

Do Terrorists "Win" Elections?

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A bomb blast in Spain, just before the country's election, destroyed several commuter trains, killing hundreds and wounding thousands. Three days later, Spanish voters turned out the conservative Popular Party and Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, inserting the Spanish Socialist Party leader Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero as Aznar's replacement.

Several months later, a cryptic message was delivered to the offices of al-Jazeera in Pakistan. Within hours, American audiences were watching Osama bin Laden's videotape. An initial poll from *Newsweek* magazine claimed that incumbent President George W. Bush jumped to a six-point lead as a result of the reaction to al-Qaeda's message. A few days later, President Bush and the Republicans prevailed over the challenger, Senator John F. Kerry from Massachusetts.

In both these cases, the media claimed that terrorists determined the outcome of the elections, an opinion that is commonly held.¹ If this opinion is true, it implies that terrorists have power over the fundamental workings of democracy. But is the opinion true? Did the terrorists in fact win at the ballot box in 2004? To answer this question, I analyzed survey results from before and after the votes were cast, as well as relevant material from the literature and results from focus groups. The analysis shows that the terrorists did little, if anything, to change the outcome of either election.

THE COMMUTER TRAIN BOMBINGS IN SPAIN

On March, 11, 2004, roughly 200 people were killed and 1,500 were wounded in bomb attacks on Spanish commuter trains. The attack took place just three days before the election.² This case is often used by the media as a textbook example of how terrorists influence elections.³ The incumbent party, the conservative Popular Party, was defeated at the polls.⁴ Given this center-right coalition's support for Operation Iraqi Freedom, knocking Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar from power and the subsequent Spanish withdrawal from Iraqi was counted as an al-Qaeda victory.⁵

Such a simple cause-and-effect analysis is questionable. A post-electoral survey of Spaniards by *El País* revealed that 70 percent of the people did not feel the 3/11 attacks influenced their vote choice.⁶ In the same survey, 86 percent of respondents felt that the terror attacks *had* influenced the rest of the electorate. Clearly the commuter train bombings did not sway the average Spanish voter. Nevertheless, voters themselves felt it influenced "somebody else," feeding into the myth that terrorists altered the outcome at the ballot box, despite the absence of evidence in this case. Moreover, the terror strikes did not *create* anti-Iraq war feelings in Spain; those attitudes were present long before the train bombings. "Had this vote been held a year ago, the outcome would have been similar – polls

last March found that as much as 90 percent of Spanish voters opposed their government's support for the war in Iraq."⁷

If there was a reaction among voters to the bombings on 3/11, it appears to have been a reaction to the government's attempt to pin the blame for the attack on ETA, a Basque separatist group, "despite evidence pointing to radical Islamists, ETA denials, and al-Qaeda claims of responsibility."⁸ Since an ETA attack "would likely have swelled support for the ruling party and its hard line on the separatists,"⁹ the government's claim of ETA responsibility looked like a cynical attempt to take advantage of the attacks.

Furthermore, claiming the attack was a victory for terrorists assumes we know what the terrorists intended the attack to accomplish. Was the goal of the attack to make Spain withdraw from Iraq, knock Spain from the war on terrorism, or reestablish the Islamic foothold in Europe from pre-1492?¹⁰ Attacks continued after the new prime minister promised to withdraw from Iraq,¹¹ implying that the terrorists had interests other than the election. If they intended the attack to get Spain out of the war on terrorism, then the attack failed since Zapatero promised to continue to wage the war on terrorism.

Such evidence lead Ingrid Van Biezen to conclude that "to interpret the election result as a victory for terrorism, as some observers could not resist, and to insinuate that voters who supported the Socialists somehow showed a reluctance decisively to reject terrorism, would be grossly unfair."¹²

THE CASE OF THE OSAMA BIN LADEN VIDEOTAPE

In America, the claim that Osama bin Laden's video affected the outcome of the 2004 election is part of a larger media obsession with the concept of an "October Surprise," or an event occurring in the waning moments of the election which could help one side prevail.¹³ The term became part of the media lexicon during the 1980 election, when accusations were made that Republicans attempted to keep the American hostages in Iran a little longer in order to bring down the Carter Administration. Since then, several events have been deemed "October Surprises."

Despite the media fascination with October Surprises, the evidence for such events is thin. Though several books and op-ed articles have been written about the 1980 case (including one by Carter's national security aide Gary Sick), a bipartisan panel of members from the House of Representatives found no evidence for such an event, even after hundreds of interviews.¹⁴ The panel, led by Indiana Democrat Lee Hamilton and Illinois Republican Henry Hyde, wrote, "there is no credible evidence supporting any attempt or proposal to attempt by the Reagan Presidential campaign, or persons representing or associated with the campaign to delay the release of the American hostages in Iran."¹⁵ Other October Surprises include the decision of Iran-Contra Independent Counsel Lawrence E. Walsh to indict former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger for lying during the investigation for his role in the transfer of U.S. arms to Iran four days before the 1992 election.¹⁶ Yet a closer analysis of the poll numbers shows that the indictment had little impact upon the 1992 election. Voters did not list it as

important. Furthermore, there is evidence that the independent counsel did not try to target President George H. W. Bush with the probe and even scheduled questioning so as not to embarrass the incumbent.¹⁷

Despite scant supporting evidence for October surprises, when Osama bin Laden released a video shortly before the 2004 election in the U.S., the press pounced on the pre-recorded message as yet another October Surprise. The bin Laden videotape was delivered to the Pakistani offices of Al-Jazeera on Friday, October 29, 2004, according to bureau chief Ahmad Muaffaq Zaidan. He claimed he transmitted the tape to the headquarters in Qatar.¹⁸ Al-Jazeera broadcast an eighteen-minute segment of the tape where Osama bin Laden addressed the American public, took credit for the 9/11 attacks, and issued the famous line about America's security not being in the hands of Bush or Kerry.¹⁹

Following the broadcast of the bin Laden tape, a *Newsweek* poll found President Bush had an expanded lead over Kerry. Pundits saw bin Laden's influence in this result.²⁰ Philip Sherwell, for example, claimed "President Bush has opened a six point lead over John Kerry in the first opinion poll to include sampling taken after the new Osama bin Laden videotape was broadcast on Friday night." He added, "the *Newsweek* poll published yesterday, only three days before the presidential election, put Mr. Bush on 50 percent and Mr Kerry on 44 percent. A similar poll conducted a week earlier gave the president 48 percent to his Democratic challenger's 46 percent." Sherwell commented that "Mr. Bush may have his greatest enemy to thank for helping him secure another four years in the White House after the appearance of the video sparked a sharp final round of argument over which candidate can best defeat terrorism." He continued, "The poll's findings appear to indicate that the president is benefiting during the last days of a bitter campaign from the focus on national security and the 'war on terror.'"²¹

Once President Bush was reelected, the *Newsweek* poll was cited by news organizations in their post-election analysis. "In that close campaign, it was this video – not the Swift Boat tactics that got all the ink – that made the difference. John Kerry, who led in several polls that weekend, saw his margin melt away," *Newsweek's* Jonathan Alter wrote.²² The group Media Matters also mentioned the *Newsweek* poll, claiming that bin Laden provided the tape to help Bush.²³ The *Huffington Post's* Scott Payne claimed that the bin Laden videotape "hurt Kerry."²⁴ Additionally, Senator John Kerry claimed that the videotape cost him the election.²⁵

There are several problems with such claims however. First, in reaching their judgment that bin Laden changed the outcome of the 2004 election, commentators focused only upon the pair of *Newsweek* polls. A different picture emerges if we look at other polling. Second, while there was no evidence that the *Newsweek* poll was flawed in itself, its application to the Osama bin Laden videotape was. After all, this *Newsweek* poll was taken between October 27 and 29. The videotape was only made available on the last day of the poll and late in the day at that. The ability of this poll to assess the mood of the public on the subject of the notorious videotape is clearly questionable and does not offer much support for the claim that bin Laden changed the election.

Neither does other polling. This is evident if we look at polling both before and after the broadcast of the bin Laden tape (see Table 1). In thirteen polls taken from October 14 to just before October 22, the average lead for President Bush was 3.1 points. In four of these polls, the incumbent had support of 50 percent or more. In seven polls taken between October 21 and October 29, President Bush's average lead was 3.8 percent. In six polls taken after the evening of October 29, when the bin Laden videotape appeared, the average lead for President Bush had shrunk to 1.02 points. One of these polls, the Harris poll from November 2, found the race to be "virtually tied" and reported that Kerry had been making gains over the course of the past few days. The final margin of victory for the incumbent was roughly 1.4 percent. Of course, we are only talking about very small percentages, many within the margin of error, but comparing "before" and "after" polling suggests that if the videotape did anything, it hurt Bush and helped Kerry.

Other polling data also suggests that the bin Laden videotape did not give Bush the election. For example, of those queried for an NBC/*Wall Street Journal*(*WSJ*) poll taken after the videotape was released, 24 percent said the videotape made them more inclined to support President Bush. Another 12 percent said the videotape made them more likely to support Senator Kerry, while the remaining 62 percent claimed it had no effect on their vote. On the one hand, twice as many respondents said the videotape made them more supportive of President Bush. On the other hand, nearly two-thirds of those surveyed claimed such a factor did not matter to them. Furthermore, there was no evidence of a general "bounce" from the NBC/*WSJ* poll on overall candidate preferences. The pre-videotape poll showed Bush and Kerry tied at 48% (in general preferences). After the tape was released, Bush only improved his standing by one percentage point.²⁶ A possible interpretation of these numbers is that the videotape did not determine preferences so much as reinforce existing ones.

Other polls indicated little or no change on the terrorism issue, despite the presence of the bin Laden videotape. In a November 1, 2008 *GW/Battleground* poll, President Bush sported a 56 percent to 37 percent lead over Kerry on the issue of who was better at "safeguarding America from a terrorist threat."²⁷ When asked about this issue before the videotape, the results also showed Bush ahead at 56 percent to 36 percent. These polls suggest that the terrorism issue barely changed over the course of the fall campaign.²⁸

According to a CBS/*NY Times* poll taken after the broadcast of the tape, the number fearing an attack doubled from the poll taken before the tape. Yet there was no indication in this poll about which candidate benefited from the fear that an attack was more imminent.²⁹ However, a CNN 2004 election exit poll (displayed in Table 2) shows that Senator Kerry won a small majority of those who claimed to be "very worried" about a terrorist attack, while losing among those who claimed they were only partially worried, or unconcerned about terrorism. In the same poll, of those who felt that the bin Laden videotape was "very important" (almost one-third), 53 percent voted for Senator Kerry, while the remaining 47 percent chose President Bush, as seen in Table 3. Bush did

better among those who felt the tape of the al-Qaeda leader was either "somewhat important," "not too important," or "not at all important."³⁰

Bush did win a strong majority of those who claimed terrorism was the number one issue (see Table 4), although his support on the issue was fairly robust even before the videotape appeared. But those who said the bin Laden videotape mattered chose Kerry by a slight margin. For those most concerned about the bin Laden broadcast or an imminent terrorist attack, Senator Kerry received the most support. He also won a majority of those who made up their minds in the waning days of the campaign, after the videotape had been released (see Table 5). It seems likely that the ones who felt confident that Bush had adequately protected them were not intimidated by the video and voted Republican in 2004.

In any event, it seems clear that the videotape did not "scare" Americans into voting for President Bush as the media has implied.

CONCLUSION

Despite the absence of evidence that al-Qaeda successfully manipulated an election in Spain and the United States, the media was on full-alert for a new attack or bin Laden message before the 2006 and 2008 elections. Mark Hosenball of *Newsweek* claimed "a message before Election Day wouldn't be surprising."³¹ In October of 2008, Steve Kornacki wrote "it's probably time to start thinking about an October Surprise," citing the possibility of another Osama bin Laden video.³² Eli Lake, reminding readers of the videotape of 2004 and the Madrid train bombings, reported, "In later messages, al-Qaeda's leader claimed credit for helping elect Mr. Bush in 2004."³³ Jonathan Alter proclaimed "something is going to happen. My money is on Osama bin Laden popping back up with a hate video, just as he did the weekend before the 2004 election."³⁴ Justin Raimondo of the website antiwar.com wrote, "Who would really be all that surprised by an October Surprise?"³⁵ Yet the real surprise was that nothing happened before either election.

There are two possible explanations for the lack of an attack. Perhaps an attack was planned, but not carried out due to improved security measures. Another possibility is that terrorists were unable to see any major changes in the proposed policies of leaders from the major political parties after the Madrid bombing or the bin Laden videotape. Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero may have pulled troops from Iraq, but he remained committed to the NATO mission in Afghanistan. President Obama has adopted a similar strategy, effecting a draw-down in Iraq while bolstering the effort in Afghanistan. In other words, terrorists do not appear to be gaining any special advantage for attacking or threatening attack prior to elections.

The only effect that al-Qaeda seems to produce with pre-election activities is the media's fascination with the terrorists' supposed ability to "control foreign elections." As Tony Karon, Raj Chari, Ingrid Van Biezen, and this article have shown,³⁶ at least in the cases of Spain and the United States in 2004 the terrorists have not yet demonstrated this ability.

Table 1: Polls Before and After the Osama bin Laden Videotape

RCP Average	FINAL	50.0%	48.5%	1.0%	Bush +1.5
RCP Average	10/27 - 11/1	48.9%	47.4%	0.9%	Bush +1.5
<u>Marist (1026 LV)</u>	11/1	49%	50%	0%	Kerry +1
<u>GW/Battleground (1000 LV)</u>	10/31 - 11/1	50%	46%	0%	Bush +4
<u>TIPP (1041 LV)</u>	10/30 - 11/1	50.1%	48.0%	1.1%	Bush +2.1
<u>CBS News (939 LV)</u>	10/29 - 11/1	49%	47%	1%	Bush +2
<u>Harris (1509 LV)</u>	10/29 - 11/1	49%	48%	2%	Bush +1
<u>FOX News (1200 LV)</u>	10/30 - 10/31	46%	48%	1%	Kerry +2
<u>Reuters/Zogby (1208 LV)</u>	10/29 - 10/31	48%	47%	1%	Bush +1
<u>CNN/USA/Gallup(1573 LV)*</u>	10/29 - 10/31	49%	49%	1%	TIE
<u>NBC/WSJ (1014 LV)</u>	10/29 - 10/31	48%	47%	1%	Bush +1
<u>ABC/Wash Post (2904 LV)**</u>	10/28 - 10/31	49%	48%	0%	Bush +1
<u>ARG (1258 LV)</u>	10/28 - 10/30	48%	48%	1%	TIE
<u>CBS/NY Times (643 LV)</u>	10/28 - 10/30	49%	46%	1%	Bush +3
<u>Pew Research (1925 LV)</u>	10/27 - 10/30	51%	48%	1%	Bush +3
<u>Newsweek (882 LV)</u>	10/27 - 10/29	50%	44%	1%	Bush +6
<u>GW/Battleground (1000 LV)</u>	10/25 - 10/28	51%	46%	0%	Bush +5
<u>ICR (741 LV)</u>	10/22 - 10/26	48%	45%	2%	Bush +3
<u>CNN/USAT/Gallup (1195 LV)</u>	10/22 - 10/24	51%	46%	1%	Bush +5
<u>Los Angeles Times (881 LV)</u>	10/21 - 10/24	48%	48%	1%	TIE
<u>Newsweek (880 LV)</u>	10/21 - 10/22	48%	46%	1%	Bush +2
<u>Time (803 LV)</u>	10/19 - 10/21	51%	46%	2%	Bush +5
<u>GW/Battleground (1000 LV)</u>	10/18 - 10/21	49%	45%	1%	Bush +4
<u>AP-Ipsos (976 LV)</u>	10/18 - 10/20	46%	49%	2%	Kerry +3
<u>Marist (772 LV w/leaners)</u>	10/17 - 10/19	49%	48%	1%	Bush +1
<u>FOX News (1000 LV)</u>	10/17 - 10/18	49%	42%	2%	Bush +7
<u>Pew Research (1070 LV)</u>	10/15 - 10/19	47%	47%	1%	TIE
<u>ABC/Wash Post* (1237 LV)</u>	10/16 - 10/18	51%	46%	1%	Bush +5
<u>NBC/WSJ (LV w/leaners)</u>	10/16 - 10/18	48%	48%	1%	TIE
<u>Harris (820 LV)***</u>	10/14 - 10/17	49.5%	44.5%	1%	Bush +5
<u>CBS/NY Times (678 LV)</u>	10/14 - 10/17	47%	45%	2%	Bush +2
<u>CNN/USAT/Gallup (788 LV)</u>	10/14 - 10/16	52%	44%	1%	Bush +8
<u>Time (865 LV w/leaners)</u>	10/14 - 10/15	48%	47%	3%	Bush +1
<u>Newsweek (880 LV)</u>	10/14 - 10/15	50%	44%	1%	Bush +6

Source: RealClearPolitics, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/bush_vs_kerry.html

Table 2: Worried About Terrorism

TOTAL	BUSH	KERRY	NADER
Very Worried (22%)	44%	56%	0%
Somewhat Worried (53%)	56%	43%	0%
Not Too Worried (19%)	51%	47%	1%
Not At All Worried (5%)	50%	48%	1%

Source: CNN Exit Poll, 2004,
<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>

Table 3: Osama Bin Laden Videotape

TOTAL	BUSH	KERRY	NADER
Very Important (32%)	47%	53%	0%
Somewhat Important (24%)	54%	45%	0%
Not Too Important (20%)	57%	41%	1%
Not At All Important (24%)	55%	44%	0%

Source: CNN Exit Poll, 2004
<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>

Table 4: Most Important Election Issue

TOTAL	BUSH	KERRY	NADER
Moral Values (22%)	80%	18%	1%
Economy/Jobs (20%)	18%	80%	0%
Terrorism (19%)	86%	14%	0%
Iraq (15%)	26%	73%	0%
Health Care (8%)	23%	77%	*
Taxes (5%)	57%	43%	0%
Education (4%)	26%	73%	*

Source: CNN Exit Poll, 2004
<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>

Table 5: The Timing of Deciding Who to Vote For

TOTAL	BUSH	KERRY	NADER
When Did You Decide Who To Vote For?			
Within The Last Week (11%)	46%	52%	1%
Earlier Than That (89%)	52%	47%	0%
TOTAL	BUSH	KERRY	NADER
When Did You Decide Who To Vote For?			
Today/Last 3 Days (9%)	44%	53%	1%
Earlier Than That (91%)	52%	47%	0%

Source: CNN Exit Poll, 2004

(<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>)

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¹ Paul Wilkinson, "The Media and Terrorism: A Reassessment," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 2 (1997): 51-64.

² Ingrid Van Biezen, "Terrorism and Democratic Legitimacy: Conflicting Interpretations of the Spanish Elections," *Mediterranean Politics* 10, no. 1 (2005): 99-108.

³ Sarah Oates and Monica Postelnicu, "Citizens or Comrade? Terrorist Threat in Election Campaigns in Russia and the U.S.," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September 2005, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/4/1/5/3/p41531_index.html.

⁴ Tony Karon, "Did al-Qaeda Change Spain's Regime?" *TIME*, March 15, 2004, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,601306,00.html>; Van Biezen, "Terrorism and Democratic Legitimacy," 102.

⁵ Karon, "Did al-Qaeda Change Spain's Regime?"

⁶ Van Biezen, "Terrorism and Democratic Legitimacy," 104-105.

⁷ Karon, "Did al-Qaeda Change Spain's Regime?"

⁸ Ibid.; Raj S. Chari, "The 2004 Spanish Election: Terrorism as a Catalyst for Change?" *West European Politics* 27, no. 5 (2005): 954-963; Van Biezen, "Terrorism and Democratic Legitimacy;" Oates and Postelnicu, "Citizens or Comrade?"

⁹ Karon, "Did al-Qaeda Change Spain's Regime?"

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Al Goodman, "Suspected Madrid Bombing Ringleader Killed," *CNN*, April 4, 2004, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/europe/04/04/spain.bombings/>.

¹² Van Biezen, "Terrorism and Democratic Legitimacy," 108.

¹³ Steve Kornacki, "John McCain and the October Surprise," *The New York Observer*, October 8, 2008, <http://www.observer.com/2008/politics/john-mccain-and-october-surprise>.

¹⁴ Neil A. Lewis, "House Inquiry Finds No Evidence of Deal on Hostages in 1980," *The New York Times*, January 13, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/13/us/house-inquiry-finds-no-evidence-of-deal-on-hostages-in-1980.html>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Cockburn, Patrick, "Reagan and Bush Accused in Iran-Contra Arms Report" *The Independent*, 1994, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/reagan-and-bush-accused-in-irancontra-arms-report-1400970.html>; Harvey L Schantz, *American Presidential Elections* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), <http://www.sunypress.edu/details.asp?id=53401>.

¹⁷ Robert Parry, "Lost History: Dole Nearly Cited in Iran-Contra Report," *consortiumnews.com*, 1996, <http://www.consortiumnews.com/archive/lost11.html>.

¹⁸ MSNBC.com, "Al-Jazeera: Bin Laden Tape Obtained in Pakistan," *NBC and MSNBC*, October 30, 2004, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/ID/6363306/>. Later that day, the news agency informed the State Department of the tape. The United States ambassador pleaded for the tape not to be broadcast, but was unsuccessful. "We asked them not to air it because we don't think they should give a platform to terrorists like this who call for the killing of innocents," a state department official reportedly said ("U.S. Tried to Stop Al-Jazeera Broadcast," *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 31, 2004, <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/10/30/1099028265955.html#>).

¹⁹ Maggie Michael, "Bin Laden, In Statement to U.S. People, Says He Ordered Sept. 11 Attacks," *Associated Press* (posted in the *San Diego Union Tribune*), October 29, 2004, <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/nation/terror/20041029-1423-binladentape.html>.

²⁰ Bahukutumbi Raman, "OBL's Tape: One More Spin In US Presidential Campaign?" South Asia Analysis Group, Paper No. 1155, November 1, 2004, <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers12/paper1155.html>.

²¹ Philip Sherwell, "Bush Takes a Six-Point Lead After New Bin Laden Tape," *Telegraph.co.uk*, November 1, 2004, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/1475515/Bush-takes-a-six-point-lead-after-new-bin-Laden-tape.html>.

²² Jonathan Alter, "Another October Surprise?" *BBC News*, October 21, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/us_elections_2008/7684782.stm.

²³ Media Matters, "Newsweek Cited '04 Bin Laden Video, But Omitted Part of the Story of That 'October Surprise,'" *Mediamatters.org*, <http://mediamatters.org/items/printable/200610290002>.

²⁴ Scott Payne, "Trick Or Treat: National Security As The October Surprise," *The Huffington Post*, October 16, 2008, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/scott-payne/trick-or-treat-national-s_b_135282.html.

²⁵ During a reception at the Clinton Presidential Library, the Massachusetts politician told Fox's Geraldo Rivera "It was that Usama tape – it scared them [the American people]." The source also

reports "Senator Kerry clearly believes not only is it the security issue that cost him the election, but very specifically the Usama tape coming out in the 11th hour," according to Fox News (2004). Kerry repeated these assertions in an NBC TV interview. "We were rising in the polls up until the last day when the tape appeared. We flat-lined the day the tape appeared, then went down on Monday (BBC News, 2005)," the Senator said (also cited in Alter, 2008; and Kornacki, 2008).

²⁶ Mark Murray, "Poll: Bush, Kerry Still Deadlocked," NBC News, October 31, 2004, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6376974/>.

²⁷ The George Washington University, "Battleground: Presidential Tracking 2004," The Tarrance Group, October 31-November 1, 2004, <http://www.tarrance.com/files/Last-Day-Charts.pdf>.

²⁸ Some polls even showed Kerry narrowing the gap somewhat on the terrorism issue after the Osama Bin Laden broadcast. A poll from the Pew Research Center (2004) found that the videotape had "no clear impact on voter preferences." In fact, that same poll showed the 22 point Bush lead on the terrorism issue from October 22-24 slipped to only 11 points in the October 29-31 issue (<http://people-press.org/report/232/slight-bush-margin-in-final-days-of-campaign>). Similarly, a Fox News/Opinion (2004) survey on "The War of Terrorism" showed Bush's lead on the issue dwindle from 16 points (October 27-28) to 12 points (October 30-31) after the tape (http://www.foxnews.com/projects/pdf/110104_poll.pdf). Of course, President Bush was still given better marks for handling the terrorism issue in both polls, but the videotape does not appear to be the source of support for the incumbent on the subject. Voters preferred the President on this issue long before the videotape was mailed.

²⁹ Joel Roberts, "Poll: Bush up 3 Pts. In Final Days," CBS News/*New York Times*, October 31, 2004, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/10/31/opinion/polls/main652496.shtml>.

³⁰ CNN, "2004 Election Results, Exit Poll," October 26, 2004, <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.o.html>.

³¹ Mark Hosenball, "Al-Qaeda: Plans For An October Surprise?" *Newsweek*, November 6, 2006, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/44370>.

³² Kornacki, "John McCain and the October Surprise."

³³ Eli Lake, "Spies Warn That Al-Qaeda Aims for October Surprise," *New York Sun*, September 22, 2008, <http://www.nysun.com/foreign/spies-warn-that-al-qaeda-aims-for-october-surprise/86326/>.

³⁴ Alter, "Another October Surprise?"

³⁵ Justin Raimondo, "October Surprise? Don't Be Too Surprised..." *Antiwar.com*, October 27, 2008 <http://www.antiwar.com/justin/?articleid=13678>.

³⁶ Karon, "Did al-Qaeda Change Spain's Regime?" Chari, "The 2004 Spanish Election;" Van Biezen, "Terrorism and Democratic Legitimacy."