

Journalism and terror: transmission belts? (Guest blog)

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In an era in which information is often confused with entertainment, global criminals have learned how to send their messages to society. And nobody has done it better than [Osama Bin Laden](#) and [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#).

alzawahiri.jpg

Carlos Franganillo, a POLIS Summer School student, reports.

Before 9/11 nobody could imagine that a terrorist group would be able to destroy the World Trade Center, shaking the heart of the United States and the Western world, more used to making war far from home. Now, the most pessimistic scenario can turn into reality. Al Qaeda has built a [modern myth](#), an organisation able to attack everywhere, whenever it wants. It has made us believe in a huge super-structure, some kind of James Bond's SMERSH, that perhaps never was so big. That kind of [western paranoia](#) has turned each Al Qaeda [statement](#) into breaking news.

But, are we –the journalists- reporting on a hypothetic future attack or are we working as a link between BinLaden-Zawahiri intentions and the fanatic will of thousands of fundamentalists all over the world? If Al Qaeda wants to attack it will do if it can. And surely without warning.

So, why we broadcast the message without having any certainty about if the threat is real or not? Are we looking for a higher audience while we spread fear?

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