

# **Confronting Terrorism in Latin America: Latin America and United States Policy Implications**

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## **Introduction**

This article argues that an effective guide to anti-terrorist policy formulation in Latin America should be done on a common, clear, and prospective strategy. Therefore, a set of principles based on an analysis of successful methods used in the past, mindful of the sorts of actions acceptable to a democratic society, and capable of making changes as a result of research and new data following from more contemporary operational experience. Another aspect of major importance is the use of a multilateral approach based on regional consensus as a fundamental requirement to achieve the entire political support among all the countries in the region to effectively combat the threat of terrorism in the Western Hemisphere.

This article has been developed in two main parts: the first part presents an overview of the historical evolution of terrorism, in order to understand the nature of this subject, with special focus on analysis of contemporary political terrorism in Latin America. It outlines some major problems in defining terrorism, analytical framework of terrorism, some selected problems in the response to terrorism, and some of the major policy options in democratic societies.

The second part of this article takes into account the new U.S. National Security Strategy, particularly after September 11, 2001. It outlines status of terrorism in Latin America today, including such organization as Shining Path in Peru, FARC, (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas) ELN, (Ejercito de Liberación Nacional) and AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) in Colombia, the Tri-border area of South America, as well as the strategic effects of the Iraq conflict in the region. It concludes by dealing with what should be the most important aspects that need to be taken into consideration in getting a U.S.-Latin America strategy and organization that can establish, enforce, and continually refine a holistic political-military plan and generate consistent national and international support.

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### Historical evolution

Terrorism is violence, but not every form of violence is terrorism. Terrorism has become both a driving force and a critical uncertainty in security decisions. It is vitally important to recognize that terrorism, although difficult to define precisely, as this brief history review will show, is not a synonym for civil war, banditry, or guerrilla warfare. Therefore, terrorism, in the most widely accepted contemporary usage of the term, is fundamentally and inherently political. It is also ineluctably about power: the pursuit of power, the acquisition of power, and the use of power to achieve political change. Terrorism is thus indiscriminate violence—or, equally important, the threat of such violence—used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim. Some would consider an early example to be the *sicari*, an extreme Jewish faction, who were active during the Roman occupation of Palestine (they gave us the word “zealot”). They were also involved in the siege of and the collective suicide at Masada. Although the zealots engaged in a form of guerrilla warfare against the Romans outside the cities, they apparently concentrated their terrorist activity in Jerusalem. When the revolt of the year 66 took place, the *sicari* were actively involved; one of them was the commander of the fortress Masada. Josephus Flavius (Jewish historian 37 CE - circa 100 CE) called them brigands of a new type, and he considered them mainly responsible for the national catastrophe of the year 70 CE, when the second temple was destroyed and the Jewish state ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

Another early example of terrorists is the Order of the Assassins in the eleventh century, an offshoot of the Ismailis, a Muslim sect. Hassan I Sabah, the founder of the order, was born in Qom, the Shiite center in northern Persia. Sabah adopted an extreme form of Ismaili doctrine that called for the seizure of several mountain fortresses; the first such fortress, Almut, was seized in 1090. Years later the Assassins decided to transfer their activities from remote mountain regions to the main urban centers. Their first urban victim was the chief minister of the Sultan of Baghdad, Nazim al Mulq, a Sunni by religious persuasion and therefore an enemy. During the years that followed, Assassins were active in Persia, Syria, and Palestine, killing a great number of their enemies, mainly Sunnis but also Christians, including Count Raymond II of Tripoli in Syria and Marquis Conrad of Montferrat, who ruled the kingdom of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Goldberg G. J. [Flavius Josephus Home Page](#) “Chronology of the War” last updated August 17, 2002

<sup>2</sup> Laqueur, Walter [The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction](#) Terrorism and History page 11 New York: Oxford, 1999.

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In cultures such as China and India secret societies have flourished from time immemorial. Many of these societies practiced violence and had their “enforcers.” Their motivation was usually religious more than political, even though there was a pronounced element of xenophobia in both cases, such as the attacks against “foreign devils” culminating in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. In India, the motivation of the thuggee (from which we get the word “thug”), who strangled their victims, was apparently to make an act of sacrifice to the goddess Kali.

The nineteenth century, a time of great national tension and social ferment, witnessed the emergence of both modern—what is called “traditional”—terrorism and guerrilla warfare, which appeared first in the framework of Napoleonic War in Spain and Russia, then continued in various parts of Asia and Africa, and reached its high tide after the Second World War with the disintegration of the European empires. Terrorism as we know it grew out of secret societies of Italian and Irish patriots, but it also manifested itself in most Balkan countries, in Turkey and Egypt, and of course among the extreme anarchists, who believed in the strategy of propaganda by deed. Last but not least were the Russian terrorists, who prior to the First World War were by far the most active and successful. Terrorism was widely discussed among the European far left, not because the use of violence as a political statement was a monopoly of the left but because the right was the political establishment, and prior to World War I the left was seen as the agent of the change, trying to overthrow those in power. However, most leaders of the left rejected terrorism for both philosophical and practical reasons.<sup>3</sup>

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and up to the outbreak of the First World War, terrorist attacks took place in many places all over the globe. They were widespread in the Ottoman Empire, then in its last phase of disintegration. Armenian terrorism against the Turks began in the 1890s but ended in disaster with the mass murder of Armenians during World War I. Later there was a third wave of Armenian terrorism in the late 1970s and 1980s, when the Turkish ambassadors to Austria and France were killed.

There were a great many attempts on the life of leading statesmen between 1880s and the first decade of the twentieth century. American presidents Garfield and McKinley were among those killed. There were several attempts to assassinate Bismarck and Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany. French president

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<sup>3</sup> Laqueur, Walter *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* Terrorism and History page 12 New York: Oxford, 1999.

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Carnot was killed in 1894; in France also there were several attempts to murder Napoleon 1803-15 and Napoleon III 1860s in an age well before the rise of anarchism.

Generalizations with regard to terrorism are almost always misleading, but it can be said that terrorism in the 1920s and 1930s certainly stemmed more from the extreme right than left. There were some terrorist operations in the early history of Italian fascism. Mussolini gave support to the extreme right-wing Croatian Ustasha. The Ustasha wanted independence for their country, and like many other terrorists, they welcomed help from any quarter. On the other hand, Lenin wrote terrorism was one form of the military struggle that might be usefully applied or even be essential during certain moments of battle. However, other leaders such as Trotsky were against it for pragmatic reasons. "Even if successful, he wrote in 1911," terrorism would only cause confusion among the ruling classes for a short time. The capitalist system did not rest on a government minister and would not disappear with the eradication of one".<sup>4</sup>

With the end of the Second World War, the terrorist action shifted from Europe to the Middle East and Asia. In the colonies and other dependencies in North Africa and the Middle East, nationalist groups striving for independence launched violent campaigns. Terrorist acts had, of course, taken place before in the East; for example, prime ministers had been assassinated in Iraq and Egypt. But with the weakening of the colonial powers, violence gained a new powerful momentum.

In urban societies such as Palestine and Cyprus, the action, by necessity, took place mainly in the cities. In Algeria, the struggle against the French proceeded both in the cities and in the countryside, and elements of terrorism and guerrilla warfare appeared side by side. Terrorism in Palestine, spearheaded by Irgun, had first appeared on the eve of the Second World War, but then called an armistice until the end of the war. On the other hand the Algerian war for independence began in 1954 in the mountainous regions of the country, was carried to the cities, and lasted for seven years.

In Latin America, during the colonial days there were some terrorist activities against the colonial empires as the most effective way to destabilize the

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<sup>4</sup> Laqueur, Walter *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* Terrorism and History page 22 New York: Oxford, 1999.

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government. However, the outbreaks of terrorism in the late 1960s that were not nationalist-separatist in character but drew its inspiration from the extreme left. The Tupamaros of Uruguay were the prototype of this new terrorism. They emerged in a country that for years had been the most progressive in Latin America, and even in the 1960s was among the more liberal. The Tupamaros, who stood for radical political and social change, attracted some of the best and most idealistic from the younger generation, and they engaged in bank robberies and kidnappings but not in indiscriminate murder. The Tupamaros caused the rise of a military dictatorship and destroyed the democratic system, and at the same time, brought about the destruction of their own movement.

Terrorism in Argentina began a few years after the outbreak in Uruguay. It was on a far more massive scale, and both the terrorist operations and the backlash were more indiscriminate and bloody. In contrast to their Uruguayan comrades, Argentina terrorist consisted of two groups: the Montoneros (basically Peronist in orientation and social composition), and the smaller but better equipped and organized ERP (Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo) (People's Revolutionary Army) more doctrinally left-wing in character and consisting in large masses of students. The Montoneros began their campaign with the killing of ex-President Aramburu in May 1970. Terrorism in Argentina reached its height in the period 1975-76. There were 646 political murders in 1976, and the terrorists attacked military installations in some provincial cities. Argentina is one of the recorded examples of urban guerrilla activity using terrorist tactics—that is, where terrorists came close to establishing liberated zones in urban areas.

Within a decade military dictatorship in Argentina, as in Uruguay, gave way to a representative civilian government, but the experience of these countries did show that even weak and ineffective governments were capable of defending themselves when terrorists had no hope of gaining the support of significant section of the population.

Considered by many to be at one time the most dangerous and violent terrorist organization in the world, the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) of Peru is unique in many ways. After twenty years of violent disruption of civilized order it remains today a menace to Peruvian society despite the attempt by successive governments to defeat it and despite a general revulsion at its message and its methods. Christened by Marxists as a shining path to the future, it now represents for most Peruvians something that is archaic and destructive. "Originating as an educational enterprise in the Indian-highlands of Peru and directed by academics

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anxious to reinvigorate a community, it twisted away into authoritarian rigidity contemptuous even of the poor it set out to benefit.”<sup>5</sup>

Most Latin American countries witnessed urban terror, and it would be tedious to survey all of them here. Venezuela was one of the first to confront urban terrorism, and in some respects the country seemed predestined for it, since two-thirds of the population lived in urban centers and a substantial part of the powerful Communist party supported the terrorists. (This was a fairly rare exception, because relations between terrorists and Communists were usually not good; the established Communists considered the terrorists dangerous adventurers far from the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, where the terrorists saw the Communists as no better than other conservative politicians who talked much and did little). Terrorism in Venezuela failed not because of massive police repression—the measures taken by the democratic government were halfhearted—but because the terrorists caused more irritation and hardship for the general public than for the government, disrupted daily life, and brought about a public groundswell of revulsion against them.

Neither was terrorism very successful at the early 1960s in Colombia, even though this country had one of the most violent political traditions in Latin America. The terrorist movement M 19, FARC, ELN, and AUC appeared on the scene not when repression was most violent but on the contrary, when a democratically elected government was in power when economic development was strong. In later years there was to be a resurgence of terrorism in Colombia, but this had more to do with the appearance of the drug cartels and their growing power than with revolutionary zeal.<sup>6</sup>

### The problem of defining terrorism

The first analytical task facing commentators on terror is to define their subject matter. Because terrorism engenders such as extreme emotions, partly as a reaction to the horrors associated with it and partly because of its ideological context, the search for a definition, which is both precise enough to provide a meaningful analytical device yet general enough to obtain general agreement from

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<sup>5</sup> Whittaker, J. David. The Terrorism Reader. Peru page 151 New Fetter Lane, London Routledge, 2001

<sup>6</sup> Laqueur, Walter The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction Terrorism and History page 26-27 New York: Oxford, 1999.

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participants in the debate is fraught with difficulty. Without a basic definition it is not possible to say whether the phenomenon we call terrorism is a threat at all, whether it is a phenomenon of a different nature to its predecessors, and whether there can be a theory of terrorism.

A major stumbling block to the serious study of terrorism stems from considering terrorism a moral problem. This is one of the major reasons for the difficulty over the definition of terrorism. For a definition to be universally accepted it needs to consider not only behavioral description, but include individual motivation, social milieu, and political purpose. Many academic students of terrorism seem to find little difficulty in labeling an event as “terrorist” without making a moral judgment about the act. Many politicians, law enforcement and governmental officials, and citizens find themselves unable to take such a detached view. It may not be too difficult to construct an acceptable definition within a given reference group. The problem arises when that group attempts to engage in dialogue with others.

This communication problem is of more than academic importance. It is one of the roots of the causes of both the vacillations in policy, which characterize the responses of most individual states to terrorism, and of the complete failure of the international community to launch any effective multinational initiatives to combat the problem. Within a given community those who study terrorism often cannot communicate with the policy-makers and law-enforcers because the latter groups often reject the analytical techniques of the former as being of insufficient relevance to the real world. Part, at least, of this lack of relevance is seen as an inability to distinguish between “right” and “wrong” acts. At the international level, the political support given to sectional interests militate against a universal definition that could form the bases for international law and action. Thus, for example, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is seen by some nations as a terrorist group having no political legitimacy and using morally unjustifiable methods of violence to achieve unacceptable ends. On the other hand, other nations view the PLO as the legitimate representative of an oppressed people using necessary and justifiable violence (not terrorism) to achieve just and inevitable ends. The definition rests, then, on moral justification. But, in fact, **the proper study of terrorism should seek to explain a phenomenon, not justify it.** And it must be realized by all that explanation does not entail justification.

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### Definitions of terrorism

In order to appreciate the nature of the terrorism it is necessary to look at the definitions and concepts of terror and terrorism and to examine their often ambiguous relation to other forms of civil, military, and political violence and to criminal behavior. Wilkinson notes that one of the central problems in defining terrorism lies with the subjective nature of terror.<sup>7</sup> Because of the complex interplay of the subjective forces and of frequently irrational individual responses it is very difficult to accurately define terror and to study it scientifically. For this reason, and because of its inherently, ideological nature, behavioral scientists have tended, until recently, to steer clear of the subject of terror and terrorism. Historians, psychiatrists, and social philosophers have not been so reluctant. However, they have studied those leaders, regimes, and governments responsible for developing explicit theories and policies of terrorism, or have attempted to assess the political leaders behavior, socio-economic, and political preconditions for and consequences of terrorism. According to Dr. Jerrold Post a nationally recognized expert on the psychology of political leadership “Certainly in reviewing the history of the twentieth century, it would be difficult to portray the major events as simply a consequence of historical and political forces, ignoring the impact of such giant figures as Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Josef Stalin, Adolfo Hitler, and Mao Ze-dong.”<sup>8</sup>

The first, and easiest, distinction to make is between terror and terrorism. The use of terror in itself does not constitute terrorism. Criminals for personal ends may employ terror. This type will not be discussed in this article. This article will focus in the employment of terror as indiscriminate use of violent means for political ends, in particular in Latin America.

Within this framework, many have tried to refine the definition of terrorism. For Thornton, **terrorism is the use of terror as a symbolic act designed to influence political behavior by extra-normal means, entailing the use on threat of violence.**<sup>9</sup> Terrorism may achieve political ends by either mobilizing

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<sup>7</sup> Wilkinson, Peter. *Terrorism and the Liberal State* London: Macmillan, 1974

<sup>8</sup> Post, M Jerrold *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders with Profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton* Profiling Political Leaders: An Introduction page 1 The University of Michigan Press 2003

<sup>9</sup> Thornton, T. P *Terror as a Weapon of Political Agitation* page 73 in H. Eckstein (ed), *Internal War*, London: Collier-Macmillan, 1964.

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forces sympathetic to the cause of the terrorists or by immobilizing the forces of the incumbent authorities.

An important emphasis in Thornton's definition of terrorism is on its *extranormal* quality. The use of terror may be placed in the upper levels of a continuum of political agitation, above political violence (such as riots). It is the extranormal nature of the use of terror that distinguishes it from other forms of political violence. Terrorism is further characterized by its high symbolic content. Thornton contends that the symbolic nature of terrorism contributes significantly to its relatively high efficacy.<sup>10</sup>

### Political terrorism

Wilkinson divides political terrorism into three types: revolutionary terrorism, sub-revolutionary terrorism, and repressive terrorism. **Revolutionary terrorism is defined as the use of systematic tactics of terroristic violence with the objective of bringing about political revolution.**<sup>11</sup> It is characterized by four major attributes: 1) it is always a group, not an individual phenomenon, even though the groups may be very small; 2) both the revolution and the use of terror in its furtherance are always justified by some revolutionary ideology or program; 3) there exist leaders capable of mobilizing people for terrorism (Wilkinson attributes more importance to the availability of leaders as stressed by collective behavior theorists than he does the role of personality factors stressed by some other theorists); 4) alternative institutional structure because the revolutionary movement must partake action in the political system and therefore must develop its own policy-making bodies and codification of behaviour.<sup>12</sup>

The second category in Wilkinson's typology is sub-revolutionary terrorism, which is defined as **terror used for political motives other than revolution or governmental repression.** Where revolutionary terrorism seek a total change, sub-revolutionary terrorism is aimed at more limited goals such as forcing the government to change its policy on some issue, warning or punishing specific

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, 74

<sup>11</sup> Wilkinson, Peter. *Terrorism and the Liberal State* London: Macmillan, 1974. An interesting attempt to refine Wilkinson's typology and to select a set of variable that may be operationalized may be found in R. Shultz, Conceptualizing political terrorism: A typology, *Journal of International Affairs*, 1978, 32, 7-15. nevertheless, for expository purpose Wilkinson's outline provides the clearest scheme for analysis

<sup>12</sup> From, Erick. *The Fear of Freedom* pages 47-49 London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1942

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public officials, or retaliating against government actions seen as reprehensible by the terrorists.

Wilkinson's third category, repressive terrorism, is defined as **the systematic use of terroristic acts of violence for the purposes of suppressing, putting down, quelling, or restraining certain groups, individuals or forms of behavior deemed to be undesirable by the oppressor.** Repressive terrorism relies heavily on the services of specialized agencies (the secret security *apparat*) whose members are trained to torture, murder, deceive, etc. Recent examples of separateness of the "terror staff" are Hitler's SS with their isolated system of values, unique uniforms and hierarchies and Papa Doc Duvalier's *Tonton Macoutes* in Haiti, with the famous sunglasses which provide a striking visual representation of the psychological distance which terrorist may try to establish to separate themselves from the populace.

### Some selected problems in the response to terrorism

The implications of the changing security landscape for the analyst and policymaker are potentially tremendous. In essence, we may be witnessing a boomerang effect in which we must focus on aspects of both national security, in which military forces may continue to play a pre-eminent role, and human security, in which non-traditional security issues predominate. Thus, we may well witness renewed focus on failed or failing states, epidemiology (as, for example, in the case of AIDS), environmental stress, resource scarcity and depletion, drugs, terrorism, small arms, inhumane weapons, cyber-war, and narco-trafficking.

Terrorism is where politics and violence intersect in the hope of delivering power. All terrorism involves the quest for power: power to dominate and coerce, to intimidate and control, and ultimately to effect fundamental political change. Violence (or the threat of violence) is thus the *sine qua non* of terrorists, who are unswervingly convinced that only through violence can their cause triumph and their long-term political aims be attained. While it is true that the existence of injustice or inequality within a state provides a fertile ground for the development of social movements which view terrorism as a legitimate tool for change it is not the case that the elimination of these evils would necessarily eliminate the threat of terrorism.

The increasing evidence of nihilistic philosophies and idiosyncratic motivations among terrorist groups, combined with the disruptive/destructive

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potential inherent in nuclear, biological, and biochemical materials implies that we will always have to face policy choices other than prescriptions for social change. This does not imply that government can ignore or downgrade acknowledgement of social problems and policies designed to remedy them. In reality, the future holds problems of a structural nature (for all types of political systems), which, indicate that a truly just and equal society is little short of fanciful.

Democratic states that strive for but do not meet goals will be challenged in the future only by those who demand change. It is the duty of these states to evolve policies aimed specifically at countering such demands if the tactic chosen to advance them is terrorism. Policies to be examined include those related to intelligence gathering, the news media, the use of the armed forces in a counter-terrorist role, domestic anti-terrorist legislation and international treaties, and the handling of hostage situations. There are decisions to be taken in all of these areas, which have important consequences for the type of society in which we will live and they ought properly to be subject of informed public debate.

According to Steven Monblatt, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism in Latin America and, with the very notable exception of the situation in Colombia, governments in the region have been fairly successful in dismantling local terrorist groups and thwarting their attempts at violence. They have not been as successful in countering the support activities of the other international and more complex groups. The problem is complicated by a series of factors, some new, some long-standing. The most important among them are: governments in Latin America have limited resources to devote to new counter-terrorism initiative; local legislation is often outdated, or does not address some important issues, such as regulation of charities; corruption in some critical sectors such as banking and customs; lack of well-trained counter-terrorism cadres in all three branches of government; history of human rights abuse in some countries that limits popular support for new measures which might lead to further abuse; ethnic politics in some countries constrains governments; links between terrorist groups, drug trafficking, arms smugglers and urban gangs which have weakened governmental control in some areas and opened the way to the creation of safe havens.

Many of the vulnerable areas in the hemisphere are well known. However, several critical vulnerabilities do not get attention they need. For example, the U.S. imports just under 600,000 containers yearly from ports in Latin America and the Caribbean. A terrorist attempt using one of these containers, even if

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thwarted, would bring demands to radically increase container inspection. What would be the impact of an attempt to increase inspections to 100%? How convincing to the public would be explanations that this level of inspection was not really necessary?

### Policy options

In general, the attitudes taken toward terrorism and appropriate policies to be used in dealing with it have become polarized into a soft, compromising view on the one hand, and a tough, no concessions, view on the other. What is necessary for an effective guide to anti-terrorist policy formation is a set of principles based on an analysis of successful tactics used in the past contained within the bounds of some basic assumption about the sort of actions acceptable to democratic society and capable of absorbing changes as a result of research and new data following for more contemporary operational experience. The following options might be suggested as parts of an anti-terrorist campaign.

1. Attempt to find long-term solutions to the underlying causes of terrorism. This approach involves a decision to acknowledge that there are remediable inequities in society, which may provide objective causes of terrorism.
2. Increase the size and power of the security forces; for example increase manpower, search and entry powers, power to detain without trial, etc. This would involve major policy decisions about the nature of policing our society, civil rights, etc.
3. Introduce capital punishment for terrorist activities. If terrorists are to be treated as a separate class of offenders which types of terrorist acts are to be made capital offenses
4. Enact legislation-limiting rights of assembly and increasing controls over the members of society by way of identification cards, registration of residence and extensive use of computerized files.
5. Establish a “special force” or special military units to cope with terrorist attack. The decision to employ new types of force involves policy decisions about how early to commit military forces, the role of the police in anti-terrorist operations, and civil-military relations.

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6. Announce a policy of “no negotiations” with terrorists. Such a policy implies a wide range of decisions about such issues as the value of individual life, authority and prestige of the state, and how far in reality such a policy would be pursued.
7. Make it illegal for individuals or private organizations to pay ransom to terrorists or to take out ransom insurance, and place a legal duty on people to report hostage takings to the police.
8. Introduce internment without trial or special legal procedure designed to limit intimidation of witnesses. These kinds of changes require major policy decisions about the legal system, civil rights and political consequences of such changes.
9. Place legal limits on the ability of the media to report terrorist acts; such restrictions involve some of the most controversial policy decisions about freedom of the press, free speech, and the nature of government.
10. Promote and become a signatory to international treaties providing for extradition or trial of captured terrorists, suspension of air services to countries providing safe haven for hijackers, etc. This involves decisions about the effectiveness of international measures, the definition of terrorism and whether or not to allow “political exception” clauses.
11. Introduce special anti-terrorist legislation, which may mandate a combination of the above or other measures. Such legislation implies that a decision has been taken that normal legal processes (cannot deal with terrorists) and leads to significant intrusion into every-day life.

### The rule of law

The foremost principle must be the objective of maintenance of democratic processes of government and the rule of law. This principle has been stressed by Wilkinson who writes:

*It cannot be sufficiently stressed that this aim overrides in importance even the objective of eliminating terrorism and political violence as such. Any bloody tyrant can solve the problem of political violence if he is prepared to sacrifice all considerations of humanity, and to trample down all constitutional and judicial*

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*rights*<sup>13</sup> However, to believe that depriving citizens of their individual rights and suspending the democratic process is necessary to maintain “order” is to put oneself on the same moral plane as the terrorists, who believe that “the end justifies the means.” It is important that executive control of anti-terrorist and security policy rests with the civil authorities (the elected government) that are accountable to the people for their actions. Further, it should be both policy and practice for the government and its security forces to act within the law.

We must uphold constitutional authority and law and order, and we must do so with firmness and determination. To do so requires political will, but most importantly it requires citizen support. To gain such support the political will must be translated into effective action.

First, the government must be open and honest about its policies and objectives. As will be stressed when we come to examine the role of the armed forces in counter terrorism, it is particularly important in a democratic society to spell out clearly the circumstances under which military aid to the civil power would be invoked, the rights and responsibilities of military personnel operating in an internal security role, and the lines of command and control.

Second, the government must accord full and proper support to its civil and security forces personnel who are involved in counter-terrorist operations. In particular, it is necessary to avoid sudden changes in security policy, which could undermine both official and public confidence in the government’s ability to handle difficult situations.

Third, any anti-terrorist measures must be, and must be seen to be directed only at terrorists. The response must be limited, well defined and controlled. It must also, wherever at all possible, be publicly explained by the civilian authorities (the elected government) that are accountable to the people for their actions.

Arguments about legal behavior are particularly important in the field of intelligence gathering. Intelligence is the central pivot around which an effective counter-terrorist operation revolves. It is also potentially dangerous to the democratic form of government itself, particularly when a large and poorly controlled intelligence apparatus is established or grows and begins to consider itself the defender of all things “good” and assumes executive functions. It is

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<sup>13</sup> <sup>12</sup> Wilkinson, P. Terrorism and the Liberal State page 121 London: Macmillan, 1977

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possible to tighten democratic control and accountability of intelligence agencies without damaging their effectiveness.<sup>14</sup>

### The problem of concessions

It is apparent from the forgoing that government should adopt a consistent firm approach to the handling of terrorist situations, which avoids extremes of policy (either hard-or soft-line). Part of this approach must be a policy of no deal or concessions to terrorists' political demands. There is now ample evidence to show how terrorist groups escalate their demands if governments make concessions to them. The kidnapping by Brazilian terrorists of Western diplomats is a case in point. On 4 September 1969, the U.S. ambassador to Brazil was kidnapped and then released following the release of 15 terrorist prisoners. On June 11 1970, the German Ambassador was kidnapped. This time the price paid was 40 prisoners.

In Argentina, the Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo, ERP (People's Revolutionary Army) extracted huge sums of money as ransom because international corporations met their demands. On the other hand an hard-line policy of "no concession" is exemplified by the U.S. government approach. They have faced a large number of kidnappings of diplomats, military personnel, businessmen, and tourists. Whenever the government has been directly responsible for negotiations they have refused to give in to terrorist demands. A number of diplomats have been murdered because of their government's determination to stick to its policy. It is suggested that this general approach taken by the U.S. government is in its own, and other, long-term interests if terrorism is to be successfully combated.

### Negotiation Strategies

To give an idea of some of the options facing governments in dealing with the terrorist demand Bobrow has listed four basic models of terrorist crisis resolution.<sup>15</sup> These models are:

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<sup>14</sup> see discussion of this issue in [Royal commission on Intelligence and Security](#) Fourth Report (vol. 1) (the Hope Report) Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1977.

<sup>15</sup> <sup>14</sup> Bobrow, David B. [Preparing for unwanted events](#): Instances of International political terrorism. *Terrorism: An International Journal*, 1978, 1, 397-422.

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1. *The domination model.* This model involves no bargaining, with the government's aim being surround, isolate, and annihilate the terrorists. The terrorists' options are to surrender and take the consequences, or resist and be killed. The fate of the hostage is of secondary importance in this model.
2. *The contingent concession model.* Here attempt are made to isolate the terrorist, but limited bargaining then occurred. According to this model, the fate of the hostage is a consideration, but in the final analysis is still subordinate to actions that maintain the superiority of the state.
3. *The ransom with entrapment model.* This model implies that bargaining take place as if the government is going to comply with the terrorists' demands. The aim is to deceive the terrorists into releasing their hostage so that they may then be overcome without in fact delivering the ransom.
4. *The ransom with eventual retribution model.* This model recognizes that the terrorists control the immediate situation and the safety of the hostage is of prime importance. In the government's view their only option is to accede to the terrorists' demands but they still have it in mind to somehow punish them at some future time.

Of course these models are a very simplified version of reality and do not embrace all possibilities, but they do encapsulate most responses to date. It is necessary to develop such models and analyze the outcomes, which have occurred when a particular model has been employed. We may then be in better position to face the future. Suicide bombing and other indiscriminate killings, which are more common today has not been considered because political terrorist groups in Latin America have not need such mechanisms in the past or in the present.

### **The United States National Security Strategy after September 11, 2001 and terrorist activities in Latin America today**

President George W Bush's report on the National Security Strategy of the United States of America, released on September 17, 2002, was not only the first major strategy statement of a new administration; it was also the first since the surprise attacks of September 11, 2001. The first major innovation is Bush's equating of terrorists with tyrants as source of danger. United States leadership is acceptable because it is linked with certain values that all state and cultures share. Bush insists that the ultimate goal of U.S. strategy must be to spread democracy

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everywhere. But, what the NSS says is: we will **defend** the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will **preserve** the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will **extend** the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.

September 11 showed that terrorists could now inflict levels of destruction that only states wielding military power used to be able to accomplish. Weapons of mass destruction were the last resort for those possessing them during the Cold War, the NSS points out. “Today, our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapon of choice.” That elevates terrorists to the level of tyrants in Bush’s thinking, and is why he insists that preemption must be added to—though not necessary in all situations replace—the tasks of containment and deterrence: “We cannot let our enemies strike first.”

There is also a preference for preempting multilaterally: “The United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community. But we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them doing harm against our people and our country.”

Terrorism in Latin America is determined from two basic sources: first, groups based outside the region, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Al Qaeda, second, homegrown groups, such as the FARC, ELN, and AUC in Colombia and Shining Path in Peru that have been added to the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. While the extent of their threat to the region when compared to groups like Al Qaeda or Hezbollah is certainly debatable, there is no denying their growing international connections.

### Groups based outside the region

The Tri-Border region, where the frontiers of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet, apparently hosted groups that carried out the 1992 and 1994 bombings against the Jewish Community Center and the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires. It is described as a free zone and safe haven for drug dealers, arms smugglers, international organized crime figures, money launderers, and representatives of terrorist groups. The role of the Tri-Border area in abetting international terrorism is not precisely clear. An estimated 12,000 to 70,000 “Arab Muslims,” mostly of Lebanese origin, are believed to inhabit this region. It is known that Islamic terrorist organizations—predominantly Hezbollah and Hamas—raise funds from these Arab communities (as they do from communities elsewhere in

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the world), mainly to support terrorist activities in Lebanon and Israel. Money collected typically flows from Ciudad del Este in Paraguay—the principal center of illegal commerce—to banks in Foz do Iguacu on the Brazilian side and elsewhere in Brazil, then is wire-transferred or couriered to the Middle East. Latin American terrorist groups, especially the FARC, also reportedly maintain a fund-raising presence in the Tri-Border, although their sources and channels probably differ somewhat from those of Middle Eastern terrorists.

Terrorism within the region is of a much lower profile than in the Middle East. This is due primarily to the fact that no definitive evidence has surfaced proving Al Qaeda is operating within the area. Open sources within the State Department, Central Intelligence Agency, and Defense Intelligence Agency noted that the primary activity has been smuggling and money laundering. This does not mean that the potential threat does not exist. If more proactive measures within the Tri-Border area are not taken, terrorist cells within the area will only grow and pose a greater threat to the region and to the United State.

The considerable success of U.S. military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan may have encouraged some Middle Eastern terrorists to make tracks to more hospitable areas, including the Tri-Border area, where they can blend in with the sizeable Arab immigrant population already there. Tri-Border area also may be a place for terrorists to pick up false documents, exchange information, and obtain money and weapons. Troubling reports continue to surface of al-Qaeda and Hezbollah training camps along the Brazil-Paraguay border, of “summit meetings” among different Islamic extremists in Ciudad del Este, of clandestine communications networks run by terror groups in Foz do Iguacu, and other ominous signs.

One recent article through interviews with the chief of the Paraguayan National Police cited the existence of fundraisers for Hezbollah, HAMAS, and Al Qaeda all within Ciudad del Este.<sup>16</sup> One merchant, Ahmad Barakat, has been suspected of raising nearly \$ 50 million in two years.<sup>17</sup> Brazilian officials recently estimated as much as \$ 6 billion annually is illegally laundered within the tri-Border region.<sup>18</sup> It is hard to estimate how much of this amount goes toward

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<sup>16</sup> <sup>15</sup> Goldberg, Jeffrey. In the Party of God: The New Yorker October 28, 2002. pages 75-80

<sup>17</sup> <sup>16</sup> San Francisco Chronicle, May 4<sup>th</sup> 2002, page A 10

<sup>18</sup> Hudson, Peter. There are No Terrorist Here Newsweek November 19, 2002 page 39

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other activities such as smuggling, narco trafficking, or weapons for the FARC in Colombia, but support for terrorism may be substantial.

### “Homegrown” Groups

The revelation that IRA (Irish Revolutionary Army) agents were involved in training the FARC, most likely in urban terrorism, strengthened international support for Colombia and further undermined FARC claims to political legitimacy.<sup>19</sup> Combined with the evidence of FARC ties to the Basque terrorist group ETA and reports of its hiring ex-Yugoslav military as trainers, this bolstered Bogota’s claims that it was facing a terrorist threat rather than any legitimate political challenge. The use of terror tactics has been largely confined to Colombia, with infrequent spillovers into neighboring states. The agenda of all three groups is overwhelmingly domestic and the ultimate solution to the threats they pose will have to be largely domestic as well. The war on terrorism has served to raise the profile of Colombia’s conflicts, especially their international dimensions, but has not significantly advanced the search for solutions.

There is no consensus among Colombia’s neighboring states as to how they and/or Colombia can best confront these issues. All fear an escalation and expansion of existing conflicts; none seem to have a coherent strategy for reversing these trends. They also have demonstrated little ability to work together to confront issues arising from the Colombian situation. Above all, no tradition of or effective mechanism exists for promoting regional security efforts when confronted by a civil conflict in a neighboring state.

As Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) has observed, “Colombia’s problems are having a profound impact on the stability and security of the entire region, yet there is little or no sustained regional support for Colombia’s efforts to deal with the narco terrorist threat.”<sup>20</sup>

Peru has been the battleground for a bloody and violent internal revolution for the past two decades. The steady increase in the scope and intensity of Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) attacks in the early 1990s led many observers to argue what had once been considered unthinkable, that a Maoist organization appeared

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<sup>19</sup> <sup>18</sup> Millet, Richard L. Colombia’s Conflicts: The Spillover Effects of a Wider War. Shaping the Regional Security Environment in Latin America. Special Series. Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College and North South Center University of Miami. Pages 25-26 October 2002

<sup>20</sup> Idem page 27

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on the verge of overthrowing a government in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. A planned Sendero offensive against Lima in October 1992 would have created generalized fear as well as potential chaos and ungovernability. The capture and subsequent exploitation of Abimael Guzman (the Shining Path leader) was the turning point in the insurgency. Without the charismatic and near mythical Guzman, the Sendero lost much of its luster, but this terrorist organization has not disappeared because conditions favoring terrorism remain.

For nearly ten years, one Shining Path faction has operated in the Upper Huallaga Valley and other coca-growing regions without launching any significant attacks in Lima or in other parts of the country. Beyond its involvement in the drug trade, the Shining Path has not recently represented a significant threat to the government of Peru or to U.S. interests in the country, so what does it mean to talk of the Shining Path's resurgence? Does the car bomb that exploded less than four blocks away from the U.S. embassy and was timed to coincide with the U.S. President George Bush's arrival in Peru signify a change in strategy for Comrade Artemio, (emerging Shining Path leader) or is something more substantial in the works?

All the evidence suggests that a broader reorganization of the Shining Path is underway. Public attention shifted from the jungle to the capital as early as November of 2001 when the counter-terrorism police unveiled two captured Shining Path militants to the media in Lima. Accused of plotting an attack on the U.S. Embassy, the two men were found with explosive materials and a detailed map of the newly constructed and fortified U.S. complex.

By December, it was clear to the police that the terrorists were actively organizing in Lima. A recently uncovered intelligence report points the finger at a new Shining Path faction, *Proseguir* (To Continue), which has begun to reorganize the movement's operational base in urban areas. While it is unclear whether this new faction is tied to the remnants of the Shining Path operating in the jungle, there is little doubt that it has embarked on a reorganization of the movement. Senderistas recently arrested in connection with the car bomb hailed from a cell operating in the northern province of Piura rather than the jungle, raising additional concerns about the Shining Path's expansion.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Weinstein, M Jeremy., A New Threat of Terror in the Western Hemisphere. SAIS Review vol. XXIII no. 1 Winter-Spring (2003): 7-9, 16

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The police believe that *Proseguir* has launched a “campaign of political and ideological consolidation” with the goal of resurrecting former participants and coordinating with the captured Shining Path leaders in Peru’s two major prisons.<sup>22</sup> Acts of violence are central to this reorganization. The police believe that the new Metropolitan Committee is targeting female police in an effort to capture weapons, and plans a series of “sabotage and demolition” attacks on North American interests and installations. The car bomb may have been only the first of these attacks.

*CARETAS*, a Peruvian news magazine, recently reported that a group of subversives (probably the Shining Path) is building support in the poor shantytowns around the capital by invading privately-held and state-owned land and distributing it to the poor residents.<sup>23</sup> This is likely part of an effort to create a new generation of “cadres” for the movement. All the evidence suggests that a broader reorganization of the Shining Path is underway.

These shantytowns are home to hundreds of thousands of underemployed and unemployed migrants, many of whom barely survive in dire poverty. The shantytowns were strongholds of the Shining Path at its peak, and to most in Peru, this strategy is a worrisome development.

The threat of domestic terrorism in Peru seems to stem not from drug trafficking in the jungle, but from a different group of militants who are laying the groundwork for a broader campaign of terror. Their targeted recruits are the poor and the newly educated, populations that continue to lack opportunities for economic advancement.

The problems with tracking terrorist activity are its clandestine nature, very low signature, and the fact that terrorist organizations are transnational. Paul Wilkinson states that, “almost every significant terrorist campaign has an international dimension, even when it is mounting a specific challenge to a government within its own territory.”<sup>24</sup> He makes an excellent example with the Irish Republican Army. The organization receives funding from the United

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<sup>22</sup> *Idem*

<sup>23</sup> *Idem*

<sup>24</sup> Wilkinson, Paul. *Terrorism vs. Democracy: The Liberal State Response*, London: Cass, 2001 page 188

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States, uses the Republic of Ireland as a safe haven, and carries out its attacks within Great Britain.<sup>25</sup> It is ironic that the United States with its history of tough policies against terrorists has been a major source of funding for an organization that has caused one of its closest allies so much pain and grief.

In the age of globalization, terrorism is not just the host state's problem. Multilateral efforts must be established to combat the threat, or else it will simply move to a new location and continue operations. An excellent example of this is the failure to build a cooperation with the Sudanese government when they came to the United States with an offer to allow the U.S. to extradite Osama bin Laden in 1996.<sup>26</sup> After no kind of deal could be reached, the Sudanese unilaterally expelled bin Laden to Afghanistan. It was thought that at least by expelling bin Laden out of Sudan, it would disrupt his operation,<sup>27</sup> but within two years he was back in operation, and started a string of terrorist activity against the United States that culminated in the September 11 attacks. Therefore it can be argued Afghanistan was an even better base of operations, since it afforded the Al Qaeda network very rugged terrain to train and hide in under a government that was openly supportive of him, or at least easily influenced by bin Laden's vast resources.

Unilateral action, therefore does not necessarily eradicate terrorist activity, especially if it has grown to a level that it has become transnational, like Al Qaeda network, or is decentralized, like the emerging threat in the Tri-Border area. Frank Mora coined the term "balloon effect" when the same type of unilateral action was applied to narco trafficking.<sup>28</sup> Essentially, by unilaterally acting against an organization with transnational ties to eradicate its operations within the border of one country, the state may simply cause the organization to relocate to another region. This is illustrated by the analogy of squeezing a balloon, and instead of bursting it, you just cause a bulge in another area. This same analogy can apply to the terrorist threat in the Tri-Border area. It is stealthy and decentralized to the point that law enforcement cannot identify a single charismatic leader at its head, like Guzman of Sendero Luminoso, or Carlos the

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<sup>25</sup> Idem

<sup>26</sup> Washington Post, Washington D.C. October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2001, page A1

<sup>27</sup> Idem

<sup>28</sup> Mora, O Frank. *Victims of the Balloon effect: "Drug trafficking and U.S. policy in Brazil and the Southern Cone of Latin America"* The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies, vol. 21, issue 2 Summer 1996.

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Jackal. One may not even exist. Therefore, past strategies that worked successfully against an organization such as Sendero will not apply for the Tri-Border Area. For Paraguay to suddenly get tough and start an all-out eradication campaign against alleged Hezbollah financiers, narco-traffickers, and smugglers would most likely result in spreading these threats into neighboring Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay like a virus. This type of action may exacerbate the problem, since it would also anger the large Muslim and non-Muslim Arabic population within the region, and may in fact have an unintended reverse effect promoting sympathy for illicit organizations that have been targeted as terrorist.

### Addressing Terrorism

Probably a mode of response within the overall framework of the U.S. National Security Strategy particularly after 9-11 could be a regional approach based on three levels of response, and incorporating several other general elements that are needed. The first level consists of achieving a broad international consensus on the nature of the terrorist threat and the measures needed to defeat it. This has in part been accomplished in the United Nations and through international treaties such as the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism. However, as mentioned before in this article, at the international level the political support given to sectional interests militate against a universal definition that could form the bases for international law and action. If this consensus is approved it will provide not just a conceptual framework but legally binding requirements that states take specific measures to deal with the terrorist threats within their borders. At this level the U.S. needs to focus its attention on achieving universal good faith efforts at compliance.

The second level, deal with working with regional governments to identify gaps in legislation and then help them develop effective means to close those gaps is crucial. For example, in many countries in the Western Hemisphere, while money laundering is illegal, there is no legislation requiring transparency in charitable giving and distribution, making successful attempts to close down charitable fronts unlikely.

Finally, at the third level, where appropriate legislation exists, willing partners need to implement best practices based on these laws and international standards. This requires both effective training programs and a commitment by local governments to keep trained personnel in place long enough to see their training fully integrated into the local bureaucratic culture.

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From the Latin America leaders' perspective terrorism is not the most important problem in Latin America, unrequited demands for economic well being social justice are. Programs that promote equity and fairness are important components of overall security policies; and the willingness and ability to engage with local people—but on their terms are crucial.

There are not major conflicts between a regional counter-terrorism initiative and other critical elements of U.S. policy in the hemisphere. The devil, however, is in the details. For example:

Essential efforts to improve container security at regional ports should be combined with measures to streamline the flow of trade, so as not to further weaken already weak economies and reduce support for security initiatives.

Training for judicial and security personnel must incorporate, and be seen to incorporate, improved protection of human rights. There is a link between police brutality and the inability of prosecutors to gain convictions based on circumstantial evidence, absent a confession.

Many countries now have laws against money laundering, however these laws rarely have much to say about other aspects of terrorist fund-raising, such as informal money transfer and false-front charities.

Finally, there is tremendous reservoir of goodwill towards the U.S. stemming from 09/11 attacks and a willingness to cooperate with U.S. in ways that would have been politically difficult some years ago. However, after the war in Iraq some political leaders in the region perceive that the United States is prepared to go its own way on terrorism.

### **Strategic effects of the conflict with Iraq on Latin America and perspectives on counter-terrorism policy application**

The United States shares with its Latin American neighbors an increasingly and vitally important financial, commercial, and security partnership. Any kind of political-economic-social-security deterioration in the region will profoundly affect the health of the U.S. economy—and the concomitant power to act in the global security arena.

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The Latin American-U.S. partnership has always been one conducted between non-equals. That inequality is demonstrated in several ways. In general terms, it is often pointed out that North Americans hear far more about the Israel-Palestinian conflict, as one example, than about the war in Colombia. But even worse, the main concerns of the U.S. regarding hemispheric security and the war on terrorism are related almost exclusively to the Colombian conflict situation. In Colombia, the United States has until recently focused its money, training, and attention almost entirely on the counter-drug campaign. It has seen the Colombian crisis in limited terms. But the Colombian drug issue is only one piece of a larger, more complex, and multidimensional strategic puzzle that goes to the entire hemisphere and the global community.

The United States is again seen as employing “benign neglect,” occasioned by the necessity of putting such substantial attention and resources into the Iraq war and its aftermath, which would likely result in the deterioration of Latin America-U.S. ties. That neglect would also likely result in a decrease in the already minimal cooperation that now exists in the war on terrorism and an increase in direct security threats from Latin-based terrorists to U.S. interests in the region and to the United States. This dilemma is critical. Continued neglect and indifference to Latin America’s stability problems will profoundly affect the health of the U.S. economy—and the concomitant power to act in the international security arena. At the same time, increasing instability in the hemisphere will likely increase direct security threats from terrorists to U.S. interests in the region and to the United States. Much is at risk.

According to Dr. Max G. Manwaring, Professor of Military Strategy at the U.S. Army War College, Latin Americans perceive that the United States is prepared to go its own way in the war of terrorism and deal militarily with Iraq, North Korea, and other “rogue states” as required. In this context, it is also perceived that the United States wants to see Latin Americans deal with their own internal stability threats. The Latin countries, in turn, argue that they are willing to do that, but that will require the help of United States and other Western powers. The help that has been forthcoming has tended to be directed toward the tactical/operational drug issues and not to the central strategic problems that spawn illegal drug trafficking and myriad other instabilities that lead to more violence, crime, corruption, and conflict. The “bottom-line” here is that a unifying U.S.-Latin American organization is needed that can establish, enforce,

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and continually refine a holistic political-military plan and generate consistent national and international support.<sup>29</sup>

### Conclusion

The U.S.-Latin American relationship is an unequal relationship. The current United States administration has introduced significant changes in the National Security Strategy (NSS) and on international relations. President George Bush, by cutting his attendance at the G8 meeting in France short by a day in order to address his more important diplomatic efforts in the Arab world, sent a clear message of interests focus in the world scenario. It is emblematic of how the Bush administration has changed. For some experts it is the most important reformulation of U.S. grand strategy and its implications in international relations over half a century. But, in my view it does not represent any positive change in U.S. Latin American relations, but continued neglect and indifference to the region's stability problems. But, the Bush NSS, echoing the president's speech at West Point on June 1, 2002 sets three tasks: We will **defend** the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will **preserve** the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will **extend** the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.

The Bush NSS comes across as more forceful, more carefully crafted, and-unexpectedly-more multilateral than its immediate predecessor. It is an indication that there are interesting things going on here. On the other hand, in the last ten years the Latin American perspective is that the main concerns of United States regarding hemispheric security and the war on terrorism are related almost exclusively to the Colombia conflict situation. Today, after the war on Iraq, another perspective has emerged on "Who is the enemy?" and the type of anti-terrorist operations that should be conducted. Generally, Latin Americans argue that the terrorist enemy is not a single state or group of "rogue states." It is not a specific terrorist leadership—such as Osama bin Laden of Al Qaeda. Rather, the enemy is the violent terrorist actions resulting from anyone's extremism. For Latin America, the problem of fundamentalist Islamic terrorism or a Saddam Hussein is not urgent in a context where political-socio-economic instability threatens compromise the continuity of democratic systems and free market economies. In that connection, the terrorist enemy is a lethal combination of

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<sup>29</sup> Manwaring, G. Max. Strategic Effects of the Conflict with Iraq: Latin America. report publishes by The Strategic Studies Institute Carlisle, PA March 2003.

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transnational non-state actors who exploit for their own narrow purposes poverty, disease, social discontent, refugee flows, illegal drugs, instability, irredentism, and insurgency regardless of geo-strategic location or level of power.

In this changing scenario emerge some political concepts and attitudes that need to be taken into consideration by both sides in any partnership between the United States and Latin America in the “war on terrorism.” All parties should continue to promote democracy, increase moral and fiscal support to the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and non-government organization that work to enhance the infrastructure of civil society in the region. At the same time by exercising moral leadership in the military struggle against terrorism consistent with established American values in war, America can use force effectively but discriminately.

As we look at the situation two years after September 11, 2001, we note the U.S. government has effectively adopted a systematic approach to counterterrorism. It has employed a broad range of strategies, distinguished among different elements of the terrorist groups, and tailored tactics accordingly. The United States has also worked very closely with allies worldwide, with major pay-offs. The U.S. has also sought—but with *much less success so far*—to engage in the war of ideas and to address underlying causes of terrorism, including the promulgation of intolerance and extremism, as well as the open sore that is the Israel-Palestinian problem.

This latter aspect of war of ideas to address causes of terrorism is the starting point that will allow the creation of a framework for common international policies in the war on terrorism in the region. In this regard defining the subject matter is fundamental because terrorism engenders such extreme emotions, as a reaction to the horror associated with it, and partly because of its ideological context. It is important to reiterate that without a basic definition it is not possible to say whether the phenomenon we call terrorism is a threat at all, whether it is a phenomenon of a different nature to its predecessors, and whether there can be a theory of terrorism. Therefore, it is necessary that that definition transcend behavioral description to include individual motivation, social milieu, and political purpose. Another very important aspect is communication when the groups attempt to engage in dialogue because, it is one of the roots of the causes of both the vacillations in policy, which characterize the response of most individual states to terrorism, and a complete failure of the international community to launch any effective multi-lateral initiative to combat the problem.

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The contemporary security environment—to include the war on terrorism that most Latin American leaders perceive—is a multi-polar world in which one or 100 states and non-state actors are exerting different types and levels of power within shifting sets of alliances, formal and informal. This situation is extremely volatile and dangerous, and requires careful attention.

According to the Cuzco Consensus in Peru on May 23-25, 2003 the member countries of the Rio Group signed an international declaration on Peace and Security in the New International Scenario. They agreed that, in the Political Declaration to be adopted during the next OAS Special Conference on Security to be held in Mexico on October 2003, the multidimensional approach to security, which is deeply rooted in the diversity that characterizes the countries of the region, should be recognized in a special form and that a flexible security architecture which is based on cooperation and provides for a common and renewed approach to this issue should be implemented. The Rio Group states reaffirmed the need to further deepen defense cooperation and confidence-building measures, among others, that contribute to strengthen regional security and increase transparency in bilateral, sub-regional and regional relations.

To respond more efficiently to the current threats such as terrorism, the worldwide problem of drugs and related crimes, organized international crime, illicit arms trafficking, common crimes, etc., the Inter American states must lean towards the establishment of a flexible security architecture, which includes standards on the concept of human security and is based on a multidimensional view of the same. Thus, these countries have decided to intensify the presence of the Rio Group in all the competent international forums.

In this sense, the Rio Group reiterated their most energetic condemnation against terrorism, which is a threat to peace and security, to the effective enforcement of the rights of all individuals, and to democratic stability. Likewise, they emphasized the need to continue to fight against the world problem of drugs and related crimes, particularly those involving terrorist activities. In addition, they highlighted that the fight against terrorism should be carried out with full respect for international law and human rights.

On the other hand, the United States and its major allies have focused more lately on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as one example, than on the war in Colombia—though the latter has caused as much carnage as the former and is much closer to home. After September 11, the United States has focused on some specific areas or countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., and has ignored what is

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happening in Latin America—and what is likely to happen without the implementation of the sort of strategic reforms based on a common concept about terrorism, and well defined common interests. This situation has reinforced the notion that Latin America is not important and that the United States does not care about the region. Clearly, the United States continues to move unilaterally in pursuit of its own agenda based on its new NSS. For example, meeting with foreign ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean in Chile on June 9, 2003, at the annual assembly of the Organization of American States, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell moved to smooth over differences that persisted from the diplomatic wrangle that preceded the war in Iraq, and to continuing divergences on issues like trade and human rights. Mr. Powell was nearly alone in focusing on the triple scourge he described as "tyrants, traffickers and terrorists." For the most part, representatives of the 33 other nations taking part emphasized the need for social justice, warning that democracy itself could be threatened by mounting economic difficulties and inequality.

In his remarks before leaving the OAS conference, Mr. Powell acknowledged, "an unfettered market alone does not guarantee sustained development." But he also urged the organization's members to support the United States' plan for a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas by 2005, saying it would lead to "a partnership of strong, equal and prosperous countries living and trading in freedom."<sup>30</sup> However, the main differences between Latin Americans and the United States on the security environment and a strategy to be implemented persist, bringing the possibility of the expansion of terrorism, the expansion of "lawless areas," and the expansion of general instability that could destroy the democracy, free market economies, and prosperity that have been achieved in recent years.

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<sup>30</sup> Rohter, Larry "Latin Lands Don't Share Powell's Priorities" New York Times. 9 June 2003  
NYTimes.com [nytdirect@nytimes.com]