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## Spain's PM: Iraq Should Serve As Lesson



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MADRID, Spain - Spain's prime minister said Sunday he hopes the deteriorating situation in Iraq ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) will serve as a warning to countries against using preemptive wars in the future.



AP Photo

"The mission in Iraq, which is showing itself every day to be a failure, should serve as a lesson to the international community: preemptive wars, never again; violations of international law, never again," Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said.

Speaking before some 20,000 supporters at a meeting celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Socialist party, Zapatero reiterated that he had ordered Spain's troops home from Iraq April 18, a day after he was sworn in, "because they should have never been sent there."

On Wednesday, the last 260 of the 1,300 Spanish troops who took part in the U.S.-led occupation returned home. Another 1,000 soldiers remain in Iraq to pack up military hardware and ship it back to Spain. The government says those soldiers will be in Spain

by May 27.

Zapatero's predecessor as premier, Jose Maria Aznar of the conservative Popular Party, had supported the war in Iraq despite massive opposition in Spain. Spain did not take part in the invasion but sent in troops afterward.

Zapatero vowed his government would never break, nor support the violation of, international law in order to fight terrorism.

"The real and most efficient fight against terrorism is through the cooperation of all democratic countries, all free countries, in the United Nations ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) with the cooperation of all and not via unilateral interventions, which only lead to failure," he told the meeting at a bullring on Madrid's outskirts.

The meeting began with a minute's silence for the 191 people killed and more than 2,000 people injured in the Madrid rail bombings March 11.

The bombings, claimed by Islamist radicals, occurred three days before the general elections and were seen by many as a reprisal for Aznar's support for the war.

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