
Venezuela's Maduro Says Spain's Aznar is a War Criminal

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At the end of a demonstration in Caracas against U.S. sanctions imposed on Venezuelan officials, Maduro announced that he will propose to the National Assembly the creation of a “committee of jurists defending the human rights of Venezuelans and of dignitaries from around the world to indict for war crimes” a number of leaders including Aznar.

“I won’t take back a single comma – Aznar is a murderer, an heir to Francisco Franco’s fascism and must be tried by the International Criminal Court,” he said.

After accusing Aznar last Friday of the death of more than a million Iraqis, Maduro referred to him again on Monday while saying that not only “the U.S. masters” should be judged, but also their “subjects.”

“The Spanish right is irritated because I speak the truth, but they don’t deny what I say,” he said.

“Former Prime Minister Aznar is a murderer because he lied, he supported the lie of George W. Bush, he lied and was the chief promoter of the invasion and bombing in the year 2003 of the Iraqi people and as a result of that imperial war, 1.2 million Iraqis were killed,” Maduro said.

He also said he wanted to make it clear that in accusing Aznar, he wasn’t “meddling” with the Spanish people, whom he said he respects and “loves.”

Spain’s Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo dismissed as “clearly and absolutely

unacceptable" Maduro's statement last Friday about Aznar.

The Foreign Ministry last week summoned the charge d'affaires at the Venezuelan Embassy in Madrid to convey a protest over Maduro's comments.

In late October, Venezuela's leftist government recalled its ambassador in Madrid for consultations "as part of a thorough review" of its diplomatic relations with Spain in the wake of "meddlesome" remarks by current Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, Aznar's successor as leader of the conservative Popular Party.

On Oct. 22, Rajoy met in his office with Lilian Tintori, wife of Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, who has been jailed since February for allegedly instigating violence during an anti-government protest.

The Popular Party said then that Rajoy expressed to Tintori his and the European Union's concern over the charges against Lopez and the need for the Venezuelan government to respect freedom of expression and citizens' right to demonstrate peacefully.

The following day, Venezuela's Foreign Ministry issued a statement that characterized Rajoy's remarks with respect to Lopez as "meddlesome, irresponsible and disrespectful."
