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The Role of Safe Havens in Islamist Terrorism

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This article will develop an explanatory theory on terrorist safe havens. Focusing on Islamist Terrorist networks, this article argues that four specific conditions are necessary for the establishment of a safe haven for Islamist terrorist networks: geographic features, weak governance, history of corruption and violence, and poverty. At the conclusion of the article, the developed theory is applied to the Tri-Border Area of South America (TBA), where the frontiers of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet, an area overlooked by the 9/11 National Commission Report's list of Islamist terrorists' safe havens.

Keywords al-Qaeda, hizballah, safe havens, terrorism, tri-border area

Introduction

In 2004, three years after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (9/11), the independent National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (U.S.) stated as one of its primary objectives: “Terrorists should no longer find safe havens where their organizations can grow and flourish...The United States Government must identify and prioritize actual or potential terrorist sanctuaries.”¹ Terrorism experts widely agree that an overarching success of terrorist networks is the establishment of, and access to, safe havens where training and operations can be conducted. Many works discuss the origins and causes of terrorism, the conditions that allow it to grow, and offer detailed descriptions of different groups’ aspirations and operations. However, a comprehensive analysis of the conditions necessary for the establishment of a terrorist safe haven is noticeably absent from the available literature on terrorism.

This article explores the role of four specific conditions necessary for the establishment of a safe haven for global terrorist networks, in particular international Islamist terrorist networks, hereafter Islamist terrorists. The conditions are geographic features, weak governance, history of corruption and violence, and poverty. The primary objective of this research is to determine whether these conditions make for an ideal safe haven for Islamist terrorists. An explanatory theory on safe havens is developed using plausibility probes that illustrate key assertions regarding the specific conditions. The theory will then be tested on the Tri-Border Area of South America (TBA) where the frontiers of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet.² The primary argument of this article is that a combination of the four aforementioned conditions produces ideal circumstances that Islamist terrorists exploit to enhance their capabilities. The conclusion will

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determine whether a generalized explanatory theory on safe havens can better serve counter-terrorism policy, specifically the U.S. policy towards the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

Definitional Boundaries

For the purpose of this article, terrorism is described as “the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change.”³ This definition accepts the notion of political change to include how the role of ideology and religion are used to alter the political condition.⁴

To limit the scope of this research, this article focuses on safe havens sought and exploited by transnational Islamist terrorists. The phenomenon, while not initiated by Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda network, has been exponentially spurred by the organization’s encouragement of an Islamist transnational movement ideologically based on Islamist fundamentalism. In the discussion of Islamist terrorism, both Sunni and Shi’a groups are considered.⁵

Terrorists, regardless of ideology, benefit heavily from access to safe havens. While safe havens are not a requirement for many Islamist groups, they can be extremely useful, and for some groups they may prove essential. This article defines safe havens as geographical spaces where Islamist terrorists are able to successfully establish an organizational and operational base that may include one, some, or all of the following⁶:

- Fundraising through different means of financing activities (e.g., smuggling, money laundering, Islamist charities, criminal activities, drug trafficking, taxes on diaspora/immigrant/local population);
- A communications network for efficient command and control and intelligence gathering;
- An operational space for training; access to weapons and weapon components;
- A logistics network to enable travel, the movement of money, the access to fraudulent documents and weapons materiel.

Safe havens provide terrorist networks with the tools necessary for the enhancement of their organizational and operational capabilities. Organizational tools sustain the group’s existence as a cohesive entity and operational tools are used by terrorists to conduct attacks. Four main organizational tools are ideology, leadership, recruitment pools, and publicity. The operational tools include: command and control; weapons acquisition; operational space for planning, training and conducting attacks; and operational security and intelligence gathering. These tools ensure the survival and success of the group and all require significant funding.⁷

Given the division between organizational and operational needs, this research differentiates between two main types of safe havens: support network and operational base. Support network safe havens mainly employ organizational tools that aim at ensuring a group’s continuity and survival through support activities. Operational base safe havens include primarily operational tools that directly affect a group’s attack operations. An overlap between the two is inevitable, but this distinction enables us to understand the significance and role of safe havens for Islamist terrorists.

Developing a Safe Haven Theory

Geographical Features

Geographic features can present terrorists with formidable advantages. Given the need for secrecy in terrorism planning and organization, it is easiest for terrorist networks to operate where the geography is beneficial to their illicit activities. This includes countries that have rugged terrain to ensure the inaccessibility of local and federal authorities; porous borders allowing for the easy movement of people and equipment as well as natural geographical features that may serve as physical obstacles to conceal activities. In such places, terrorists can successfully hide themselves and don a cloak of anonymity.⁸

Terrorists can exploit these geographical features to ensure access to several of their tools, both organizational and operational. In particular, geography can offer the necessary conditions to successfully enhance their capabilities. Rugged and inaccessible terrain can offer sufficient cover to establish training facilities, plan and prepare for future attacks, and conduct illegal activities such as fundraising. Similarly, porous borders can present easy access to greater mobility and facilitate access to weapons smuggling networks.

Natural physical barriers are the most obvious geographic obstacles in combating terrorists' safe havens; porous borders are a more amorphous challenge. Terrorists exploit national borders that have been softened through the growth of globalization. Greater mobility of capital, labor, and even ideas has become the norm, making governmental control over globalized trade all but impossible; and border control an even greater challenge.⁹

Two examples of the advantages offered by geographical factors are Mindanao and Yemen. Mindanao, located at the southernmost tip of the Philippines, has a rugged mountainous landscape with narrow coastal plains and extensive swampland making it an extremely remote and inaccessible area.¹⁰ This allowed for the establishment of training camps, such as Camp Abubakar, a 10,000-hectare compound that has reportedly trained over 2,000 Islamist terrorists in the area.¹¹ Filipino Colonel Ernesto Boac believes that other Islamist terrorists may be hiding in the rugged mountain range that rises from the Lake Lanao in central Mindanao, however, Boac says "Getting into that area is very, very difficult . . ." and calls the region "a black hole."¹² Similarly, the sprawling deserts and mountainous landscape of Yemen make it relatively easy for terrorists to seek shelter among remote tribes.¹³ Moreover, the inability of Yemen's government to control its borders translates into a similar handicap in controlling arms smuggling between its borders with Saudi Arabia.¹⁴ Yemeni honey traders regularly exploit weak border controls and are believed to have some connections to al-Qaeda. The real significance of the honey trade for Islamist terrorists, in addition to profit, is that honey is "considered a good product in which to conceal contraband: drugs, arms, gold, electronic equipment and cash are often smuggled in honey containers."¹⁵ The smell and consistency of the product makes it ideal to hide weapons and drugs, and custom inspectors often refrain from inspecting honey containers that are "too messy."¹⁶

Terrorists see the diminishing control of borders as a means to increase their mobility, both physical and financial, as well spread their ideology. Developing nations often lack resources to adequately control their borders and oftentimes fail to keep up with the flow of people and commodities in and out of their territories.

The complex geography of Mindanao and its remoteness is further exploitable given the porosity of its borders. Porous borders and weak border controls can encourage a variety of smuggling activities not necessarily initiated by terrorists but cleverly exploited by the terrorist groups as they seek operational tools, such as weapons and other equipment, and safe passage to other territories. Several Islamist terrorists are believed to take advantage of this situation to move freely between the many islands that make up the Philippines.¹⁷

Weak Governance

According to the U.S. National Security Strategy in 2002, weak states are of major concern in the GWOT. Weak governance can be described as the result of state failure to ensure central authority over its territory and citizenry in full and ensure security to its citizens, provide the necessary basic public services for the needs of its population, maintain political legitimacy domestically and/or internationally, administer functioning institutions, and control a working economy.¹⁸ Today, weak governance and underdeveloped institutions exist in countries, or regions of a country, where democratization has not fully developed for reasons of inadequate government policies or war, as well as historical legacies of colonialism and the Cold War. Whatever the cause, weak governance leads to politically unstable circumstances.¹⁹

A state's inability to adequately govern its citizens and administer its institutions reveals to Islamist terrorists uncontrollable territories that they can exploit. These are three categories of weak governance: failing states, where the central government maintains some control over the territory but its ability to enforce law and order is rapidly eroding; failed states, where the central government is on the verge of collapse and is incapable of performing its traditional functions; and the final and most severe category, collapsed states, where there is a complete vacuum of political authority.

Weak governments appeal to terrorists because the breakdown of central authority allows them to conduct their operations with little interference. Significantly, Islamist terrorists seek those states where political instability exists while "the veneer of state sovereignty" is still present.²⁰ This semblance of state sovereignty prevents interference and counter measures from international actors. Moreover, weak governance does not necessarily have to be widespread throughout the entire country for terrorists to exploit it. Pockets of political instability, or 'brown areas', defined as enclaves where the central government has failed to exert its authority and "there is minimal or zero presence of the state both functionally and territorially," share many of the characteristics of weak states.²¹ Terrorists use this vacuum to carve out a base for their operational and organizational needs confident of a government's lack of adequate resources and capacity to confront them. In these indeterminate regions, "borders are uncontrolled or undefined; corruption is endemic; per capita as well as regional GDP is falling rapidly; violence and crime are rife . . . and anarchy is the norm."²² As a result, Islamist terrorists appeal to the popular support of the people, allowing them to "step into the void created by the collapse of central authority establishing a 'state-shell.'"²³ A state that is unable to control activities within its territory is unable to curb weapons proliferation, transnational criminal activities, and drug trafficking – all of which serve to encourage the establishment of a safe haven for Islamist terrorist networks.

In the Southern Philippines, pockets of political instability have become the targets for both indigenous and international Islamist terrorists. Foreign terrorists are

concentrated in the Moro Islamist Liberation Front (MILF) held territories, around Mt. Karanaw in Lanao del Norte and Mt. Vietnam in Lanao del Sur, an area where the government has sought to control the Muslim insurgency for decades.²⁴

In tribal societies the lack of a central governmental authority is often filled with the authority of tribal leaders. In Yemen, Osama bin Laden's ancestral land and a traditionally tribal society, the government "has yet to exert full control over tribes in remote areas"²⁵ and a majority of the country is believed to be a 'no-mans-land' where Islamist terrorists hide and operate freely.²⁶ In these remote mountainous tribal regions, tribal leaders, or sheiks, wield more power than the government. The traditional tribal codes have long allowed Islamist terrorists to gain protection, or "a promise that a tribal chief will fight for his visitor's life against any foe."²⁷

Tribal traditions that undermine a government's central authority also exist in the North West Provinces of the frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan, known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), henceforth Afghan-Pakistan border areas. They are home to the Pashtun tribes, whose leaders have long ignored government central authority. Tribal leaders believe that the central government is unable to provide security in the tribal areas, and so they have to look after themselves. In the Khost Province, the Mangal tribe has its own tribal militia, called an *arbakai*, that protects the villages with Kalashnikovs.²⁸

A History of Corruption

A history of corruption, both governmental and those conducted by criminal individuals, can further exacerbate the circumstances that facilitate terrorists' activities. The United Nation's Global Programme Against Corruption defines corruption as "the abuse of power for private gain" including both the public and private sector.²⁹ In the public sector, the most prevalent forms of corruption include: nepotism, cronyism, kleptocracy, narcocracy, and government for hire.³⁰ The annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published by Transparency International (TI), measures the perception of corruption among both local and expatriates of a specific country. TI's most recent statistics in 2006, ranked Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen with the most offensive corruption rating out of 163 countries examined.³¹

Government corruption at the Presidential level has occurred in more than one occasion in South East Asia. Former Filipino President Ferdinand Marcos stole US\$5 billion from the Filipino people between 1957 and 1971.³² In Indonesia, President Suharto, along with his accomplices and family, stole more than US\$80 billion from the Indonesian people throughout his thirty-two years in office.³³ Corruption at this level encourages further corruption throughout all levels of the government and undermines the rule of law, potentially leading to violence as well as illicit activities that can support terrorism. Moreover, the lack of rule of law inhibits good governance.³⁴ According to TI "bribery, and corruption in all its forms" is one of the most significant causes of poverty and economic underdevelopment throughout the world. Increased corruption disrupts efforts to establish democratic institutions and norms and "corrupt officials and business people are trapping whole nations in poverty . . . hampering sustainable development."³⁵

The corruption embedded within many governments in the developing world has often the capacity to infiltrate the rest of society. Moreover, as corruption begins to influence formal economies it can earn a certain level of legitimacy, as its elimination could adversely affect a state's economy. The illegal economy that prevails in the

Afghan-Pakistan border areas consists of widespread smuggling, ranging from various commercial commodities including weapons and documents, and sometimes even human smuggling. The scale of the illegal economy props up the formal economies of both countries.³⁶ This situation can be exploited by the remnants of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters believed to still be hiding in the area.

A proliferate exchange of drugs for arms and other material including forged documents and contraband goods is also a feature of the relationship between narco-traffickers and terrorists. The exchange of drugs for weapons commonly culminates in illegal arms in the hands of Islamist groups worldwide and promulgates the vicious cycle of corruption.³⁷ Drug traffickers and gun smugglers commonly share the same transit routes and infrastructure, building relationships along the way.

However, corruption is not the only fuel of international drug trafficking. It is the combination of endemic corruption, weak governments and a weak economic system in conjunction with unsupervised borders that is largely beneficial to drug trafficking activities. Where violence, corruption, organized crime, weapons smuggling, and other illicit activities converge, safe havens for terrorists is merely the next step.³⁸

A History of Violence

The line between corruption and violence is often blurred as the intensity of one condition can serve to spur the other. A history of war often contributes to a culture of violence that is exacerbated by corruption. Alternatively, corruption can become so rampant and vicious that it leads to civil unrest. Widespread violence that is not controlled by the central authority further erodes state capacity to effectively manage the use of force throughout its territory. This lack of control undermines government legitimacy and weakens society's trust in the ability of the state to protect its citizens. As the population finds itself vulnerable in the face of government incapacity, illegal means of protection measures are sought. Such corrosive environment offers terrorist groups a window of opportunity to exploit weakened countries.

In Mindanao, the history of violence dates back to several decades. A secessionist movement, led by an aggrieved Muslim minority, has existed for over four centuries perpetuating a cycle of insurgent violence.³⁹ Today, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the MILF are the dominant players in the violence that inadvertently welcomes terrorists. The MNLF and the MILF share a common ideology with Islamist terrorists, and so they are easily infiltrated especially by al-Qaeda's South East Asian affiliate, Jemaah Islamiya (JI). JI have swiftly co-opted the MILF to take advantage of their resources and territory in exchange for helping the establishment of a Muslim state in Mindanao.⁴⁰ JI has essentially taken advantage of the chaos of violence and war to advance its own goals.

A second example illustrates how a legacy of violence can develop an environment permissible to the establishment of terrorists' safe havens. In the Sahel region of West Africa, where Chad, Niger, Mauritania, and Mali are located, the nomadic Tuareg tribe has traditionally opposed the authority of the central government as it aspires to gain greater regional autonomy. Violence erupted there in June 1990, and while an agreement with the government in 1992 was intended to end the hostilities, occasional outbreaks of violence, banditry, kidnapping, and other criminal activities continue to this day. This perpetuates a cycle of violence that encourages corruption and undermines government authority, allowing al-Qaeda-inspired

groups such as the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC) from Algeria, to establish a foothold in the region.⁴¹

Violence can attract Islamist terrorists in many ways. Islamist terrorists are drawn to the anarchic environment where abandoned weapons and chaos are present and a large recruitment pool exists within the disenfranchised population. The chaos that can sometimes emerge as a result of violence, whether because of war, or a state's lack of monopoly over the use of force, is favorable to terrorists who exploit it to blend in and operate with little or no governmental interference.

Poverty

Until a few years ago, experts believed that poverty directly affected terrorism.⁴² In the last decade, however, the notion that poverty breeds terrorism has been debunked by several scholars who emphasize that there is little direct correlation between poverty and participation in terrorism.⁴³ Despite the lack of evidence to indicate that poverty directly affects terrorism, it is important to note its indirect effect on supporters of terrorist activity who help terrorists set the stage for the establishment of safe havens.⁴⁴ The consequences of poverty including unemployment, lack of food and shelter, hopelessness, resentment and increased violence can supply terrorist groups with fertile ground for recruitment as well as a safe haven.⁴⁵

The causes of economic underdevelopment and stagnation that lead to poverty are numerous.⁴⁶ Among the reasons developing countries fail to achieve success are: poverty as a cause of economic stagnation itself, physical geography, lack of governmental resources, inept governance, and the geopolitics of international trade. In some countries the poor are so mired down they cannot save enough to catapult themselves out of the conditions of poverty. Physical geography that may in some countries offer economic prosperity can also mean the opposite. High mountain ranges, landlocked countries, long coastlines, and locations in the tropics that favor diseases like malaria and dengue fever impede economic development. Inadequate governmental resources mean the state lacks the funds for the required infrastructure upon which economic growth depends such as roads and power grids. Insufficient funding is exacerbated by inept governance, which fails to properly identify a state's infrastructure and institutional needs to enable social services, private investment, and self-restraint to prevent officials from accepting bribes and side payments. Finally, the geopolitics of trade in the form of trade barriers impede the development of poorer countries which leads to greater insecurity worldwide: "If we in the West don't create a system of world trade that is fair as well as free . . . we will also pay a price . . . in increased terrorism and increased insecurity all around the world."⁴⁷

In tribal societies, financial necessity largely determines whether the native population will offer support to terrorists. In Yemen, Sheik Faisal Aburas of the northern governorate of al-Jawf claims to know of several occasions where terrorists paid tribal leaders to ensure their protection: "If a terrorist comes to my area, the thing that binds me to him is not ideology. It's [financial] need."⁴⁸ In the Afghan-Pakistan border areas, one tribal official in Jamrud said he knew of an al-Qaeda operative living in the hills of Waziristan who was paying US\$750 a month for "a simple, mud-walled house that ordinarily rented for less than US\$80."⁴⁹ According to leading tribesman Dilawar Khan "It is the economics of *jihad* playing its role in Waziristan." Such deals become even more attractive to those who consider supporting al-Qaeda to be a service to Islam.⁵⁰

The lack of successful domestic political economies in a number of developing nations results in a gap between the rich and the poor. It also leads to greater unemployment, and the lack of a political alternative in the face of continued poverty creates a more fertile ground for the rise of and sympathy towards Islamist extremism.⁵¹ Islamist terrorists exploit these areas to establish 'state shells' for their operations. State shells are established by "gaining control of the [desired] territory" to further deteriorate the weak socio-economic infrastructure in place and replace it with their own socio-economic infrastructure geared solely towards their operations.⁵²

Summarizing the relationship between poverty and terrorism, in 2002 President George W. Bush stated: "Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty [together with] weak institutions and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks."⁵³ Unsound economic systems and economic failure and stagnation can lead people to lose faith in their potential to maintain their individual livelihood. As society loses trust in the government and in its capacity to sustain a working economic system, a desperate indigenous population may be influenced with financial rewards to provide protection and support for terrorist groups. While terrorism experts have disproved the direct correlation between poverty and terrorism, scholars nevertheless agree that states where economic underdevelopment persists can provide ideal environments for the establishment of Islamist terrorist safe havens.

An Analysis of the Developed Theory

Together the conditions explored in this article are conducive to the establishment of Islamist terrorists' safe havens. Significantly, no one condition can be taken in isolation. Rather, the combination of geographical features, including inaccessibility and difficulty of terrain and porosity of borders; continued weak governance and underdeveloped institutions; a long history of violence and corruption; and widespread poverty offer favorable circumstances for Islamist terrorists. They exploit this environment for the establishment of safe havens to enhance their capabilities and scope of operations.

Although support network and operational base safe havens serve slightly different purposes, the conditions explored here could encourage the establishment of either. For a support network safe haven, geographic features can aid in concealing training camps, make accessibility a challenge for law enforcement, and porous borders offer ease of movement for people and products. Weak states lack the resources and institutions to effectively control and administer its territory offering terrorist groups a place to establish themselves. Pervasive corruption and violence further weakens states by disregarding the rule of law and unraveling the state's monopoly over the use of force. Lastly, poverty can provide terrorists with an environment where the population is in such dire economic misery that they are easily co-opted through the promise of financial reward.

Operational base safe havens employ these same conditions for different activities. Porous borders allow operatives to travel to their intended target with relative ease. Inaccessible terrain provides shelter until the attack is launched. States with weak governance are unable to track the activities and operations of Islamist terrorists. These states lack the ability, skills and resources to preempt and/or prevent terrorist attacks. Corruption and violence can offer better opportunities for future attacks as Islamist terrorists bribe officials and pay off potential recruits. Lastly,

poverty exacerbates the cycle of violence and corruption – widening the possibilities available to Islamist terrorists.

Alternatively, for Islamist terrorists that are increasingly operating on a global scale, safe havens may be used both for support network and operational base activities simultaneously. Prior to 9/11, Afghanistan was exploited for both its capacity to train operatives and raise revenues but also to launch activities in the Middle East and North Africa. In the Philippines and Indonesia, al-Qaeda affiliates employ similar methods.

The interconnectedness of these conditions is often circular. It is difficult to determine the primary fueling conditions that spur the others into action. Corruption is fueled by poverty, as it simultaneously damages economic development and keeps poverty levels from improving. A vulnerable population susceptible to financial rewards and filled with economic hopelessness provides not only a willing recruitment pool but also facilitates the opportunities for a support network as increased violence and disrespect for the rule of law undermine good governance. Additionally, geographic features that may appear harmless can aggravate the problem, creating ideal circumstances to establish an Islamist terrorist support network safe haven.

The Tri-Border Area in South America

From a boat along the Parana River traveling towards Brazil one can simultaneously steal a glance at three countries: Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. The Iguazu Falls, which embraces both Argentina and Brazil, is the predominant natural feature in this lush jungle outback. Three cities, Puerto Iguazu, Foz de Iguazu, and Ciudad del Este meet where the borders of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay converge. Located in the South East part of South America, where Argentina juts into Brazil and Paraguay, the three cities are commonly referred to as the Tri-Border Area. These three concentrated urban centers have forged relations that go beyond the free trade agreements established in the late 20th century. Their livelihoods are so entwined that many who work in Ciudad del Este make the daily journey across the International Friendship Bridge to their homes in Foz de Iguazu “where the quality of life is better.”⁵⁴

Amidst a population of approximately 629,000 inhabitants, over 65 nationalities are represented in the region ensuring that reasonable anonymity is available to those who seek it.⁵⁵ The Arab community in the TBA, numbering between 30,000–60,000 Middle Eastern immigrants, has been in the area since the 1980’s and has established several Islamist schools and mosques. In Ciudad del Este three mosques serve a population of merely 2,000 Arabs. Interestingly, Islam is the fastest growing religion in a region where Christianity has dominated for centuries.

Exposing a Vulnerable Geography

The weak monitoring of border controls between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay makes the TBA an ideal place for illicit activities. While the downtown centers of the three cities that make up the TBA are fairly concentrated and easy to get to, the outskirts of the TBA, with its vast jungles and expansive farms, resemble a labyrinth of unmarked roads that are fairly inaccessible.

Additionally, the interconnectedness between the three cities further blurs the borders that separate them. Ciudad del Este is accessible to and from Foz de Iguazu through the International Friendship Bridge. Tancredo Neves Bridge further extends

the link to Argentina by linking Foz de Iguacu to Puerto Iguazu. Over the International Friendship Bridge alone, more than 40,000 vehicles cross the border between Brazil and Paraguay every day. Immigration control is almost non-existent for pedestrians. Of the flow of people and vehicles that pass over the bridge daily, only about 10% are routinely inspected, according to customs officials.⁵⁶ This ineffective border check system was partly instituted to encourage tourism in the region, particularly to the Iguacu Falls, which attracts millions of visitors annually. Customs and immigration procedures are infamously lax to further boost the free trade area established in the region.

The Weakness of the State

In 2002 former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated that in South America “ineffective sovereignty and ungoverned areas”⁵⁷ were the main factors destabilizing the continent. Rumsfeld’s comments are more accurate than the generally accepted assumptions regarding the region. In much of Africa weak governance arises due to countries’ inability to exert authority and provide resources to adequately govern their nations, while in South America the situation differs slightly. In South America, weak governance is commonly a result of the state’s passivity and neglect towards enforcing central authority, coupled with disregard for the rule of law exemplified by widespread governmental corruption.

The lack of counter-terrorism activities in all three bordering countries may further appeal to Islamist terrorists. In 2003, Brazil failed to comply with a request from the Colombian government to designate FARC as a terrorist organization because the country “did not maintain a formal list of terrorist groups.”⁵⁸ Similarly, in Paraguay and Argentina counter-terrorism mechanisms are barely in place. In instances when they do exist, they are often ineffective due to lack of resources, skills, and funding.⁵⁹ In a situation where no formal legislation or infrastructure is in place to combat terrorism, terrorists may feel free to travel and establish their support activities right under the eye of the government.

Conversely, years of passivity and neglect towards violence and corruption have resulted in South America countries’ inability to exert authority within their own urban centers. In Brazil and Argentina, law enforcement agencies actively investigate the links between domestic criminal groups and terrorism. Rio de Janeiro’s infamous drug lord, Fernandinho Beira-Mar, now behind bars after being arrested in the jungles of Colombia, is alleged to have cultivated a profitable relationship with FARC. The relationship involved intricate drugs-for-weapons arrangements and extensive money laundering.⁶⁰ Alternatively, in Paraguay, the government has little support for law enforcement, as illicit activities often benefit politicians and other government officials. Additionally, the legal system is hindered by bureaucratic redundancies that prevent it from adequately enforcing the law.

The resources to enforce central authority and coordinate activities to adequately govern and protect the countries are truly limited. According to one senior law enforcement official, agents from foreign intelligence agencies, including Israel’s Institute for Intelligence and Special Tasks (Mossad), American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and the bordering countries’ own agents have been operating in the TBA since at least 1994.⁶¹ However coordination among all parties and resources to effectively combat weak border controls, drug trafficking, and other illicit activities in the area remains inadequate.

Since the end of military regimes in the region, the lack of a strong military role has enabled criminal gangs to confidently break the law and ensures terrorists face little obstacles. Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay all suffered from oppressive military regimes. All three countries now inhibit the military to ensure it lacks the resources and authority to challenge the state again. By diminishing the power of the military and relegating the armed forces to little more than symbolic ventures, weak security environments have emerged, opening “the door to transnational intruders.”⁶²

Corrosive Corruption

In the TBA, corruption parallels the existing situations that prevail in Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. All three countries rank at the bottom of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.⁶³ A brief examination of corruption within each of the three bordering nations is appropriate.

In Argentina, government corruption has been linked to terrorist activities for over a decade. The first mark of Islamist terrorist activity in South America occurred on March 17, 1992 when a car bomb killed 29 people and left over 250 injured as it exploded in front of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Two years later, on July 18, 1994, terror struck again in Buenos Aires as a second car bomb was detonated at the gates of the Argentina-Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA) building. The bomb leveled the entire seven-story building, killing 85 people and injuring more than 300.⁶⁴ The official government investigation into the bombings was filled with allegations of corruption from the very beginning. Allegations emerged that former President Carlos Saul Menem accepted a US\$10 million bribe from the Iranian government to purposely foul the investigations.⁶⁵ Additionally, several state police officers were charged as accomplices in the bombing for allegedly handling the vehicle that was used in the bombing.

In Brazil, government corruption has more than once reached the highest levels of government. The most significant example occurred in 1992 when the first President elected by a popular vote after a long history of military regimes, Fernando Collor de Mello, resigned to avoid impeachment due to charges of corruption. More recently, on September 2004, Brazilian Federal prosecutors announced that over one hundred politicians, including senior members of Congress, and more than 400 government officials were involved in widespread corruption involving the Banestado Bank.

The history of corruption is similarly widespread in Paraguay. The most significant corruption scandal in Paraguay occurred in September 2001 when the Paraguayan consul in Miami, Carlos Weiss, was recalled and subsequently arrested for fraudulently issuing hundreds of visas and passports, a large majority to Arab nationals.⁶⁶ However, other corruption scandals have long plagued the country. In 1985 former President Alfredo Stroessner was forced to resign for involvement in drug trafficking. Most recently, in 2002, Paraguayan prosecutors formally charged former President Luis Gonzalez Macchi for allegedly partaking in a large corruption scandal that erupted in 2001 in which US\$16 million of government funds were transferred to high-interest accounts in the U.S.⁶⁷

Amongst the TBA countries, corruption is not limited to the highest levels of government; rather it extends even to the law enforcement agencies charged with preventing such criminality. Consequently, law enforcement is neither effective nor trusted. In Brazil, as in most Latin American countries, citizens have little trust

in the police as many officers are routinely accused of revenge killings and bribery.⁶⁸ According to the U.S. Department of State's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, during January to June 2006 in Brazil, police killed 520 persons in Rio de Janeiro and 290 in São Paulo.⁶⁹ In Paraguay, members of the National Commission for Citizen Security, an organization established to offer citizens a role in supporting the National Police, were accused of harboring and protecting narcotraffickers in exchange for monetary rewards in cities located in the Alto Parana Department which include Ciudad del Este.⁷⁰ Similarly, in Argentina, some in the police force are also involved in drug trafficking.⁷¹ These abuses of power prevalent within all levels of government prevents civilians from relying on their law enforcement officers, as well as encourage further corruption amidst civilians.

Uncontrollable Violence

An extension of corruption, violence is also commonplace in the three bordering countries. Criminal gangs and law enforcements agents abuse their power indiscriminately, perpetuating a cycle of violence. Latin America has witnessed a number of violent conflicts since the 1970's as it was featured heavily as a staging ground in the proxy wars of the Cold War. As a result, a cache of small arms and light weapons remain in the region, helping to fuel the indiscriminate violence. Additional violence which was featured in the numerous military dictatorships in the region also bolsters the culture of violence that persists. Despite the veneer of relative peace in the region, the culture of violence has remained. Human right abuses continue unabated, organized crime and gang violence is common, and lingering guerrilla warfare continues to ravage some areas of Latin America. Deteriorating economic conditions, widespread availability of arms, a weak judicial system, and corruption fuel the rise of violence. This continuous cycle severely undermines democratization in Latin America and increasingly erodes the rule of law.⁷²

Citizens in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil call the current situation in their country akin to war, or 'urban terrorism.' Organized criminal networks are well-equipped to conduct systemic extortion, kidnapping, and drug trafficking relatively unchecked. Statistics show that Rio de Janeiro is now witnessing a "murder rate worse than some war zones." An estimated 26 out of 100,000 people are killed annually, one of the highest numbers in the world.⁷³ In 2003, and more recently in January 2007, the city experienced frequent, sometimes daily, ambushes between the police and the members of the leading drug cartels.⁷⁴

Similar to Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina also experience a high level of violence; with kidnapping occurring often. It is in the major metropolitan areas of Paraguay and Argentina that kidnappings occur with the same frequency as they do in the streets of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.⁷⁵ In Argentina specifically, the number of kidnappings "increased more than fivefold" in the period from 2002–2004, with 200 kidnappings alone in 2004.⁷⁶

The legacy of violence is arguably a result of several decades of authoritarian military dictatorships that controlled the three countries ruthlessly, leaving violent action ingrained in the countries' traditions.⁷⁷ In Brazil, as in Argentina and Paraguay, while the police force complains of insufficient funds and resources, society's trust in their work is discouraged by reports of police torture and abuse of power.⁷⁸ In the three countries, the police force culture is extremely violent and

aggressive. Moreover, those officers who “were trained during the years of military dictatorship” are largely in charge of the training of the current police force.⁷⁹ As a result, Brazil’s police force has a negative image within society as “corruptible, trigger-happy officers.”⁸⁰ Violence is also a means used by government officials to combat crimes and gang warfare. Reports of “extrajudicial executions by paramilitary forces and government-linked death squads”⁸¹ emerged in the 1990’s and more recently in April 2005 when a group of police officers targeted petty criminals in a shantytown.⁸²

Exploiting Poverty

The colonial legacy of South America and destructive economic policies inherited from colonial powers has kept most countries suffering from endemic poverty and unable to develop mature democratic institutions.⁸³ According to The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), South and Central America have the “world’s most egregious inequalities in income distribution, with the richest 10% accounting for 35% of total earnings.”⁸⁴ Forty-three percent of the Latin American population lives below the poverty line, and the period between 1997 and 2003 saw an increase of 20 million poor.⁸⁵ The colonial legacy that impairs Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay similarly affect the TBA. The continued poverty and inequality rampant in the continent is a major influencing force leading the desperate population into the world of illicit activities and potentially terrorist support activities. The financial appeal is not limited to ordinary society, but it also affects local government officials and, at times, politicians of significant stature.

The Brazilian government has long been under pressure for cultivating one of the world’s “most unfair distributions of wealth.”⁸⁶ A minority wealthy population owns the majority of the country’s fertile and arable land. Socio-economic conditions are precarious not only in the rural areas, but also in major metropolitan centers, where a third of the population lives in miserable conditions in the numerous ‘favelas’ or shantytowns throughout the cities.⁸⁷ Similarly, in Argentina the gap between the rich and the poor is rapidly increasing, leading to much discontent among the population, forcing them to look for alternative ways to ensure their economic livelihood. In Paraguay, approximately 85% of the rural population lives below or just at the poverty level.⁸⁸

The consequences of endemic poverty go beyond just economic impact. Lacking in resources and appropriate command posts, the police force in Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil have insufficient manpower and little funds for equipment. The Paraguayan National Police force is under-funded and under-trained; corrupt officers are enticed to illegal activities due to the monetary incentive.⁸⁹ Moreover, the average salary for a police officer in Brazil is \$350 a month, and \$400 in Argentina.⁹⁰ Desperate financial need commonly fuels law enforcement’s tolerance and tacit consent of criminal activities.

As described above, in all three countries poverty fuels corruption and violence, further undermining the legitimacy of the central government. Poverty cannot be alleviated as corruption continues to flourish within the political leadership. However, the cyclical relationship between poverty, corruption and violence makes it difficult to determine which condition first emerges setting the spark for the other conditions. Nevertheless, the fact remains that poverty brings to the surface feelings of resentment, hopelessness and anger that are eagerly exploited by Islamist terrorists.

Evidence of Islamist Terrorism: Does The TBA Fit the Bill?

At first glance, the TBA appears to be an unlikely candidate for the establishment of a modern Islamist terrorist network safe haven. It is a stunning tourist destination that features the stereotypical characteristics of Latin American wondrous traditions: scantily clad women and late nights. However, evidence indicates that a significant Islamist terrorist presence exists in the region. Transnational criminal networks have long used the region for myriad illegal activities including weapons smuggling, drug trafficking, document fraud, money laundering and a thriving black-market. The possibility that Islamist terrorists may be partaking in the activities is almost logical.

The U.S. government has only recently, in the aftermath of 9/11, begun to focus its resources in the region, however Islamist terrorists reportedly have a long-standing presence in the TBA. In fact, while the U.S. State Department claims to have no credible information indicating whether the al-Qaeda network has established itself in the region, it nevertheless believes Islamist groups including Hizballah and Hamas receive funds from the TBA.⁹¹ Other Islamist terrorists believed to operate in the region are operatives linked to Egyptian Islamic Jihad.⁹²

Islamist terrorists have taken advantage of the relative remoteness and anonymity of the region to establish training camps and transit routes in the jungles of the TBA. Brazilian and Paraguayan officials, as far back as 2000, acquired photographic evidence of “Arab extremists” reportedly taken at a training camp established in a farm outside of Foz de Iguacu. The training camp was heavily decorated with Iranian flags and flags representing the pro-Iranian faction of Hizballah, Al-Mukawama. Corroborating the Brazilian and Paraguayan sources, Argentine intelligence agents suspect that Hizballah does indeed run “weekend training camps” in the remote jungles and outback close to Foz de Iguacu.⁹³ Terrorist training camps allegedly exist not only in the immediate and unofficial boundaries on the TBA but also alongside the Brazilian–Paraguayan border going north in Guaira, Boa Vista, Pedro Juan Caballero, and Palma Chica. According to intelligence sources of reporter Sebastian Junger, out of those alleged training camps, Guaira stands out. The US government allegedly lists Guaira as a potential training camp for Islamist groups.⁹⁴ The lush jungle in the TBA also makes it possible for organized criminal network to conceal over one hundred airstrips that are commonly used for gunrunning and drug trafficking around the region.⁹⁵ The relationship between organized crime groups and Islamist terrorists in the area allow terrorists to draw on this infrastructure to improve their capabilities and expand their resources.

The extended network of familial and cultural relations that exists among the immigrant population combined with the relative anonymity offered in the TBA also offer ways to improve terrorists capabilities and resources. This familial network allows Islamist terrorists to establish an intricate fundraising system in the region. Assad Ahmad Barakat, Hizballah’s chief fundraiser in the region, ran an extended network of financing activities. Ahmand Barakat owned the biggest shopping center in Ciudad del Este and, upon his arrest in Brazil in 2002, significant evidence emerged linking him directly to Hizballah’s senior members. Receipts confirming wire transfers to Hizballah and videos encouraging violent jihad were uncovered.⁹⁶ However, it wasn’t until June 2004 that the U.S. Department of Treasury designated Barakat and two of his businesses, Casa Apollo and Barakat Import Export Ltda., as key financier for Hizballah.⁹⁷ Two terrorists related to al-Qaeda were also arrested

in Paraguay in July 2002. Ali Nizar Darhoug and Muhammed Daoud Yassine were reportedly collecting money for al-Qaeda. Additionally, Daoud Yassine's name was found in the address book of a high-ranking al-Qaeda official captured by U.S. forces, Abu Zubaydah.⁹⁸

This extended community coupled with the relative remoteness and inaccessibility of the area also allows Islamist terrorists to successfully establish a working communications center in the region. The communications and logistics network reportedly established by Islamist terrorists in the TBA has been closely monitored for some time by the Argentine intelligence agency, Secretaria de Informacio del Estado (SIDE). It is believed that as early as 2000 Islamist terrorists had established a underground communications network exploiting a system known as Private Automatic Branch Exchange (PABX). PABX makes it possible to evade interception by law enforcement and intelligent agencies by using various satellite signals and telephone networks simultaneously.⁹⁹ In 2000, the Brazilian Federal Police (PF) uncovered secret communication bases near Foz de Iguacu that were used to communicate between the TBA and the Middle East. In 2002, the PF closed several of these communication bases in an attempt to disrupt their activities.¹⁰⁰

Endemic corruption in the TBA, reflective of the situation in the three bordering countries, further facilitates the relationship between transnational criminal networks and Islamist terrorists. In the TBA all illicit activities, to a certain degree, are fueled by government corruption in the form of bribery and threats. They are also made possible through the profits of drug trafficking and other illegal activities that are controlled by criminal gangs and exploited by Islamist terrorists. Drug trafficking profits are also instrumental to the thriving black market of the TBA. As the most significant and profitable illicit activity in the TBA, narcotrafficking is also the logical means to finance a majority of the "activit[ies] of the Islamist terrorist groups and organized crimes syndicates"¹⁰¹ operating in the region.

The accessibility to weapons, forged documents, and other contraband in the TBA is a treasure trove for Islamist terrorists. Throughout the streets of the Ciudad del Este and Foz de Iguacu an AK-47 can be bought for US\$375, a passport can be bought for US\$5,000 and customs officials can be bribed for about US\$500.¹⁰² On November 2000 a Palestinian with alleged links to Hamas, Salah Andul Karim Yassine, was arrested in Ciudad del Este for document fraud. Karim Yassine had entered the country using false documents. Similarly, in April 2002, an Egyptian citizen with suspected links to al-Qaeda, Al-Mahdi Ibrahim Soliman, was arrested in Foz de Iguacu for document fraud.¹⁰³

In addition to providing significant profit, drugs are often traded for weapons, and other services. The same transit routes and infrastructure employed by drug traffickers in the TBA is also used for the smuggling of weapons, and even people.¹⁰⁴ Hizballah, which has operated in the region since the early 1990's, exploits the drug trade in the TBA to supplant the financing of the group and facilitate money-laundering mechanisms.¹⁰⁵ In May 2002, Ali Assi, a Lebanese national, was arrested at Beirut International Airport for possession of cocaine. In the TBA, he worked at the Islamist Welfare Center in Ciudad del Este and maintained reported links to Assad Ahmad Barakat in the region. On July 2002 a raid into the apartment of Fakjumar Sabnani, an alleged Hizballah operative in Ciudad del Este, uncovered "evidence of illegal activities, including letters detailing transfers of assault rifles and military equipment . . . and authorization [from Hizballah] for Sabnani to use \$30 million for arms trafficking."¹⁰⁶

Islamist groups strengthen their presence in the region through extortion and violence. Illegal taxes in the form of a “war tax” are widely imposed on the business community in the area to support the continued financing of terrorist activities. A number of TBA businessmen have been targeted for violence, and even murder. Ussein Mohamed Tayen, who served as President of the Chamber of Commerce in Ciudad del Este, was murdered in 2002 for apparently not complying with the illicit economic dynamics of the region.¹⁰⁷ Since 2001, when Hizballah leaders in the area reportedly issued a fatwa supporting the use of physical violence when necessary, the rise in violence and murders has grown considerably.¹⁰⁸ The bribery and corruption of government officials, law enforcement agents, and civilians in the TBA is also illustrative of the terrorists’ exploitation of the poverty that exists in the three bordering countries.

While the terrorist activities in the TBA remains mostly focused on support networks, links to operational base activities have occurred, as evidenced by the 1992 and 1994 bombings in Buenos Aires. Compared to its extensive infrastructure in the Middle East, Africa, and South East Asia, al-Qaeda’s presence in Latin America can be described a merely “rudimentary.”¹⁰⁹ However, while no concrete proof exists, it has been reported that Khalid Sheikh Mohamed spent time in the TBA in December 1995, the same year Osama bin Laden allegedly visited the region.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, Hizballah appears to have the strongest foothold in the area. The reported ties between al-Qaeda and Hizballah remain speculative¹¹¹; however, the two groups’ collaboration on the tactical level has allegedly increased since al-Qaeda’s eviction from its safe haven in Afghanistan.¹¹² Concrete evidence of Islamist terrorist presence in the TBA, for purposes of an operational base safe haven, is not available. However, the indication of a support network safe haven in the area is undeniable.

The four conditions described above are all present in the TBA. The complex geography of the region makes it an ideal hiding place and transit route for Islamist terrorists. Weak governance has allowed Islamist terrorists to operate beneath the government radar because the three bordering states lack the capacity and resources to extend their authority to the TBA. Corruption on the political and civil level has encouraged criminal activity in the shadow of legitimate socio-economic activities. Violence ensures force is recognized as power in a place where government control is nonexistent. Finally, the woes of poverty and its consequences have influenced bribery and instilled economic hopelessness in the state. The interaction between these conditions results in an environment that is ideal for support base safe havens for Islamist terrorists. While evidence remains ambiguous, greater focus on the activities in the region can only enhance the U.S. government’s knowledge of Islamist terrorist operations.

Section 4: Recommendations

The potential applications of an explanatory theory that offers guidelines detailing conditions that may facilitate the establishment of Islamist terrorists’ safe havens are diverse. It not only allows policymakers a chance to identify future potential safe havens but also presents an opportunity to address such conditions. Recognizing how these conditions emerge and interact to attract Islamist terrorists can shed light on what precautions need to be done to prevent such an outcome. This is a fundamental dimension of the GWOT. To successfully fight terror, the U.S. must be

attentive not only to the areas presently recognized as foci of Islamist terrorists' activities, but also other potential safe havens.

The evidence provided in this article suggests that an Islamist terrorist presence in the TBA has been in place for several years. To eliminate this mounting threat in the TBA, and prevent other potential safe havens from emerging, policymakers must be equipped with the necessary tools to preempt the establishment of Islamist terrorist safe havens. To do so, focus must be on the issues of geographical challenges, weak governance, violence and corruption, and poverty throughout the world.

A starting point to eliminate Islamist terrorist safe havens should include the following recommendations that feature the support of the U.S., in close collaboration with the international community:

- **Infrastructure Development:** Greater accessibility throughout remote regions (including building of roads, bridges) is needed to eliminate potential hiding places for Islamist terrorists. Adequate coordination for monitoring borders and tracking cross border movements is necessary, and where required, international assistance should fill the gaps.

In the TBA, as with most frontier regions, better roads would be greatly advantageous in deterring illegal terrorist related activities. Additionally, interference with the telecommunications network exploited for terrorist activities should consist of a two-part strategy. Initially, the identification and recording of terrorist communication could be used to track terrorist movement and activities. Once that is achieved, tampering with the communication network to block signals could successfully hinder terrorist activities.

- **Sufficient Resources:** A commitment to financial assistance both from donor and recipient countries is needed to guarantee resources for full administrative control and authority over a state's sovereign territory to monitor, intercept, and destroy communications and intelligence gathering networks; identify, infiltrate, and destroy training camps; and train, provide for, and administer sufficient law enforcement manpower. An overhaul of counter-terrorism capability in countries that wish to cooperate with the U.S., but lack the means to do so, must also be overseen and supported.

In Latin America, despite immense natural resources, countries lack the necessary material and institutional resources and skills to effectively tackle illegal activities and corruption within their borders. Significantly, Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay must refrain from denying that terrorism-related activities exist in the TBA and come to terms with the fact that to successfully target the illegal activities that exist within their borders, the three countries need to not only acknowledge the problem but must also cooperate among themselves and ask for international assistance.

- **Institution Building:** Democracy and good governance cannot be imposed on the unwilling, however a commitment must exist to advance towards greater compliance with democratic standards. Democratic values and processes create long-lasting and efficient institutions that permit states to exert central authority throughout their sovereign territories, maintain justice through improved legal institutions, and offer economic opportunity and widespread social services to the population.

The experience and process of institution building cannot be imposed upon the countries that govern the TBA. The best option available for Brazil, Argentina, and

Paraguay is to focus on media efforts to alert and provide a greater understanding of democratic standards so the people can demand them from their institutions. Media can positively affect democracy and institution building in at least two ways: it ensures that citizens make informed choices and serves as a ‘checking function’ by ensuring that elected representatives uphold their oaths of office. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) considers the media to be a vital part of the civil society by encouraging civilian participation in politics, as well as having an impact on ensuring the rule of law is further institutionalized through the independent media that keeps a ‘check’ on the judicial system.¹¹³

- **Monitoring Finances:** The growing transnational illegal economy that funds organized criminal networks and Islamist terrorists alike must be tracked more efficiently. A greater understanding of the various economic avenues used by Islamist terrorists to covertly move and acquire money including hawalas, money laundering, drug trafficking, commodities exchange, and Islamic charities is critical.¹¹⁴ Despite the relative successes of international tools to fight terrorism financing as achieved by the United Nations International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terror and the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development’s Convention Against Transnational Bribery to name two, limitations must be recognized. Enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with these international tools and standardized criminal laws against terrorism financing are desperately needed.¹¹⁵

A cohesive system to track the path of money from origin to final distribution, including its intermediary channels, must be implemented. Other financial transactions such as weapons sales and drug smuggling must be tracked to determine who is facilitating and benefiting from each transaction. The challenge is to successfully establish effective collaborative relationships between all countries and agencies involved and ensure that a more proactive and efficient monitoring mechanism is established.

- **Economic Development:** The establishment of Development Assistance programs in developing countries to enable sound economic development throughout the world is vital. Development Assistance must first emphasize the establishment of peace and security – an important precondition for economic development – through a functioning civil order. Once that is achieved, civil order may support institution building, allowing countries to invest on native human capital and improve transparency and accountability in the process. Investment in human capital may offer societies a stake in their own economic and social well-being, contributing to national development. This helps create a strong civil society, providing the base for long-lasting institutions that have the capacity to manage the development programs funded by the international community.¹¹⁶

In the TBA the market economy focuses mostly on illegal commerce, as is the case with many frontier regions. Thus, economic development is not necessarily lacking in the region, however it is illegal market economy that is flourishing. A program of assistance with the help of the World Bank and the International Monetary Bank (IMF) must intervene to help establish a legal market economy in the region.

- **Improved Intelligence:** A practical framework for real cooperation between law enforcement and intelligence agencies within the U.S. must be established. This relationship should extend beyond the U.S. to its international allies. As a basis for cooperation, integration of all-source intelligence analysis must include law

enforcement agencies and customs and immigration databases. This coordination is imperative to uncover unknown threats. The focus should be not only on states already recognized as safe havens, and sponsors of terrorism, but also on states where conditions may make them vulnerable to future exploitation by terrorists.

Intelligence initiatives are at the core of most of the changes that need to occur in the TBA to successfully combat the role of safe havens in that region. In the TBA, initiatives to infiltrate the foreign Muslim community must use native Latin American agents of Arab origin. Significantly, comprehensive cooperation and sharing of information between the three states' intelligence agencies, such as the Joint Intelligence Center set up in August 2006 by Brazil and Paraguay to monitor the TBA, as well as a strong liaison relationship with American intelligence is imperative to achieving actionable intelligence.¹¹⁷

This article serves as a starting point to addressing the actual and potential proliferation of Islamist terrorism in the TBA, as well as other areas, by recognizing what conditions may lead to the establishment of safe havens where terrorist operations are supported, planned, and orchestrated. In offering these recommendations, this article aims to ignite a constructive debate on the issue of Islamist terrorist safe havens and offer guidelines for combating the problem. To successfully fight the GWOT, the U.S., together with its allies, must focus not only on the known and visible threat, but also on those threats that remain unknown.

Notes

1. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York; W.W. Norton 2004) pp. 364–367.

2. The choice of the TBA is in part, due to its exclusion from the 9/11 National Commission Report that lists currently recognized safe havens used by Islamist terrorists.

3. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York; Columbia University Press 1999) p. 44.

4. *Ibid*, pp. 13–47. The debate that exists over the definition of terrorism is beyond the scope of this article; the general consensus that exists among scholars is used. This includes widely accepted characteristics of terrorism: political objectives; violence, whether by an act, or the threat of such an act; psychological effect beyond the immediate target; conducted by an organization that exists within a hierarchical structure; and carried out by a non-state actor.

5. For more background on transnational Islamist terrorists and al-Qaeda affiliates, see Hoffman, "Combating Al-Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat;" Jonathan Schanzer, *Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups & The Next Generation of Terror* (Washington, DC; Specialist Press International 2004); Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (London; Tauris 2003); Karen Greenberg, ed., *Al-Qaeda Now: Understanding Today's Terrorists* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press 2005); International Crisis Group, "Understanding Islamism;" Angel Rabasa, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Sara A. Daly, Heather S. Gregg, Theodore W. Karasik, Kevin A. O'Brien, William Rosenau, 'Beyond Al-Qaeda: Part I, The Global Jihadist Movement.' (Santa Monica, CA; RAND Corporation 2006) http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG429.pdf and Angel Rabasa, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Sara A. Daly, Heather S. Gregg, Theodore W. Karasik, Kevin A. O'Brien, William Rosenau, 'Beyond Al-Qaeda: Part 2, The Outer Rings of the Terrorist Universe.' (Santa Monica, CA; RAND Corporation 2006) http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG430.pdf

6. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, pp. 364–367.

7. The distinction between organizational and operational tools offered in this paragraph is drawn from Kim Cragin & Sara A. Daly, 'The Dynamic Terrorist Threat: An Assessment of Group Motivations and Capabilities in a Changing World.' (Santa Monica, CA; RAND 2004). Cragin & Daly use this distinction to measure terrorists' capabilities and

intentions. In this work, the author uses Cragin & Daly's analysis to explore what requirements are necessary to establish and use safe havens.

8. Remoteness is not the only geographic characteristic that appeals to terrorists. Before 9/11, al-Qaeda moved freely in Western Europe, particularly in Germany where a 9/11 cell flourished in Hamburg. For a brief overview on the al-Qaeda Hamburg cell see Peter Finn, 'Hamburg's Cauldron of Terror.' *The Washington Post* 11 September 2002. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64793-2002Sep10.html>. Additionally, several Hizballah cells within the United States have been uncovered and are being prosecuted. For more information on Hizballah's activities in the US, see Associated Press, 'N.C. Man Pleads Guilty to Helping Hizballah;' 01 April 01 2002. Electronic version; Daniel Pipes, 'The Hizballah in America: An Alarming Network.' *National Review Online* 28 August 2000.

9. For a more in-depth discussion of globalization and terrorism, please refer to: Jamal R. Nassar, *Globalization and Terrorism: The Migration of Dreams and Nightmares* (New York; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2004) and Manfred Steger, *Globalism: Market Ideology Meets Terrorism* (New York; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2005).

10. 'Mindanao,' Encyclopædia Britannica Online. <<http://www.britannica.com/>>.

11. Brett Decker, 'Out of Manila's Control.' *National Review Online* 11 May 2004. Electronic version.

12. Zoher Abdoolcarim, 'The Philippines' Terrorist Refuge.' *TIME Asia*, 17 February 2003. Electronic version.

13. Megan Stack, 'A Bard Against Bullet.' *The Los Angeles Times* 18 October 2004. Electronic version.

14. Stack (note 12).

15. Loretta Napoleoni, *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Networks* (London; Pluto Press 2003) p. 159.

16. Ibid.

17. Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (London; Lynne Rienner Publishers 2003) p. 19. See also Simon Elegant, 'Elevated Philippine Terror.' *Front Page Magazine* 29 October 2003. <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=10542>

18. Schanzer, (note 5) p. 27.

19. Napoleoni (note 16) p. 139.

20. Ray Takeyh & Nikolas Gvosdev, 'Do Terrorist Networks Need a Home?' *The Washington Quarterly* 25:3 (Summer 2002) pp. 97–108.

21. Napoleoni (note 16) p. 140.

22. Ibid.

23. A 'state shell' is an informal, illegal authority that is able to establish its rules and economic system within a territory where a political vacuum exists. For more on state shells see Napoleoni (note 16) Chapter 5: "The Birth of the Terror State Shell."

24. Decker (note 10).

25. International Crisis Group, 'Yemen: Coping with Terrorism and Violence in a Fragile State.' No. 8 8 January 2003. See also Stack (note 12). For more information on the historical background of the tribal role in Yemen, see Shelagh Weir, *A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen* (Texas; University of Texas Press 2007).

26. 'Yemen—A Crossroads of International Terrorism.' *United Press International* 13 October 2000. Electronic version.

27. Stack (note 12)

28. Scott Baldauf, 'Key to Governing Afghans: The Clans.' *The Christian Science Monitor* 24 June 2004. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0624/p01s04-wosc.html>

29. United Nations Office of Drugs & Crimes, 'Corruption.' <<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption.html#UN>>

30. Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Funding Evil: How Terrorism Is Financed & How to Stop It* (Boston; Bonus Books 2005) pp. 181–184.

31. Transparency International, 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2006.' http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2006/cpi_2006_1/cpi_table These countries, as well as others recognized as Islamist terrorists' safe havens by the 9/11 National Commission Report, have a CPI ranging from 1.0–2.6 out of 10 indicating a high level of corruption.

32. Ehrenfeld (note 30) p. 30.

33. Ibid.

34. For more on rule of law see Thomas Carothers, 'Democracy's Sobering State.' *Current History* (December 2004) pp. 412–216. See also Max Weber, *The Theory of Social & Economic Organization* (Oxford; Oxford University Press 1947) p. 156.

35. William Horsley, 'Leaders Urged to Combat Corruption.' *BBC News Online* 28 August 2002. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2221684.stm>>

36. Napoleoni (note 16) p. 102.

37. For more on the nexus between transnational criminal networks and terrorism see Ehrenfeld (note 30) Chapter 5: 'Other Narco-Terrorists.' See also Mark A.R. Kleiman, 'Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy.' (The Congressional Research Service; Library of Congress 2004).

38. Michael Klare and David Andersen, *A Scourge of Guns: The Diffusion of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Latin America* (Washington, DC: Federation of American Scientists, 1996) pp. 57–61.

39. Abuza, (note 14) p. 34.

40. Ibid. pp. 34–36.

41. 'Country Profile: Mali.' (The Congressional Research Service; Library of Congress 2005) <lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf>

42. For more on the relationship between poverty and terrorism, see J. Khan and T. Weiner, 'World Leaders Rethinking Strategy on Aid to Poor' *New York Times* 18 December 2002. Charles Russell and Bowman Miller, 'Profile of a Terrorist' *Terrorism: An International Journal* No. 1, 1977; Maxwell Taylor, *The Terrorist* (London; Brassey's Defense Publishers 1988). Walter Laqueur, 'The Terrorism to Come.' *Policy Review* no. 126 (August 2004).

43. For more on the lack of direct link between poverty and terrorism, see Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, 'Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There A Causal Connection?' *Journal of Economic Perspectives* Vol. 17 (Fall 2003) pp. 119–144. Laqueur (note 42); Robert Barro, 'The Myth That Poverty Breeds Terrorism' *Business Week Online* 10 June 2002. <http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/02_23/b3786027.htm>

44. Laqueur (note 42).

45. Napoleoni (note 16) p. 105. See also Anne Perkins, 'Hewitt Links World Poverty with Terror.' *The Guardian* 31 January 2003. <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/foreignaffairs/story/0,11538,886018,00.html>

46. Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economics Possibilities for our Time* (New York; The Penguin Press 2005) pp. 56–71.

47. Perkins (note 45).

48. Stack (note 12).

49. Baldauf (note 28).

50. Scott Baldauf and Owais Tohid, "Pakistani Army Must Go Through the Pashtuns." *The Christian Science Monitor* 25 June 2004. <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0625/p07s02-wosc.html>>

51. Abuza (note 14) p. 16.

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