¡Bomba!
(Part one)

It was an idyllic Spring morning. A gentle breeze rolled down from the Sierra Alhamilla bringing the mingled scent of a thousand wild flowers. The sun had not stoked itself into its full summer fury and a fundamental calm seem to blanket Alqueria. Life was easy, life was good. Antonio Poyato gently turned the soil of his smallholding, preparing the ground for this season's Remitroot crop.

His spade struck something very hard. A painful reverberation shot through his arm. Antonio paused and scrapped the loose earth to one side. A metal cylinder it was a bomb! Antonio thought about testing his theory by hitting it again with his spade, but thought again. If it detonated there would not only be a large explosion, he would also need a new spade, and good spades are expensive. Breathlessly, he phoned Josè Cabrasilbido the local policeman who contacted the army. A bomb disposal team was soon on its way from Viator barracks.

An orderly evacuation of Alqueria was to take place but without motor transport. Vibration could be a problem considering the strangely stratified geology of the Alquerian Valley. A fleet of buses was to meet the evacuees on the Camino de Alqueria. Then transporting them to a hastily erected reception area some twenty kilometres to the east. Rodriquez wasn't waiting for the buses, high-jacking a bicycle he made it to Almería before he realised the chain was off.

The origin was a mystery, either a left-over from the Civil War or did the Palomares B-52 have a fifth bomb?

The implications of an explosion in Alqueria and in particular Poyato's smallholding were many. Of main concern was Poyato's Remitroot crop which would be ruined. Remitroot has been classified as a National Treasure by a corrupt group of politicians who are addicted to the stuff. It therefore attracts a considerable government grant,

which if lost would mean Poyato would have to work for a living, something to be avoided at all costs.

A sandbagged dugout surrounded the erstwhile petard while a uniformed figure listened as intently as any physician through a suitably complicated stethoscope. A strange gurgling sound was detected but no ticking nor any mechanical sound at all that signified a belligerent mechanism at work. They were unable to establish its dimensions, no tail nor nose was visible. It was thought to be too dangerous to dig any further. Nor could any entry point be found, the thing seemed completely continuous.

A high level meeting was arranged between representatives of Alqueria and the military to determine the best course of action. After many hours of debate it was decided that a controlled explosion was to take place. This would allow the bombs casing to be breached and the exact nature of the device determined.

Will Alqueria be devastated?
Will an explosion improve the general appearance of the village?
Time will tell.