A global manhunt is underway for several possible al-Qaeda ringleaders.

The fact that British citizens carried out the attacks is a wake-up call for Britain. The bombings must result in a sea change in how America's closest ally deals with Islamic extremists. Specifically:

Talking Points

- British anti-terrorism legislation must be strengthened to prevent further attacks on the scale of the London bombings. Greater powers must be given to British authorities to monitor, detain, and extradite suspected terrorists, and the U.K. should immediately withdraw from all articles and protocols in the European Convention on Human Rights that might act as a barrier to effective anti-terrorism measures.
- The U.K. must not tolerate the Islamic militancy in its midst, which seeks to destroy British society and impose a Muslim state. Foreign clerics who preach treason and violence in the U.K. should be deported and banned from re-entering the country.
- The U.S.–British-led war against al-Qaeda must be waged militarily as well as through intelligence and police operations. Whoever has harbored, funded, aided, or abetted the London bombers must be held to account. If any state played a role in these attacks, there must be consequences.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:
www.heritage.org/research/europe/bg1871.cfm

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Center for Foreign Policy Studies
of the
Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis
Institute for International Studies

Published by The Heritage Foundation
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Washington, DC 20002–4999
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- The United Kingdom must no longer act as a safe haven for Islamic militants and terrorist organizations from across the Middle East and North Africa.⁴ Tougher anti-terrorist legislation and stronger immigration and asylum laws are required to help prevent further terrorist attacks on British soil.
- The British government must not be constrained by the European Convention on Human Rights⁵ in drawing up its anti-terrorism legislation. Britain should immediately withdraw from articles of the Convention that restrict its power to act in areas of vital national security, including deportation of foreign nationals and extradition of terrorist suspects to countries that implement the death penalty. The London bombings should also prompt a major political debate in Parliament over whether the U.K. should withdraw altogether from the European Convention on Human Rights.
- The British government must pursue a policy of zero tolerance toward Islamic extremism, which is a deadly threat to the fabric of British society. Foreign Islamic clerics who preach violence and hatred should be deported from Britain, and terrorist suspects must be extradited to friendly countries that request it, especially the United States. British politicians must also be careful not to appease or promote extremists who support the use of terrorism. It is vitally important that British leaders immediately condemn inflammatory statements and apply tremendous pressure on community leaders to

denounce extremists in their midst.

The U.K. has distinguished intelligence services in the shape of MI5 and MI6, which have thwarted several earlier attempted terrorist attacks on London and have earned the reputation of being among the very best in the world. Their efforts must not be undermined by a lack of political determination on the part of some British politicians and by European conventions that all too often are more concerned with the rights of suspected terrorists than with national security. Britain cannot fight its domestic war on terrorism with both hands tied behind its back amidst a powerful culture of political correctness, much of it imported from continental Europe.

At the same time, the war must be taken to the terrorists on the world stage. If it is established that a state sponsor of terrorism was involved, the United States and the United Kingdom must retaliate with force. An attack on London is no different from an attack on Washington or New York, and it demands a vigorous joint response. In this scenario, all options must be on the table, including air strikes and special-forces operations. Additionally, the continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan must be prosecuted aggressively, and the terrorists must be rooted out and destroyed. This may necessitate deploying more British troops to both theaters of operation. This is a global conflict that is as much Britain's war as it is America's.

Motives of the Terrorists

The barbaric terrorist attacks on London were a

1. For a profile of the bombers, see Sam Knight, "The Leeds Bombers," *The Times* (London), July 13, 2005, at www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-20749-1692402,00.html (July 15, 2005). For a profile of the fourth bomber, see Adam Fresco, Sean O'Neill, and Stewart Tandler, "Jamaican-Born Bomber from the Suburbs of Middle England," *The Times*, July 15, 2005, at www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,22989-1694965,00.html (July 15, 2005).
2. "Forgotten Men Who Became Foot Soldiers of Al-Qaeda," *The Times*, July 18, 2005.
3. *Ibid.*
4. For analysis of London's role as a sanctuary for Islamic terrorists, see Steve Coll and Susan B. Glasser, "In London, Islamic Radicals Found a Haven," *The Washington Post*, July 10, 2005, p. A1, at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/09/AR2005070901390.html (July 15, 2005), and Elaine Sciolino and Don Van Natta, Jr., "For a Decade, London Thrived as a Busy Crossroads of Terror," *The New York Times*, July 10, 2005, at www.nytimes.com/2005/07/10/international/europe/10qaeda.html?incamp=article_popular_5 (July 15, 2005).
5. Council of Europe, "Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms," at www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/D5CC24A7-DC13-4318-B457-5C9014916D7A/0/EnglishAnglais.pdf (July 19, 2005).

direct assault on the Anglo–U.S. alliance, the engine of the global war on terrorism. By striking London, the world’s biggest financial center, al-Qaeda hoped to achieve a three-pronged propaganda success.

First, it planned to disrupt the Group of 8 (G-8) meeting, a symbol of the most powerful Western leaders in the world. As is already clear, that aim failed.

Second, it hoped for the “Spanish effect”: to alienate the British public from its government as it successfully did in Madrid. Here, too, the terrorists are bound to fail, for they have underestimated the strength and resolve of the British people. Instead, the bombings have considerably strengthened the position of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Third, it hoped to fracture the Anglo–American partnership in Iraq. The bombings closely resembled the Madrid attacks of March 2004 and were specifically aimed at forcing Britain to withdraw its 8,500 troops from Iraq. Again, this strategy is doomed to failure. There is no sign that Britain’s commitment to Iraq is breaking. Indeed, the U.S. and the U.K. will not leave Iraq until the scourge of terrorism in the country is vanquished. Members of the same global network that was behind the London attacks are daily killing civilians on the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities. Iraq today is the central battleground in the war on terrorism, and it is there that al-Qaeda can and must be fought on the battlefield.

Above all, the terrorists are driven by an evil doctrine of hatred and loathing, based on an extreme misinterpretation of Islam, that has as its ultimate goal the destruction of liberal democracy across the world, whether it be in the West or the Middle East, and the establishment of a Muslim Caliphate.⁶ It is an ideology that cannot be appeased or negotiated with, but which must be defeated. The terrorist bombings in London, and the attacks of 9/11 in Washington and New York, were not the consequences of U.S. or British foreign policy, but part of

an epic confrontation between the forces of barbarism and the forces of civilization.

Similarities to the Madrid Bombings

Although regarded as “Britain’s 9/11,” the London bombings are more similar to “3/11,” the March 11, 2004, bombings in Madrid, in terms of targeting and scale. Like the Madrid attacks, the London attacks were aimed at mass transit systems in the capital city at the height of rush hour, soft targets that would yield a large number of casualties. In Spain, 10 bombs hidden in sports bags blew up on four crowded trains, killing 191 and wounding more than 1,500.

The Madrid terrorists belonged to a loosely organized ring of North African immigrants, most of them from Morocco. Some were linked to the Moroccan Islamic Combat Group, a radical Islamic terrorist group allied with al-Qaeda, which was responsible for the May 16, 2003, suicide bombings in Casablanca, Morocco, that killed 45 people.⁷ Three weeks after the bombings, seven prime suspects blew themselves up after Spanish police surrounded them in a Madrid suburb. This made it difficult to establish whether a local cell carried out the bombings acting by itself or with guidance or support from al-Qaeda’s high command.

The Madrid bombers apparently also had plans to attack New York City. Spanish investigators warned the U.S. government in December 2004 that the Madrid train bombers had detailed plans of New York’s Grand Central Station, indicating that they also may have considered an attack there. Handmade drawings and other “highly specialized technical information” about the station were found on a computer disk seized from the home of one of the suspects.⁸

The Madrid and London bombings have demonstrated that radical Islamic terrorists have developed extensive support networks inside major

6. This is a point made powerfully by the British Prime Minister in a July 16, 2005, speech; see “Full Text: Blair Speech on Terror,” BBC News, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4689363.stm.

7. Renwick McLean, “Spain Arrested More Than 130 Suspects in Islamic Terrorism in ‘04,” *The New York Times*, January 6, 2005, p. A6.

8. Reuters, “Madrid Train Bombers Also Targeted New York,” March 2, 2005.

European cities. Al-Qaeda-style attacks are increasingly likely in Europe, which has become a critical front in the global war on terrorism.

The al-Qaeda Threat

After being dislodged from its bases in Afghanistan in late 2001 and intensively hunted in many countries, Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization has dispersed, with many of its top leaders believed to be hiding along the Afghanistan-Pakistani border or in Pakistani cities. As fugitives deprived of the state support from Afghanistan's Taliban regime, which has also been forced into exile, bin Laden and his top lieutenants have undoubtedly found it more difficult to communicate, recruit new cadres, raise funds, train terrorists, and organize attacks. As a result, al-Qaeda has increasingly devolved from a distinct terrorist organization into a loose coalition of like-minded Islamic extremist groups.

Bin Laden has always functioned more as al-Qaeda's chief financier, propagandist, and ideological theorist than as its operational commander.⁹ He acted more as a "chairman of the board" than as a "chief executive officer." However, maintaining his own personal security has required him to isolate himself from his followers as much as possible and is believed to have diluted his ability to lead the organization on a daily basis. In one of his most recent videotapes, he sought to appear as an elder statesman sitting behind a desk rather than as a guerrilla commander in combat fatigues, clutching a weapon.

The worldwide manhunt for terrorists has fragmented the al-Qaeda core group and led to the development of local franchises that often act autonomously. Groups loosely affiliated with al-Qaeda have taken the initiative to launch attacks, sometimes acting in its name.

Bin Laden also has absorbed other groups into al-Qaeda. For example, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian terrorist who led a terrorist network that sometimes competed with al-Qaeda in fundraising,

has been brought under the al-Qaeda umbrella to lead al-Qaeda operations in Iraq. Despite continuing ideological differences, particularly over Zarqawi's fanatical hatred of Shiites, bin Laden may have decided to merge with Zarqawi's group to strengthen the al-Qaeda "brand name" in Iraq, which has emerged as the bloodiest theater in the global war against terrorism.

Given the use of sophisticated explosives and reports of contacts with Pakistani Islamic radicals affiliated with al-Qaeda, it is likely that the London terrorists were given logistical support by the al-Qaeda core group. In this respect, the London bombings may bear a resemblance to the first World Trade Center bombing in New York in February 1993. In that attack, the local ring of amateur terrorists that did most of the dirty work was guided by Ramzi Yousef, a dedicated professional terrorist who was dispatched from al-Qaeda to oversee the operation.

Future al-Qaeda attacks in Europe will likely resemble the conventional bombings of Madrid and London more than a complex 9/11-type terrorist spectacular. Al-Qaeda's local cells probably do not have the resources to mount such a massive attack without being detected. What remains of the al-Qaeda core group is probably saving its best punch for the United States, its self-declared chief enemy.

Islamic Extremism in Britain

The scale and complexity of the problem involving young Islamic extremists in Britain was highlighted in a recently leaked British Foreign Office/Home Office study.¹⁰ Terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda have found a fertile recruiting ground in the U.K., where half of Muslims are under the age of 25 and where there is widespread Muslim opposition to the U.S.-British-led war on terrorism.

The report revealed that extremist groups are secretly recruiting well-educated affluent Muslims from British universities, in addition to impoverished, underachieving Muslims through mosques and prisons. The recruits are driven by "anger" over

9. See James A. Phillips, "Defusing Terrorism at Ground Zero: Why a New U.S. Policy Is Needed for Afghanistan," Heritage Foundation *Background* No. 1383, July 12, 2000, at www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/bg1383.cfm.

British foreign policy in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine as well as “alienation” from British society and “disillusionment with ‘sell out’ mainstream Muslim organizations.” According to the report:

[Terrorist recruits in the U.K.] range from foreign nationals now naturalized and resident in the U.K. arriving mainly from North Africa and the Middle East, to second and third generation British citizens whose forebears mainly originate from Pakistan and Kashmir. In addition, whilst many have grown up in Muslim households, a significant number come from liberal, non-religious Muslim backgrounds, or only converted to Islam in adulthood. These converts include white British nationals and those of West Indian extraction. By and large most young extremists fall into one of two groups: well educated undergraduates or with degrees and technical qualifications in engineering or IT; or under-achievers with few or no qualifications, and often a criminal background.¹¹

The British government study concludes that “intelligence indicates that the number of British Muslims actively engaged in terrorist activity, whether at home or abroad, or supporting such activity is extremely small and estimated at less than 1%.” This translates into potentially 16,000 British Muslims out of a total population of 1.6 million. An estimated 10,000 U.K. Muslims attended an extremist conference in 2003.

The study cites a series of polls of British Muslim opinion on foreign policy issues that raise considerable cause for concern regarding the loyalties of some U.K. Muslims in the global war on terrorism. While the vast majority of British Muslims condemned the 9/11 attacks, 15 percent supported them in a November 2001 BBC poll. In the same poll, 80 percent believed that military action against Afghanistan was unjustified, and 24 percent approved of “British Muslims going to fight America and its allies in Afghanistan.”¹²

Another BBC poll, in December 2002, showed that 44 percent of Muslims thought that further attacks by al-Qaeda were “justified on grounds that Muslims are being killed by America and its allies using American weapons,” and 56 percent of respondents stated that the U.S. and its allies were “unjustified in blaming Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda groups for the attacks in America on September 11.” Seventy percent of respondents disagreed with the view that “the war on terror is not a war against Islam,” and 26 percent of those polled did not “feel very or fairly loyal/patriotic towards Britain.”¹³

Strengthening British Anti-Terrorism Measures

According to Sir John Stevens, former chief of the Metropolitan Police, “up to 3,000 British-born or British-based people have passed through Osama bin Laden’s training camps.”¹⁴ This astonishing statistic demonstrates the gravity of the problem facing Britain’s security services in combating homegrown terrorism.

10. Sir Andrew Turnbull, Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service, “Relations with the Muslim Community,” memo to John Gieve, Home Office, April 6, 2004, at www.times-archive.co.uk/onlinespecials/cabinet1.pdf, www.times-archive.co.uk/onlinespecials/cabinet2.pdf, www.times-archive.co.uk/onlinespecials/cabinet3.pdf, and www.times-archive.co.uk/onlinespecials/cabinet4.pdf (July 15, 2005). See also Robert Winnett and David Leppard, “Leaked No. 10 Dossier Reveals al-Qaeda’s British Recruits,” *The Sunday Times*, July 10, 2005, at www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-1688261,00.html (July 15, 2005).
11. Turnbull, “Relations with the Muslim Community,” p. 11.
12. ICM Research and BBC Radio 4, Muslims Poll, November 2001, at www.icmresearch.co.uk/reviews/2001/today-muslims-poll-nov-2001.htm (July 15, 2005).
13. ICM Research and BBC Radio 4, Muslims Poll, December 2002, at www.icmresearch.co.uk/reviews/2002/bbc-today-muslims-dec-02.htm (July 15, 2005).
14. Sir John Stevens, quoted in “Home-Grown Bombers ‘Behind London Attacks,’” Press Association, July 10, 2005.

Britain's existing anti-terrorism laws are among the strongest in Europe, but they clearly need to be strengthened following the London terrorist attacks. There are two main pieces of anti-terrorism legislation on the British statute books: the Terrorism Act of 2000¹⁵ and the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001, which was amended in 2005.¹⁶ Over 700 suspected terrorists have been arrested in the U.K. since September 11, 2001, of which just 119 were charged. Just 17 terrorist suspects were convicted under the Terrorism Act between 2001 and 2005, of which only three were Islamic militants.¹⁷

The British government should withdraw from any provision of the European Convention on Human Rights that acts as a barrier to British national security and should strongly consider pulling out of the Convention altogether. The Convention was introduced into British law by the Blair government through the Human Rights Act of 1998. As former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wrote in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States:

The basic principle has to be re-established that where national security is deemed to be at stake the government of the day should have the power to act swiftly to protect it. At the very minimum, the provisions of the Human Rights Act should be formally excluded from applying to detention, deportation and asylum cases where the national interest is involved.¹⁸

The London bombings highlight the need for greater powers of detention regarding terrorist suspects. The U.K. should enact legislation that permits the indefinite preventive detention of suspected terrorists in secure prison facilities. House arrest provisions and "control orders" such as curfews and tagging are simply not powerful enough to deter terrorists from operating. In order to ensure a fair system of checks and balances, the cases of individual terrorist suspects should be subject to periodic review by British (not European) courts.¹⁹

Several measures pioneered in the highly successful USA PATRIOT Act²⁰ should be implemented by the British government, including an increase of surveillance powers for British police and a crackdown on charities with links to terrorist organizations. There should be a far greater degree of coordination between U.S. and British authorities in counterterrorist measures, and the Blair government should show a greater willingness to extradite terrorism suspects wanted for trial in the United States and other allied countries.

Britain must also tighten its liberal asylum policy, which has allowed large numbers of Islamic militants to find safe haven in Britain. Foreign Islamic clerics who preach sedition against the British state and back terrorism should be prosecuted and deported, and their support networks should be completely dismantled. Britain's mosques must be reclaimed by moderate Muslims and not be allowed to operate as centers of hatred.

The British government should apply a policy of zero tolerance toward Islamic extremists and

15. United Kingdom Home Office, "Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT)," at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorism/govprotect/legislation/tact.html (July 15, 2005).

16. United Kingdom Home Office, "Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCSA)—Part 4 Powers," at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorism/govprotect/legislation/atcsa.html (July 15, 2005).

17. "Hundreds Arrested, Few Convicted," BBC News, March 11, 2005, at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3290383.stm (July 15, 2005).

18. Margaret Thatcher, *Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World* (London: HarperCollins, 2002), pp. 277–278.

19. For analysis of the issue of detaining terrorist suspects, see Paul Rosenzweig and James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., "Preventive Detention and Actionable Intelligence," Heritage Foundation *Legal Memorandum* No. 13, September 16, 2004, at www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandDefense/lm13.cfm.

20. For an in-depth summary of the provisions of the PATRIOT Act, see Paul Rosenzweig, Alane Kochems, and James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., eds., *The Patriot Act Reader*, Heritage Foundation *Special Report* No. 1, September 20, 2004, at www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandDefense/The-Patriot-Act-Reader.cfm.

immediately condemn extreme statements from religious leaders in the U.K. It should also bar entry to Britain by anyone who has ties to any terrorist organization, has supported or funded any terrorist group, or has made public statements supporting terrorism. British politicians should be careful not to confer respectability on Islamic academics and theologians who have backed suicide bombing and other forms of terrorism.

A Greater Commitment from Europe to the War on Terrorism

The U.S. and the U.K. should jointly pressure European Union (EU) member states to adopt effective anti-terrorism measures. The attacks in Madrid, Istanbul, and now London demonstrate that no European country is immune to the threat of Islamic terrorism.

Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, has already called on EU finance ministers to act immediately to freeze terrorist assets in their home countries, to tighten rules on money laundering and wire transfers of money, and to prevent abuse of charities by terrorists.²¹ The British government should also strongly back calls for European countries to share information on air passengers with the United States in an effort to prevent infiltration of U.S. borders by European-based terrorists.

The U.S. and U.K. should call on Europe to play a more proactive role internationally in the global war on terrorism. Powerful domestic anti-terrorism measures must be combined with a commitment to fighting al-Qaeda in all its theaters of operation, including Iraq and Afghanistan. The European Union, instead of appeasing international terrorist groups, must isolate organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah.

European governments should place a higher priority on disrupting and dismantling local networks that support terrorists. Western governments must take a more proactive approach to monitor, infiltrate, and dismantle not only the ter-

rorist groups, but also the logistical, financial, and ideological networks that support them. Britain has allowed a motley collection of foreign Islamic radicals to gain sanctuary in Britain. Some may have naively hoped that this would afford them immunity from attack, but the foreign exiles have played a dangerous role in radicalizing Britain's Muslim citizens.

The United States made a similar mistake when it gave sanctuary to Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the blind cleric who was the "spiritual guide" of the 1993 World Trade Center bombers, even though he was wanted by the Egyptian government for advocating terrorism. After 9/11, the Bush Administration became more energetic in investigating and cracking down on Islamist groups such as Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which had established fundraising operations inside the United States. This averted the danger that fundraising cells might evolve into full-fledged terrorist cells. It also may have hindered al-Qaeda's operations by depriving it of possible allies. Individual Islamic radicals often have links to more than one group.

The U.S. and its European allies should also focus on rooting out criminal networks that often overlap with Islamic extremist networks. For example, Islamic terrorist groups often have links with groups that smuggle drugs, arms, or illegal immigrants. The Madrid bombers had ties to a ring of petty criminals that smuggled drugs. The Hezbollah terrorist group finances itself in part by smuggling drugs out of Lebanon. It also has profited from smuggling cigarettes in America. In July 2000, FBI agents broke up a cigarette smuggling ring that trucked contraband from North Carolina to Detroit, with at least some of the profits funneled to Hezbollah. Other cigarette smugglers in the United States have been linked to Hamas and al-Qaeda.

International cooperation in intelligence and police matters is paramount because of the transnational nature of modern terrorist networks. However, European governments cannot afford to treat the London attacks and other attacks on European

21. "UK Urges Terrorist Asset Seizure," BBC News Online, July 12, 2005, at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4673975.stm (July 15, 2005). See also "EU Fight Against Terrorism Set to Focus on Intelligence Sharing," *Financial Times*, July 13, 2005.

soil as merely a law enforcement issue. Transnational terrorism is a strategic security threat. Law enforcement authorities can act only after a crime has been committed or after they receive detailed knowledge that a group is conspiring to commit a crime. A law enforcement approach that focuses on individual criminals leaves the terrorist networks in place, capable of inflicting further massacres. A more assertive approach is needed to identify and root out networks before they become a lethal threat. The Italian government appears to be taking this approach. After the London bombings, it cracked down on Islamic extremists, arresting 142 and expelling 52 illegal immigrants.

The British and U.S. Commitment to Iraq

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari recently warned against an early withdrawal of U.S. and British forces from Iraq, declaring that the country would descend into “hell” if this were implemented.²² Zebari is absolutely right: The implications for the future of Iraq would be disastrous, and a withdrawal would also be viewed across the Arab world as a cataclysmic defeat for the West and an immense victory for Zarqawi and his murderous cohorts.

Zarqawi seeks to establish Iraq as a base for exporting terrorism to Western nations and the Middle East.²³ If the insurgents triumph in Iraq, al-Qaeda will attract more recruits and funds, and a victory will embolden it for future attacks, just as the Taliban victory in Afghanistan greatly strengthened radical Islamists allied to the Taliban.

Fortunately, Tony Blair is no Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and is unlikely to yield to calls to withdraw British troops. The Zapatero regime’s decision to withdraw Spanish forces from Iraq after the Madrid bombings was an appalling capitulation to terrorism and sent the wrong message to al-

Qaeda—that the West is weak and will capitulate under pressure. Spain’s appeasement of the terrorists emboldened those who are intent on destroying the transatlantic alliance and helped to sow the seeds of the bombings in London.

Britain’s Defense Cuts and the Undermining of British Power

In an increasingly dangerous world, Britain must bear a greater load of the burden borne by the United States in the war on terrorism. As recent events have shown, this is as much Britain’s war as it is America’s. The planned U.K. defense cuts should be reversed because they will seriously hamper Britain’s ability to deploy large numbers of troops at short notice to battlefields across the globe. Britain has the world’s second most powerful military in terms of global force projection, but the planned defense cuts will greatly undermine its ability to fight effectively alongside the United States.

The Blair government’s decision to axe 15,000 military personnel is a huge strategic error of judgment that will weaken the British war machine. The Royal Air Force will lose a fifth of its 53,000 personnel, as well as five bases and four frontline squadrons. The Royal Navy will be reduced by six surface ships, making it smaller than the French navy for the first time in 200 years. The British Army will lose four of its most famous regiments, including the illustrious Black Watch, which has played a major role in British operations in Iraq.²⁴

With defense spending falling to a historical low of just 2.6 percent of gross domestic product, Britain is already extremely overstretched militarily, with its forces spread thinly across the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. With these cuts, it would be a struggle for Britain to embark upon another operation like the Iraq War, which involved 45,000 Brit-

22. See Patrick Coburn, “Iraqi Minister Says Troop Pull-Out Would ‘Take Country into Hell,’” *The Independent*, July 12, 2005, at news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article298523.ece (July 15, 2005).

23. Porter Goss, “Global Challenges 2005: Meeting Long-Term Challenges with a Long-Term Strategy,” testimony before the Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. Senate, February 16, 2005.

24. For background on the British defense cuts, see “Brown Demands 2.6 billion MoD Savings a Year in Exchange for His Cash Pledge,” *The Daily Telegraph*, July 19, 2005; “Britain’s Defence Sums Don’t Add Up,” *The Economist*, July 24, 2004; and “Britain Spends Too Little on Its Forces,” *The Daily Telegraph*, August 23, 2004.

ish troops, or another Falklands War.

Implications of the London Bombings for U.S. Homeland Security

The U.S. government should allocate homeland security funds to defend against the most likely terrorist threats and the most lethal. Although urban mass transit systems may need more investment in security systems, the United States and its allies cannot afford to be stampeded into a heavy investment in transportation security measures that terrorists can defeat relatively easily. Protecting all passengers on public transit systems everywhere is simply impossible. Funds should be allocated to protecting the most likely targets in major cities such as Washington and New York, not disbursed across America according to politically motivated pork-barrel considerations.

The federal government's first priority should be to stop terrorists before they can attack, through proactive counterterrorism measures based on vigilant intelligence and early warning. Another top priority should be to prepare for catastrophic terrorism. State and local governments should take the lead in protecting critical infrastructure and responding to local attacks.²⁵

Anti-terrorism security measures should also be assigned priorities according to the likelihood of the terrorist threat, the potential costs of a possible terrorist attack on a given target, and the opportunity costs of protecting a given target at the expense of protecting other possible targets. The U.S. government must be proactive and consider al-Qaeda's most likely future threats and not merely react to its past attacks. Al-Qaeda is imaginative and adaptive. When its first attempt to destroy the World Trade Center failed and security against truck bombs was increased, it used airplanes as guided missiles to defeat ground-based security.

Al-Qaeda and many of its affiliates choose targets that are laden with symbolism, exact considerable economic damage, and inflict maximum casualties. Because many of its attacks are aimed to inspire the

radical Muslim audience as much as to terrify the targeted civilian audience, it favors targets that provide dramatic television or video footage that it can then use to recruit additional followers.

Although protecting mass transit facilities is important, protecting a wide range of other possible targets is even more important. The highest priority should be to protect America's elected leaders in the White House and the Capitol. Al-Qaeda has already targeted them and is sure to try again. Al-Qaeda has also put a high priority on political assassinations, including unsuccessful attempts to kill U.S. President Bill Clinton and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. Military leaders are also likely targets, as is the Pentagon, which could be attacked again.

Bin Laden has a long record of trying to obtain chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological weapons of mass destruction. The Department of Homeland Security must therefore assign a high priority to detecting, defending against, and dealing with the aftereffects of such weapons, particularly a "dirty" bomb, which uses a conventional blast to disperse radioactive materials. Such a weapon could inflict immense economic damage if detonated in a major city.

Al-Qaeda could also turn chemical facilities or trains carrying lethal chemicals into weapons of mass destruction that would threaten a large number of people downwind from any explosion. Nuclear power plants, reprocessing facilities, and the electrical power grid also are tempting targets. The bombing or incineration of oil, gas, and liquefied natural gas facilities would impose a cascade of economic costs on the petroleum-dependent U.S. economy and provide televised infernos that would terrorize Americans and inspire young impressionable Muslim radicals, who will make up al-Qaeda's next generation of terrorists.

While the London and Madrid bombings have raised Americans' awareness of the potential vulnerabilities of transportation facilities inside the United States, the threats mentioned above are

25. See Alane Kochems, "Who's on First? A Strategy for Protecting Critical Infrastructure," Heritage Foundation *Background* No. 1851, May 9, 2005, at www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandDefense/bg1851.cfm.

even more acute and deserve greater attention.

What the U.K. and the U.S. Should Do

In response to the London bombings, the British government should:

- **Strengthen British anti-terrorism laws.** British anti-terrorism legislation must be strengthened to prevent further attacks on the scale of the London bombings. Greater powers should be given to British authorities to detain suspected terrorists, and the U.K. should immediately withdraw from provisions in the European Convention on Human Rights that might act as a barrier to effective anti-terrorism measures. The British government should strongly consider implementing counterterrorist laws pioneered by the United States in the PATRIOT Act.
- **Follow a policy of zero tolerance for Islamic extremism.** Britain is and always will be one of the world's most open and tolerant societies. However, it must no longer tolerate the Islamic militancy in its midst, which seeks to destroy British society and impose a Muslim state. Foreign Islamic radicals who preach hatred and violence in the U.K. should be arrested and deported. Every effort must be made to energize Muslim community leaders in Britain to work actively against the extremists in their midst. British politicians must also immediately denounce and act against inflammatory statements by Muslim extremists.
- **Reverse Britain's defense cuts.** Britain remains the world's second most powerful military power in terms of global force projection, but the planned defense cuts will greatly undermine its ability to fight effectively alongside the United States. The London bombings and the continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan underline the need for the U.K. to increase the size of its military rather than reduce it. Expenditures on Britain's armed forces must rise in correlation with the rising threats to national and international security.

The governments of the United States and the

United Kingdom should jointly:

- **Coordinate London and Washington's Anti-Terrorist Lists.** There is a striking discrepancy between the U.S. and U.K. lists of international terrorist organizations. (See Appendix 1.) The U.K. list omits over 15 organizations classified as terrorist groups by the U.S. Department of State. Washington and London should carefully coordinate their lists of proscribed groups and present a united position in the global war on terrorism.
- **Stay the course in Iraq.** The terrorist attacks in London must increase the resolve of both the U.S. and the U.K. to win the war against the al-Qaeda-backed insurgency in Iraq. Iraq has become a central front in the war on terrorism. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his terrorists must be eliminated. A clear message must be sent to al-Qaeda operatives that they will be fought and destroyed in Iraq. The defeat of al-Zarqawi and his army of suicide bombers and jihadists must become a top priority for Downing Street.
- **Press Pakistan to root out Islamic extremist groups.** The trail of the London bombing conspiracy leads to Pakistan. Pakistani security officials told *The Times* that three of the London bombers met known al-Qaeda suspects during their trip to Pakistan.²⁶ They apparently spent most of their time in the company of figures from outlawed Pakistani militant groups. Shehzad Tanweer reportedly spent several months at a *madrass* (Islamic religious school) in Pakistan run by Lashkar-i-Taiba, an Islamic extremist group affiliated with al-Qaeda that ostensibly was outlawed in 2002. Although Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's government has adopted a tough rhetorical stance against such Islamic militant groups, it has in practice turned a blind eye to many of their activities because it seeks to preserve them as useful allies against India. In the aftermath of the London bombings, Musharraf has ordered a crackdown on Islamic extremists, but the Pakistani government has eased

26. Simon Freeman, "Bombers Traveled Around Pakistan for Three Months," *Times Online*, July 18, 2005.

up on such groups after past crackdowns.

Washington and London should escalate pressure on the Pakistani government to follow through on its promises to combat and permanently dismantle Islamic extremist groups, especially those linked to al-Qaeda. If Pakistan continues to undermine Western security by permitting its Islamic radicals to recruit and train Western Muslims as terrorists, London and Washington should halt foreign aid to Pakistan²⁷ and seek to block any future loans from international economic institutions to Pakistan.

- **Take the war to the terrorists.** The war against al-Qaeda must be waged militarily as well as through intelligence and police operations. Whoever has harbored, funded, aided, or abetted the London bombers must be held to account. If any state played a role in these attacks, there must be consequences. Special-forces operations, strategic air strikes, and the targeted elimination of terrorist leaders must all be on the table, in addition to a meticulous hunt for al-Qaeda sleeper cells operating in London and other major cities across Europe. No quarter should be given to those who have murdered innocent civilians.

Conclusion

The terrorists responsible for the London bomb attacks will not succeed in changing British policy in the war on terrorism. If anything, the attacks will increase the determination of the British government to stay the course in Iraq and may result in an expansion of British military operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

In Britain's hour of need, the United States will stand shoulder to shoulder with her British allies, who are bloodied but unbowed. This latest terrorist attack will succeed only in bringing the British and American people closer together. The terrorist attacks will strengthen Anglo-American resolve. Great Britain, like America, is a great warrior nation that will always respond aggressively to national security threats and the murder of its citizens. This is an epic confrontation between civilization and the barbaric forces that wish to destroy it.

The U.S.–British alliance is a strikingly successful partnership of two great powers built on the solid foundations of a common heritage, culture, and vision. The two nations have fought alongside each other in seven major wars in the past 90 years, from World War I to the Iraq war. The war on terrorism is a global conflict that may last for decades, but it will be won by the two nations that stand at the forefront of defending freedom and liberty on the world stage.

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27. The United States gave \$400 million in grant assistance to Pakistan in 2004. The Bush Administration is committed to giving a further \$3 billion in aid to Pakistan over the next five years (\$600 million a year). "U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Pakistan," speech by Nancy J. Powell, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Lahore, August 20, 2004, at www.state.gov/p/psa/rls/rm/35681.htm. The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) expects to spend over \$400 million in development assistance in Pakistan over the next three years. See U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Country Profile, Pakistan: UK Development Assistance," at www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1019041564003.

Appendix 1

Terrorist Organizations	U.K. List*	U.S. List
Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)	×	×
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	×	×
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade		×
Al-Gama'at al-Islamiya (GI)	×	×
Al-Qaeda	×	×
Ansar al-Islam		×
Armed Islamic Group (GIA)	×	×
Asbat al-Ansar	×	×
Babbar Khalsa (BK)	×	
Aum Shinrikyo		×
Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)	×	×
Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP)		×
Continuity Irish Republican Army	*	×
Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ)	×	×
Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)		×
Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassem Brigades	×	×
Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM)	×	×
Hizballah External Security Organization	×	×
International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF)	×	
Islamic Army of Aden (IAA)	×	
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)	×	×
Jaish e Mohammed (JeM)	×	×
Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad		×
Jeemah Islamiyah (JI)	×	×
Kahane Chai (Kach)		×
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	×	×
Lashkar i Tayyaba (LT)	×	×
Lashkar i Jhangvi		×
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)	×	×
Mujahedin e Khalq (MeK)	×	×
National Liberation Army (ELN)		×
Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)	×	×
Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)		×
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)		×
PFLP General Command (PFLP-GC)		×
Real IRA	*	×
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)		×
Revolutionary Nuclei (Formerly ELA)		×
Revolutionary Organization 17 November (N17)	×	×
Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C)	×	×
Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC)	×	×
Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso, SL)		×
United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC)		×

* The British Home Office also lists 14 proscribed Irish groups: Continuity Army Council, Cumann na mBan, Fianna na hEireann, Irish National Liberation Army, Irish People's Liberation Organisation, Irish Republican Army, Loyalist Volunteer Force, Orange Volunteers, Red Hand Commando, Red Hand Defenders, Saor Eire, Ulster Defence Association, Ulster Freedom Fighters, and Ulster Volunteer Force.

Sources: United Kingdom Home Office, "Terrorist Groups," at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorism/threat/groups/index.html (July 19, 2005), and U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," fact sheet, updated October 19, 2004, at usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2004/Oct/19-666897.html (July 19, 2005).