Forging a Security Strategy for Latin America

October 31 — November 2, 2007

McCormick Foundation

Cover Caption:
On March 1, 2008, the Colombian Armed Forces attacked a FARC guerrilla encampment in Ecuador, killing Raul Reyes, a top-ranking rebel leader and 22 others. On March 6, 2008, Venezuelans march for peace in San Antonio del Tachira, Venezuela—on the border of Colombia—after the Organization of American States (OAS) formally declared that Columbia's actions violated Ecuador's national sovereignty.

Forging a Security Strategy for Latin America

Sponsored by McCormick Foundation

Cantigny Park
Wheaton, Illinois

October 31 — November 2, 2007

Written by:
Fernando Lujan, West Point Combating Terrorism Center
Tim Connors, Manhattan Institute

Table of Contents

Forging a Security Strategy for Latin America

Published by
McCormick Foundation
435 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 770
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312-222-3512
E-mail: info@McCormickFoundation.org

Foreword

Since September 11, 2001 the Middle East and Central Asia have unquestionably dominated the U.S. national security landscape—and rightly so. The specter of radical Jihadi ideology, the growth of Islamist insurgencies, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are issues that will profoundly shape the United States' future. Yet, as the Long War continues to unfold, we must be careful not to lose sight of changes occurring *outside* the Central Command (CENTCOM) region. The countries of Latin America—our overlooked neighbors—hold both great promise and great peril for U.S. strategic interests. Events happening there today will have a tremendous impact on the future geo-political landscape. Consider just the past year: In Venezuela, President Hugo Chavez narrowly lost a referendum that would have granted him indefinite reelection, revealing a tangible limit to his ever-expanding power. Just months later, a Colombian incursion to kill a senior FARC leader on Ecuadorian soil led to major troop mobilizations by the Venezuelan military and the first talk of war (however inflated) in over a decade. Meanwhile, in Cuba, a gravely ill Fidel Castro formally ceded power to his brother Raul, setting off a wave of speculation over the country's ideological trajectory.

These changes and many others offer opportunities to positively or negatively influence the security environment for many years to come—but as leaders we must first take the time to understand. Developing an effective security strategy in Latin America will require not only resources, but also an investment in intellectual capital. To respond effectively, analysts, policymakers, and practitioners from across the hemisphere must engage in an ongoing dialogue. *Forging a Security Strategy for Latin America*, a McCormick Foundation conference co-sponsored by the West Point Combating Terrorism Center, is an attempt to encourage this dialogue.

We thank the many experts from Latin America, the U.S. military and interagency, the private sector, and academia whose ideas are captured on the following pages. Their full participation was critical to the project's success.

The McCormick Foundation is deeply committed to strengthening civic health and in our country by encouraging citizens to be informed, responsible and engaged. Through its conference series, the McCormick Foundation strives to influence public policy by facilitating balanced discussions among

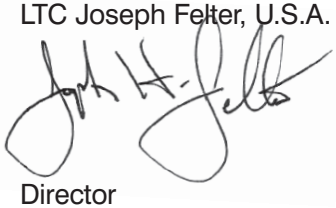
people of diverse backgrounds, to reach new levels of understanding between stakeholders, and to develop long-term solutions to critical and timely issues. The West Point Combating Terrorism Center contributes relevant scholarly perspectives through education, research, and policy analysis to combat terrorist threats to the United States. Our two organizations are extremely pleased to present you this report.

We believe Latin American Security Strategy is an extremely important topic and hope you can use the crucial information gathered here to better inform decision-making in your field. Please do not hesitate to share with us your comments, questions, or feedback.

Sincerely,

Brig. Gen. David L. Grange, U.S.A. (Ret.)
CEO and President of the McCormick Foundation

LTC Joseph Felter, U.S.A.



Director

Executive Summary

On November 1 and 2, 2007, the McCormick Foundation and the West Point Combating Terrorism Center co-sponsored a conference to discuss security strategy in Latin America. Senior Latin American military leaders, U.S. officials, analysts, practitioners, journalists, and other experts met for two days to develop policy recommendations for the most pressing issues in the region. This report summarizes the major discussions held during the conference.

Four major topics framed the discussion: 1) the threat posed by Hugo Chavez and his Bolivarian Revolution, 2) the state of affairs in Colombia and the Andean Ridge, 3) religious extremism in the Tri-Border Area (TBA), and 4) U.S. homeland security and Latin America.

Hugo Chavez and the Bolivarian Revolution:

Does Chavez Pose a Threat to the U.S.? Hugo Chavez the person is far less important than the series of institutional changes he has enacted while in office. Despite the narrow failure of Chavez's recent constitutional referendum (which would have granted him unlimited re-election as president), Venezuela's political system has been drastically restructured to prevent a future non-Leftist president from smoothly taking control:

- The government has become dangerously militarized, with more than one-third of the country's regional governments and executive positions in the hands of soldiers loyal to Chavez.
- Governmental institutions are largely loyal to Chavez personally instead of being loyal to the office of the President.
- To protect his Bolivarian revolution from internal threats, Chavez has encouraged the growth of large numbers of irregular armed militias.

Since taking office, Chavez has also succeeded in dramatically reversing post-Cold War economic and political reforms, blaming many of the region's problems on "gringo" intervention or the failed "Washington consensus" of liberalized markets and free trade.

- "Oil Diplomacy" has been Venezuela's regional economic strategy to decrease the influence of U.S.-led institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.
- Politically, the Venezuelan President is committed to supporting rising Leftist leaders, but his influence has been limited—thus far.
- Chavez's strategic communications efforts have been effective at discrediting U.S. initiatives.

- The Venezuelan regime continually undermines ongoing security cooperation efforts in the region—particularly in the areas of counter-drug and counterterrorism.

What factors have enabled Chavez to become such a major player, and do these factors imply vulnerabilities? Chavez rose to power in a veritable "perfect storm" of economic and political conditions. However, these conditions may be changing. The panel identified the examined the following possible vulnerabilities in Chavez's regime:

- The Venezuelan President's current fortunes are tied to the global oil market, but the oil sector is growing less productive.
- Chavez's domestic political successes have often resulted from the ineptitude of his opponents—but his opponents are learning.
- Social programs and "handouts" have temporarily decreased poverty, but the economy is not growing.
- Fidel Castro has generally provided a moderating influence on Chavez—his demise is more likely to worsen diplomatic relationships than to improve them.

What can the U.S. do to promote regional stability and a more cooperative relationship with Venezuela? Conference attendees made the following key proposals to improve the strategic outlook with Venezuela and safeguard U.S. interests:

- Identify players in the U.S. government that have closer personal ties to Chavez and his government to engage on issues of mutual importance.
- Maintain person-to-person contact at all levels within Venezuelan society; distinguish between the regime and Venezuelan citizens.
- Practice selective engagement, not containment.
- Develop a surrogate broadcasting strategy and offset Bolivarian aid-based initiatives with our own.

Colombia and Narco-Insurgency in the Andean Ridge:

Have U.S. and Colombian efforts truly been effective? The great preponderance of data shows that in nearly every security-related dimension, Colombia has improved markedly over the past six years:

- The overall levels of violence in Colombia have decreased significantly and the economy has rebounded.
- FARC and ELN are beginning to bend politically under sustained military pressures.

- The Colombian government has steadily pushed governance into increasingly remote areas of the country.

What major challenges remain? Yet despite the positive trends in Colombia, most participants agreed that the security situation is still rife with emerging problems and highly sensitive to external variables (such as resources or political regimes.) Some of the most important challenges identified were as follows:

- The demobilization of the AUC paramilitary group has caused a "splintering effect," leaving behind small, autonomous armed groups with no common ideological bond and a security vacuum.
- Continued progress in Colombia is still highly dependent on U.S. resources.
- The profitability of the drug trade remains extremely high and will continue to undermine the peace process.

What policies should the U.S. pursue to reinforce Colombia's positive trends? The conference participants outlined the following policy recommendations as critical to Colombia's future success:

- Continued funding with maximum flexibility to adjust programs.
- Continue to assist Colombia in developing integrated defense and governance strategies (such as the Colombian Center for Integrated Action- CCAI)
- Support the Free Trade Agreement, but provide for sufficient protections.
- Militarily, recognize that "Tier-One HVT hunting may be counterproductive; continue to focus on encouraging desertions, targeting mid-level guerrilla commanders and protection of the civilian populace.

Religious Extremism in Latin America:

What is the nature of the threat in the Tri-Border Area (TBA)? In the wake of 9/11, the tri-border received a great deal of attention as a potential safe haven for terrorists. Though much of the initial reporting has now been disproved, a distinct extremist presence remains in the region. Attendees highlighted the following key observations:

- Terrorist financing is the biggest concern: Hezbollah derives large sums of money directly from the TBA.

- Hezbollah has conducted terrorist attacks against symbolic targets in Latin America in the past—the possibility for future attacks cannot be ignored.
- Part of the problem is a lack of governance: The TBA is essentially an "international zone" where illegal organizations thrive.
- Part of the problem is demographics: The TBA is home to large, complex, and insulated Muslim communities where religious extremist elements are difficult to pinpoint.
- "Radicalization" of existing Muslim communities is not regarded as a major threat—business is too good, and Latin America's geopolitical environment is relatively inhospitable.
- Small, external, radicalized groups can plan operations from within Muslim communities with relative ease.

What factors make counterterrorism so difficult in Latin America? To succeed, U.S. policy must navigate many political and cultural obstacles—many of which are unique to the region:

- Perception problems and semantics: The term "counterterrorism" has taken on a distinctly negative connotation with the population.
- The voting public is often very reluctant to pass CT laws, often because of past excesses by authoritarian governments.
- Large segments of Latin America remain unengaged and regional attitudes towards U.S. policy are at an all time low.

What policies can the U.S. adopt to better interdict religious extremist groups operating in the region? With current obstacles in mind, the participants highlighted several policy changes that would reduce the influence of extremist groups:

- Rethink our human intelligence (HUMINT) strategies; capitalize on sources run through partner nation intelligence services.
- Continued interagency (IA) reform and cooperation at the embassy and sub-regional level.
- Focus less on dictating counterterrorism policy for our international allies and pragmatically look for issues where we can cooperate; Use the "Al Capone" method (disaggregate terrorist-related activities into specific criminal activities)
- Partnership with the Department of Homeland Security: Push the border outward.

U.S. Homeland Security and Latin America:

What general security and crime trends in South and Latin America are of concern to domestic security? Conference participants agreed that recent changes in the region have magnified the concerns of homeland security officials. Some of the most salient trends included:

- Gangs, drug cartels, and other criminal actors are becoming increasingly capable of planning an coordinating violent acts, often using military-style weaponry.
- The production and trafficking of illegal drugs is playing an ever greater role in supporting organized violence.
- Illicit enterprises, as well as national governments, take advantage of uncontrolled migration patterns to threaten U.S. domestic security.
- Persistent ungoverned spaces in the region facilitate illicit enterprises and violence-based activities.
- There is a growing interconnectedness between international security and domestic safety: Mara Salvatrucha, the JFK airport plot, Buenos Aires embassy bombings are all compelling examples.

How do U.S. homeland security and public safety agencies adapt to meet these challenges? The attendees agreed on the following policy recommendations:

- Better integrate foreign and domestic intelligence sources to improve decision-making and understanding.
- State, local, and tribal law enforcement and homeland security agencies must be integrated into hemispheric security plans.
- The federal government should continue to expand existing educational programs (such as the Naval Post-Graduate School Center for Homeland Security) to conduct training for state and local operators.

Chapter 1:
Hugo Chavez and the Rise of Populism

Harsh rhetoric aside, the relationship between the U.S. and Venezuela has grown increasingly strained over the past few years. Hugo Chavez, the country's outspoken and radical-minded leader, has aggressively worked to strengthen his own executive power while exporting a distinct brand of leftist, anti-U.S. ideology throughout the region. At the same time, the current Administration in the United States has had little opportunity for engagement or leverage to influence Chavez's decisions. This McCormick Foundation panel discussion attempted to peel away the layers of myth and exaggeration in order to examine the most important trends in Hugo Chavez's Venezuela and their implications for U.S. policymakers. Does Chavez truly pose a threat? How did he become so influential, and what are his vulnerabilities? What policies should the U.S. pursue?

Does Hugo Chavez pose a threat to Latin America and/or the United States?

Most conference attendees agreed that the threat posed by Hugo Chavez is that of indirect influence. His current engagement strategy—drawing upon a careful mix of petro-based diplomacy, continued regional economic inequalities, and dissatisfaction with U.S. foreign policy—actively seeks to undermine any U.S.-sponsored economic, political, or security plans. After considering the wide range of foreign policy challenges presented by Chavez's Venezuela, conference participants outlined the following issues as the most important for U.S. policymakers to consider:

Chavez has sown the seeds for future instability in the region: Hugo Chavez the person is far less important than the series of institutional changes he has enacted while in office. Despite the narrow failure of Chavez's recent constitutional referendum (which would have granted him unlimited re-election as president), Venezuela's political system has been drastically restructured to prevent any future non-Bolivarian president from smoothly taking office.

The government has become dangerously militarized. Carefully maintaining his status as a military officer and capitalizing on a failed coup attempt by the opposition (which gave him license to assume control of the armed forces and purge dissidents), Chavez has methodically eroded divisions between civilian and military leaders. More than one-third of the country's regional governments and a myriad of critical executive posi-

tions are in the hands of soldiers loyal to the president. During his first seven months in office, Chávez appointed about fifty active-duty military officers to civilian government jobs, including the Minister of Defense, the presidential chief of staff, and two active-duty colonels who were assigned as members of the board of the economically crucial state-owned oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA). A combination of active and retired generals have been consistently chosen to the highest executive positions in state-run businesses, the OCEPRE (Government Budget Office), the Foreign Relations Ministry, the DISIP (Secret Police), and a myriad of other governmental institutions.

Governmental institutions are more loyal to Chavez the man instead of the office of the President. Chavez has concentrated his power to an astonishing degree, implementing constitutional reforms that have effectively transformed the judiciary branch and national assembly into what one intelligence analyst called "mere appendages of the executive." He has steadily replaced members of the judiciary and national assembly with his personal friends and political supporters. Furthermore, Chavez's efforts to strengthen the executive branch have actually weakened the control of any future president over the armed forces. The attitude of the military has been changed, especially that of younger officers, who believe their role is not just to defend the nation from external forces but also to defend the revolution from its enemies. As one attendee commented: "I think it's interesting that Chavez has perfected a new mechanism for consolidating power and developing a quasi-authoritarian [regime] which uses the constituent assembly process as a veil of legitimacy. First he gets elected democratically—whether we like him or not—then by changing the constitution he maintains that power beyond the democratic process. And that's something that's being copied in Bolivia and Ecuador, but with as much success so far."

Chavez has encouraged the growth of irregular armed militias to serve as guardians of his Bolivarian Revolution. Under his direction, the Venezuelan government has actively supported the creation of dozens of armed militias, all fiercely loyal to the Bolivarian ideology and outside the control of the elected government. While Chavez insists that these groups have been formed only to conduct social and education programs through his *misiones*, multiple surveys of the individual militia members showed that members adhered to strict paramilitary hierarchy, carried assault weapons, and considered themselves "foot soldiers of the revolu-

tion." A conference attendee commented on this phenomenon, saying "I think the armed militia has been a very dangerous development. Personal handguns have always been very readily available in Venezuela. It's a very armed country in that sense. But there's a difference between the average citizen having a small handgun under his car seat to thousands of people being armed with Kalashnikovs by the government." In the event of an elected non-Bolivarian successor to Chavez, the region could face a new insurgency when these militias—already armed, indoctrinated, and organized—revolt against the new government.

Chavez's foreign policy seeks to establish Venezuela as a counter-weight to U.S. influence. Since taking office, Chavez has succeeded in dramatically reversing post-Cold War economic and political reforms, blaming many of the region's problems on "gringo" intervention or the failed "Washington consensus" of liberalized markets and free trade. While President Chavez cannot claim sole credit for the resurgence of Populist ideology throughout the continent, he has undeniably placed himself at the center of the movement—his "21st Century Socialism" is a guiding vision for the Left. As one participant commented, "I believe that Hugo is posturing himself to become the new ideological leader of Latin America's Left, which will likely be vacated in the near term with the passing of Fidel."

"Oil Diplomacy" has been Venezuela's regional economic strategy to decrease the influence of U.S.-led institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. Consistently high global oil prices have empowered Chavez to export his anti-capitalist, anti-U.S. ideology throughout the region. Chavez has won favors with Nicaragua, Argentina, Bolivia, and Ecuador by using his surging oil revenues to pay off their debts to the IMF. A new alliance called PetroCaribe enables Venezuela to project its influence to 12 Caribbean nations (most notably Cuba) by providing oil on preferential terms. Venezuela has also explored major oil exportation agreements with China, intending to reduce long-term dependence on U.S. oil markets. One attendee summarized Chavez's foreign policy goals as follows: "If you go to the Venezuelan government website, it says one of the major aims is consolidating the axis of leadership between Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia and spreading it through the continent. So it says right on the website. In the Venezuelan government's eyes, we're on the cusp of a re-emergent 21st Century socialism or an inter-American cold war shaped by Chavez's views."

Politically, Chavez is committed to supporting rising Leftist leaders, but his influence has been limited—thus far. Seeking to influence the elections of potential left-leaning nations, he has directly and indirectly supported the successful campaigns of Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua. However, his forays with Omalla Humalla in Peru and Lopez Obrador in Mexico were decisively rebuffed. These limitations were described by one attendee: "Chavez is less important than Washington thinks he is. I mean, Venezuela is effectively a very small country in terms of population. Its influence outside its own borders is certainly magnified thanks to that oil money, but I would argue that in countries such as Peru, Colombia, Southern Cone countries, Chavez's influence is in fact fairly limited. Populations there can see the errors of Chavez's ways. Trying to influence the Peruvian elections a year ago certainly didn't work. So presently there are only a handful of places where Chavez does have significant influence, and that's Bolivia and Nicaragua."

Chavez's strategic communications efforts have been effective at discrediting U.S. initiatives. Chavez has also been quick to take advantage of the U.S.'s waning international support over policy missteps in Iraq, most recently evidenced during President Bush's Latin America visit last year. As one attendee described it, "Chavez has an intuitive understanding of strategic communication. When Bush made his trip to Brazil, Uruguay and Guatemala, Chavez did a shadow trip, appearing in nearby venues. The American presidents obviously travel with a tight bubble of security, have very carefully scripted events. Chavez was having joyous, massive pep rallies everywhere he went. President Bush goes to Guatemala and the story is that the indigenous people want to purify and exorcise the site that he visited, and Chavez goes and spreads loans and his own vision of popular revolution wherever he goes. So he is very successful in tweaking President Bush repeatedly."

Chavez's ongoing hostage negotiations with the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrilla movement also hint at a well developed communications strategy. In the words of a conference participant: "Chavez getting involved in this so-called humanitarian exchange is certainly more advantageous to Chavez than it is to Uribe. President Uribe has only accepted under pressure from the Sarkozy government, whereas Chavez reaps significant rewards through the media. In Colombia, it was inconceivable two months ago to imagine an editorial in *El Tiempo* newspaper (a major Colombian paper) saying that Chavez is a good neighbor. His image

has really improved in Colombia, even if these humanitarian exchanges go nowhere."

Chavez's regime undermines ongoing security cooperation efforts in the region. Chavez's counter-balancing policy has led Venezuela to consistently fail to cooperate with regional security plans and encourage other nations to follow suit—particularly in regards to counter-narcotics and counterterrorism initiatives.

Counter-drug: In August 2005, Venezuela suspended its cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), claiming that the U.S. agents were "spying." Since then, drug seizures within the country have dropped sharply, from 35-40 metric tons in 2005 to 20-25 metric tons in 2006, while seizures by other countries of drugs coming from Venezuelan points of departure have more than tripled. One panelist added: "Venezuela has today become the premier trans-shipment country for drugs trafficking, most of which comes from Colombia. The finished product, cocaine itself, passes through Venezuela in massive quantities because of corruption, lack of cooperation or intelligence sharing with the United States, and money laundering."

Counterterrorism: Cooperation on terrorism has been equally dismal. Though Chavez has long denied support for the leftist FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN (National Liberation Army) guerrillas, the practitioners who attended the conference were adamant: "We have pictures in Colombia of Venezuelan C-130s landing at Colombian airfields and offloading equipment. That's open knowledge in Colombia. That's not a secret. That indicates—when you can coordinate a C-130—that indicates more than local corruption; it's national-level support. Yet some participants considered Venezuela's biggest support for terrorism to be its lack of immigration controls and permissive environment: "The biggest risk, I think, is in terms of personnel, or the movement of potential terrorists, civilians, whatever you wish to call it," said one intelligence official, "For example, this air link commercial flight between Caracas and Tehran now is being used as a bridge between the Arab world and Latin America, not just for someone from Caracas who wants to visit their Iranian cousin in Tehran. If you're a Muslim from Ecuador, you can travel to the Arab world without having to pass through Miami or Madrid—places with annoying security checks like that. [Chavez] may have succeeded in irritating U.S. officials, but he may not be focusing on

what kind of downstream costs would be imposed upon his Bolivarian ambitions if it turned out that an attack in this country had links to that route."

Editor's Note: The recent capture of slain FARC leader Raul Reyes' laptop computer (which occurred shortly after the conference), has only reinforced the evidence that Hugo Chavez's government actively supports the insurgent group. According to official statements by the Colombian police, the laptop documented financial ties between Chavez and the rebel group dating back to 1992. At the time, Chavez was jailed in Venezuela for leading a coup attempt, and several documents suggest that the FARC delivered him $150,000 USD in prison. Other documents highlighted major contributions provided by Chavez, including a recent message that mentioned $300 million USD in Venezuelan support for the rebels. (Associated Press, March 3, 2008)

What factors have enabled Chavez to become such a major player, and do these factors imply any major vulnerabilities?

Chavez rose to power in a veritable "perfect storm" of conditions. Terrible economic conditions precipitated by a sustained drop in worldwide oil prices put overwhelming pressures on the existing government and enabled left-wing groups to seize control. The fall of the Soviet Union removed the geopolitical stigma of the Latin American Left; Washington could no longer accuse any left-of-center regime of being a "Soviet beachhead." However, this perfect storm may be ending. The panel identified the following key factors as growing vulnerabilities in Chavez's regime:

Hugo Chavez's fortunes are tied to the global oil market, but the oil sector is growing less productive. In the same way that high oil prices have empowered Chavez's regime to undertake aggressive socialist projects and export its ideology regionally, a drop in oil prices could have a destabilizing effect. Furthermore, the nationalization of the oil industry, conducted via PDVSA (the Venezuelan national oil company), has only exacerbated the problem by reducing overall efficiency. As one panelist explained: "Although the price of oil has risen, Venezuelan oil production has fallen. Venezuela today produces about 2.3 million barrels per day. That's a million barrels less per day than when Chavez came in. The reason for this is basically poor management. PDVSA was the largest

company in Latin America when Chavez came in. When Chavez took over the company after the 2003 strike, the company was left without qualified management. In the meantime, PDVSA profits have been siphoned off to everywhere from Swiss bank accounts to social programs."

Chavez's domestic political successes have often resulted from the ineptitude of his opponents—but his opponents are learning. As one participant remarked, "Chavez benefits from the weakness and the incompetence of his opponents. In 2002 when Chavez was temporarily unseated by a coup, the acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs looked at the press conference going on in Caracas, having known the leaders of the coup from his time in Venezuela and commented, "Oh, this will never work. These guys are totally incompetent." And after having Chavez in their hands, the coup plotters let him go, and he came back stronger than ever." Chavez used the coup as a justification to seize greater control of the military. But recently, Chavez's bold constitutional reforms have given the opposition renewed strength. Another panelist commented on this, saying "Within this regime there are a lot of people who are getting very, very rich, and this kind of new Bolivarian oligarchy naturally becomes a conservative force. So as Chavez tries to reorient government policy towards a more left-wing communist-type system, he's going to come into conflict with people within his own government who will resist further changes." This tendency is reflected in last December's failed referendum and the strengthened position of opposition groups including the Catholic church, students, businesses, and even some former supporters.

Social programs and "handouts" have decreased poverty, but the economy is not growing. The economy has not sufficiently diversified, and instead has become more dependent on petroleum exportation. In the words of one panelist: "Huge amounts of oil money coming into Venezuela, into the Venezuelan government coffers, but the government has been incapable of building new roads, providing housing, or establishing reliable security within Caracas and other parts of the country for Venezuelan people. The economy's not working. The black market exchange rate is at four times the official rate. Unemployment is very high. You can't get milk and you can't get *arepas* (bread). So the difficulties within Venezuela are becoming more and more apparent." Another panelist echoed this sentiment: "There are a number of economic distortions. We've already talked about the unavailability of milk, but you

can buy gasoline for 9¢ a gallon. GM is shipping all the Hummers it can to Venezuela, because that's the hottest market right now. In the clubs, the fine whiskey is flowing, so the upper classes are still enjoying a lot of the benefits of the economic boom. But at some point, unless the laws of economics are going to be repealed, that economy has to come into balance, and that's going to cause the middle and upper classes to experience pain. That's a source of opposition."

Fidel Castro's demise will likely not improve the situation in Venezuela. Panelists generally predicted that Fidel Castro's inevitable demise could only worsen the situation with Venezuela: "I would argue that the relationship is not so much Fidel Castro being a dangerous influence on Hugo Chavez," said one senior military leader, "Rather, I would argue that Castro has been a moderating force on Chavez. There are numerous examples of this when Chavez has gotten into hot water or problems with Colombia, for example, or other countries in the region, it's Castro that has stepped in and said, "Chavez, calm down. Let me have a word with Uribe to sort things out." So the eventual demise and disappearance of Fidel Castro I think will be a danger sign, because there will no longer be that moderating force over Chavez." Another attendee predicted that Chavez would only grow to fill the ideological vacuum left behind: "I think that we're seeing the development of a virtual Fidel, where he makes occasional appearances, usually with Hugo Chavez. He's become more known now for his writings than for his speeches. We've had 18 months to get adjusted to life without Fidel, so I'm not even sure if the term "after Fidel" is even relevant anymore. I think everyone is accustomed to him being a virtual presence and not a real presence. And I see Chavez moving in as the supporter and the guarantor of the Cuban revolution…Cuba will be an outpost and not a center of the revolution."

What can the United States do to promote regional stability and a more cooperative relationship with Venezuela?

While the conference participants differed widely regarding policy approaches towards Venezuela, the following themes were generally accepted:

Identify players in the U.S. government that have closer personal ties to Chavez and his government to engage on issues of mutual importance. Attempt to de-escalate some of the rhetoric by identifying key members of the U.S. government who are on better terms with the Venezuelan regime through past associations, relationships, or agreements (i.e. members of Congress, former Venezuelan citizens, academics). Investigate the possibility of opening "back channel" negotiations for issues of mutual interest. Tone down official U.S. rhetoric and focus on areas for cooperation. Accompany any official agreements with a proactive strategic communications campaign which denies Venezuela the political role of regional spokesman or mediator. If Venezuela is willing to assist in freeing FARC hostages, be proactive in seeking cooperation—don't allow Chavez to free the hostages *in spite of* U.S. reluctance. Use the hostage issue to segue into other related issues such as border security with Colombia or human rights.

Maintain person-to-person contact at all levels within Venezuelan society; distinguish between Chavez's regime and Venezuelan citizens. While the U.S. and Venezuelan governments remain diametrically opposed in the media, the U.S. government should take every opportunity to favorably influence Venezuelan perceptions through engagement and interaction. Participants identified several methods to accomplish this:

"The Embassy should use all available resources and make determined efforts to go out and engage with Venezuelan civil society. It's not easy. There will be a lot of harassment, and it may be dangerous. But they should go out there every day to try to reach Venezuelan society and show them that the U.S. does care about the Venezuelan citizens."

Another participant who served in Russia for four years noted that the people-to-people contact between the United States and the former Soviet Union played a pivotal role in creating a foundation for the future."

When the Soviet Union dissolved, we reached out to those groups, all of those people we had been sending to the United States, all of those people who had been part of private sector or academic initiatives. Likewise, there was a large cadre of Americans that went to the former Soviet Union during this period to learn Russian culture under the leadership of academic and non-governmental organizations. These individuals played an important role after the fall of the Soviet Union as the U.S. attempted to create a strategic partnership. It's clearly one of the lessons we have

learned… people-to-people contact is strategically critical when official government relationships are weak."

Practice selective engagement, not containment. As one analyst stated, "I think our government policy is probably right, to not isolate Venezuela, to *not* embargo Venezuela. We should accept visas if Venezuelans want to come to the United States, let them come. Do no active planning against Venezuela. Our philosophy should be, as Napoleon once said: When your adversary is in the process of making a mistake, do not interrupt him." Another participant added, "And while Chavez constantly protests against U.S. economic influence, we remain Venezuela's largest trading partner. We are a major importer of Venezuelan oil. I counted three Citgo stations on the way from the hotel to here; Citgo owned by Venezuela. And he frequently will go to New York and meet with politicians like Congressman Cerano and emphasize his efforts that he's providing heating oil to poor Americans. So he's still deeply embedded with the United States economy despite efforts to find other markets. We are deeply dependent on each other." Containment is simply not a feasible strategy.

Develop surrogate broadcasting strategy and offset Chavez's aid-based initiatives with our own. The existing U.S. communications strategy often fails to penetrate Venezuela's existing media. One panelist summarized his recommendations as follows: "We can offset Chavez's influence by highlighting the good things that we're already doing down there. Obviously we can do more, we *should* do more, but make sure that what we're doing gets maximum impact through an aggressive strategic communications campaign." Another added, "We should develop a surrogate broadcasting vehicle to communicate with the Venezuelan populace what truths and realities are being masked by Chavez's semi-controlled media… sort of a multi-medium Radio-Free Venezuela, but through local opposition groups and tied to their media platforms… not the U.S. piping the message in." The U.S. must also be more willing to counter Chavez's aid-based initiatives with our own: "Whenever Chavez goes and responds to an earthquake in Peru with those MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) with his picture on the side of them, we need to be able to very rapidly respond at the same time with American aid. When he sends Cuban doctors as his surrogates in other places, we need to be there with our own. He's running circles around us."

Chapter 2:
Colombia: A Success Story in the Making?

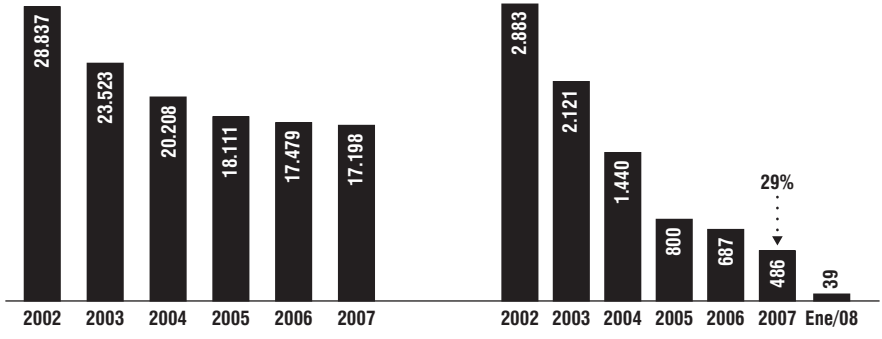
Colombia has definitely come a long way in a relatively short period of time. When President Alvaro Uribe took office in 2002, the country was being ravaged by an intense conflict between the state, communist narco-insurgencies, and illegal self-defense militias. The influx of more than $500 million dollars in annual drug revenues had drastically increased the strength of irregular armed groups on all sides of the conflict. The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)—largest of the insurgent movements—had swollen to 15,000 fighters and had shocked the world with several devastating military victories over fortified Colombian military bases. The AUC (United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia)—a confederation of paramilitaries ideologically opposed to the insurgency—had become deeply enmeshed with the illegal drug trade and responsible for massive human rights violations. Colombia's economy, which until this point had still managed to perform better than most in Latin America despite the insurgency, was plunged into a deep recession. The country was literally on the brink of collapse. This McCormick Foundation panel convened to discuss what has happened since those difficult years: Has Plan Colombia worked? Is the Colombian "good news story" real? If so, how did the country make such a speedy turnaround? What challenges remain, and what policies should the U.S. adopt to promote Colombia's continued success?

Have U.S. and Colombian efforts truly been effective?

A great preponderance of data shows that in nearly every security-related dimension, Colombia has improved markedly over the past six years. However, most participants were quick to point out that for every success, there is an associated complication, and without sustained effort all the progress made thus far could easily be reversed. Most importantly, we are at a tipping point in Colombia and continued U.S. engagement is key to success.

The overall levels of violence in Colombia have decreased significantly and the economy has rebounded. Several panelists from Colombia presented a series of recent security statistics. Homicides, kidnappings, and terrorist attacks have all been cut in half since 2002. Violence against traditionally vulnerable segments of the population—such as trade unionists, teachers, and reporters—has also declined by more than 40 percent. The commercial hub of *Medellín*, previously the murder capital of the world, has seen violent crime plummet by more than

90 percent. As a result of the improved security, economic signs have been encouraging: The stock market has surged fourteen-fold since 2002, foreign investment has doubled, and the economy is expanding by 6. 8 percent per year. As one participant stated, "There was a recent poll that asked—other than Brazil—where the best place to invest in Latin America is. The overwhelming answer was Colombia."



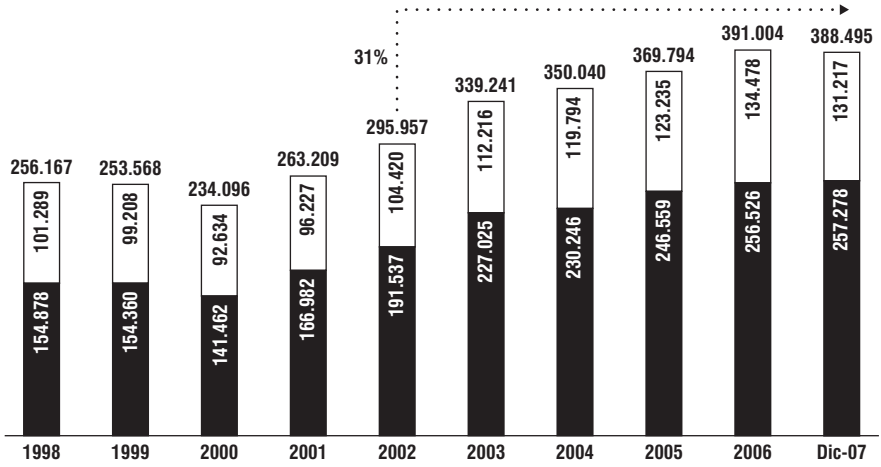
Total Homicides **Total Kidnappings**

(Source: Colombian Ministry of Defense/ U.S. Embassy; 1,000 = 1.000)

The FARC and ELN are beginning to bend politically under sustained military pressures. Colombia's two main insurgent movements—FARC and the ELN—are beginning to show signs that military losses and the expansion of government presence have taken a toll. As one attendee explained, "The Colombian military successes in the past five to eight years have precipitated the ELN's decision to negotiate with the government of Colombia, and we're right at the 'tipping point' with the FARC if the military pressure continues. Over the past four months the Colombian military has really cracked down on mid-level commanders and non-Secretariat high value targets, whether it was *Jota Jota* down in Buenaventura or *Negro Acasio*, the 16th Front Commander, or *Don Diego*, the narco-terrorist, or most recently, the 37th Front Commander. Those are valid Colombian military successes that might help precipitate a negotiated settlement." However, as another participant commented, the geography of Colombia still presents formidable problems: "JTF Omega (the military's premiere force for attacking the FARC) had some real successes in Southern Colombia, but the problem is that we're talking about an area that's as big as West Virginia. To the east of the mountains you've got another seven areas that are just as big. So the guerrillas and the narcos relocated to other areas. And the problem is half of your offensive capability is occupying this area, with no end in sight. How do

you get out of there?" Purely offensive military operations can only accomplish so much. After the military recaptures territory previously under the control of illegal combatants, police presence and an intense surge in civilian services is essential to stabilizing and ultimately consolidating these territories. Military pressure and success is essential but the conflict will ultimately end with a more integrated strategy of military, police and civilian efforts.

The Colombian government has steadily pushed governance into increasingly remote areas of the country. Following up on the success of *Plan Patriota*, the Colombian government's new *Plan Consolidación* strategy is based much more on interagency cooperation and "soft-side" assistance. As one participant remarked: "The military can do its part and provide security or conduct combat operations. But to be effective, the Colombians started something they call *accion integral*, which is military action integrated with the other arms of the government." The integrated action applies at all levels—both tactical and strategic. In 2005, with the assistance of U.S. advisors, the Colombian government created the Center for Interagency Coordination and Action (CCAI) as a means for high-level coordination and planning. The CCAI is located in the Office of the Presidency and has representatives from 15 Ministries to coordinate activities in recently retaken zones of the country. In addition, the U.S. government has begun pushing resources to Colombian government forces involved in reclaiming territory from the guerrilla. In 2002, 131 municipalities were essentially considered "ungoverned," whereas today *every* municipality in the country is permanently occupied by government administrators and security forces." The most important thing that's happened in the last two years is that USAID (United States Agency for International Development) has become actively involved and has started to really help the Colombian government, the other arms, the other ministries become much more involved in a direct way. After they win the military battles, these combined agencies under the leadership of CCAI are now assisting in occupying the area and consolidating these areas through the provision of social services such as education and health care, as well as providing economic opportunities in order for the population to be able to sustain itself and continue." To provide the needed security "backbone" required to support these efforts, the Colombian military and police have been steadily growing:



Growth of Colombian Military (Black) and National Police (White)
(Source: Colombian Ministry of Defense, U.S. Embassy; 1,000 = 1.000)

What major challenges remain?

Yet despite the positive trends in Colombia, most participants agreed that the security situation is still rife with emerging problems and highly sensitive to external variables (such as resources or political regimes). Some of the most important challenges identified were as follows:

The demobilization of the AUC has caused a "splintering effect," leaving behind small, autonomous armed groups with no common ideological bond. In 2003, the Colombian government successfully negotiated with the United Self Defense Groups (AUC) to begin a process of demobilization. Over the course of three years, more than 30,000 paramilitaries surrendered, handed over their arms, and pledged to enter a program whereby they would peacefully reintegrate with society. While the program has achieved many successes (according to one embassy official, more than 92 percent of all demobilized personnel complete the program), a vacuum has been left in some areas of the country, giving illegal criminal gangs the opportunity to move in and control key drug corridors. Moreover, some demobilizing paramilitary members, unable to assimilate effectively into society, have opted to return to these armed groups. One attendee noted that this phenomenon was relatively small scale, but important: "OAS monitoring data indicates that only 2-3 percent of the demobilized are members of these illegal criminal gangs but the perception is that it is much greater. This is a key develop-

ment because the public's perception of their own security is critical to transitioning communities out of conflict." Dozens of small criminal gangs such as *Aguilas Negras*, *Los Rastrojos*, *Los Tranquetos*, and others who lack any binding ideology have emerged and are focused solely on drug trafficking. Also, now that these splintered armed groups no longer fall under a centralized authority, the Colombian government has no means of engaging the group as a whole—there is no command structure, no lead negotiator. This leaves the expansion of government presence and rule of law as the only viable alternative. Despite these issues, some participants remained upbeat: "In my opinion the fact that these groups do not have a single command structure means they are no longer a direct threat to the government or a potential destroyer of stability." In the words of another participant: "Although we may have splintered the problem, the [Justice and Peace Law] has stripped away the paramilitary's anti-communist ideology so that once these [demobilized men] go back out on the street to conduct criminal activities, there's really no debate anymore as to what they are or what they're doing or what their interests are. They're just thugs—not self-defense forces—and there is really no debate over that anymore. And that process itself grants the Colombian state greater legitimacy over them and a freer hand in how to respond to their activities."

Continued progress in Colombia is highly dependent on resources. Colombia's insurgent groups have been increasingly denied of "breathing room" to recruit, raise revenues, or conduct operations. A careful combination of military pressure, expanded governance, and eradication has been effective at decreasing the size of "ungoverned spaces" where insurgency thrives. However, these efforts could not have been possible without the substantial funding—$7.5 billion since July 2000—provided by Plan Colombia. One participant expressed his concerns as follows: "How sustainable is all of this, and what are the risks of this progress reversing if the U.S. cuts back some of the assistance—which is happening right now? The Free Trade Agreement will likely not be approved. You have Chavez more powerful next door, and also Correa next door in Ecuador. How sustainable is the program?" Another participant from Colombia echoed this concern: "If we lose the support of the United States, it will be extremely difficult for Colombia. Without U.S. support, Colombia is an island in Latin America, and we are not exempt from the viruses that can contaminate us." Attendees agreed that Plan Colombia was an important factor in pulling Colombia back from the

brink, however, resource levels needed to be maintained if the U.S. was going to reap the returns of its investment. The presidency of Alvaro Uribe—whose hard line approach was instrumental against the FARC—will end in 2010. Yet, as one attendee explained: "I believe that the Colombian people see a brighter future for their children, and there's no way we can return to the past. There's no way we can go back."

The profitability of the drug trade will continue to undermine the peace process. Despite the ELN's involvement in peace negotiations, many were skeptical about the possibility of bringing sufficient pressure to bear: "I was personally involved in the National Conciliation Committee and we'd made significant progress [in Havana] towards formalizing an agreement," said one senior policymaker, "but unfortunately these agreements were broken off when the ELN found territories near the Pacific Ocean where they could produce quantities of cocaine and send it through Venezuela." Another attendee commented on the all pervasive influence of drug money, and how it would continue to undermine a peace process: "When I was in Colombia in the early '90s, they estimated the total money in the drug trade, compared it to the gross, to the cash flow of General Motors. And that was measured in millions, hundreds of millions of dollars. Today you hear them compared to the total cash flow of Microsoft in billions of dollars. It doesn't get down to the *campesino*. It's the middlemen, most of whom are members of the ELN and FARC, and for that reason I don't think you'll see them negotiate." These underlying factors suggest the need for a continued counter-drug strategy that combines eradication, alternative development, and expanded governance to make the drug trade less lucrative for these insurgent groups. Until political reintegration is agreed to and the externalities of being associated with the drug trade, particularly violence and insecurity, are understood then there is little likelihood of a negotiated settlement.

What policies should the U.S. pursue to ensure continued success?

Given the complex and evolving nature of the threat in Colombia, conference attendees were surprisingly united in their recommendations. The attending experts—whether from the United States or Colombia, military or civilian, academic or practitioner—all agreed that continued U.S. support is absolutely *critical* for Colombia's consolidation and leadership as a strategic ally to the United States.

Continued U.S. funding with maximum flexibility. The possibility that the U.S. Congress might significantly reduce funding for Colombian programs worried many attendees. As one stated clearly: "I think money is key here. The fact that Congress is potentially cutting off some of the money is dangerous—, the Colombians have the FARC right where they want them, and cutting off the resources to the Colombians prematurely may give the FARC the same type of respite they received when President Pastrana ceded them the *Despeje* a few years ago." (The *Despeje* was a vast demilitarized zone given to the FARC as part of peace negotiations in 1999.) Several conference attendees were also emphatic about the type of funding provided—while "soft side" support has been essential, lawmakers should be careful to leave the maximum amount of flexibility in the appropriations so that U.S. assistance can be adjusted to match the threat. Should the narco-insurgency gain strength in certain areas of the country, "hard" side support will be needed to defeat the threat and establish security so that governance programs can gain root. One speaker managing development programs in Colombia noted that they consistently highlight to visiting delegations the importance of security to achieve our development goals. She highlighted that this integrated approach has enabled USAID to work in more difficult conflict zones, particularly where airlift is required. While there needs to be an increase in soft side resources, she emphasized that it should not come as a result of a rapid decrease in hard side funds that are critical to achieving security and access to Colombia's remote regions. Moreover, the security situation is very fluid in Colombia and requires maximum flexibility in order to be responsive. Colombia's budget is currently heavily earmarked and does not provide practitioners on the ground with the funding to respond to the conflict. Another attendee was similarly emphatic about flexibility: "I think we need to be very strong and clear about the need to continue to invest in Colombia and maintain flexibility—because when you're in an evolving conflict environment, you need the flexibility to be able to respond."

Continue to assist Colombia in developing integrated defense and governance strategies. While most attendees agreed that encouraging more "soft" side programs through earmarks could be counterproductive, nearly all voiced the importance of continued U.S. Embassy partnership and guidance. In other words, "tying the purse strings" was not the best option—instead, the U.S. should empower its embassy personnel to encourage more integrated security and gover-

nance programs through their respective counterparts. One participant cited USAID as an important example: "If you looked at the year 2000, USAID/Colombia consisted of a very small staff with one official representative. The office had a million dollars a year and it was focused exclusively on judicial reform. When Plan Colombia started off, all of a sudden there was $700 million of assistance, and USAID needed to quickly ramp up but it took time. In the first years, the Embassy was working with a small staff and trying to move the Colombian resources as quickly as possible to the people. Over time, Plan Colombia became more focused on eradicating illicit drugs and supporting alternative development through an integrated plan, which has become more and more synchronized with the military's efforts." Another participant also stressed for U.S. Embassy engagement: "Colombia is just now starting to integrate other elements of power in its approach to the conflict, and that is why it's so important that our Embassy also stresses that. If we're going to go through this transition from occupying territory to promoting peace, we have to encourage them to look at more than the military element." While the Colombian CCAI has been an important organizational step, many of these integrated security and governance programs are still in their infancy. To develop these programs to their full potential, U.S. and Colombian practitioners need time to learn key lessons together through shared experience and interaction. Furthermore, Colombia is not alone in fighting irregular threats and illicit drug crops—the U.S. is just now beginning to adapt to evolving threat models in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the United States and Colombia continue to re-write their strategies against insurgencies, ungoverned spaces, and irregular threats, both countries can surely benefit from the exchange.

Support the Free Trade Agreement, but provide for sufficient protections. Conference participants were generally in favor of the U.S.-Colombian Free Trade Agreement (FTA), however some expressed reservations that the agreement—in its current form—lacks sufficient safeguards to protect Colombia's poorest classes, namely peasant farmers. As one economic advisor noted, "Colombia's conflict is rooted in inequality, and the FARC is a rural-based insurgency that still plays off the frustrations of the poorest citizens. While the FTA can be tremendously profitable for Colombia as a whole, we need to be very careful about what provisions are in place to protect those poor rural farmers. If this FTA displaces the small farmer in Colombia as NAFTA (North American Free

Trade Agreement) has in Mexico, we could very easily see them turn away from the government's development programs and embrace either the illegal drug economy or Leftist rebel ideologies." Despite unease about second and third order effects, most concurred that the FTA's passage was positive overall for Colombia: "The approval of the Free Trade Agreement is absolutely pivotal, because Colombia is one of our strongest strategic partners," said one official, "and if we don't recognize that with the Free Trade Agreement, we, again, leave them vulnerable to Chavez's influence." Another participant affirmed the benefit to Colombia's economy: "The Colombian government obviously sees the FTA as in their interests, but it's also in our interests. If we want them to be stronger, if we want them to eventually assume responsibility without major financial support from the United States, then their economy must continue to grow."

Militarily, recognize that "Tier-One HVT hunting" may be counterproductive; continue to focus on encouraging desertions,targeting mid-level commanders and protection of the civilian populace. Since the beginning of "Plan Colombia" and the introduction of U.S. military advisors, the Colombian military has often focused their high-end intelligence collection and "man hunting" capabilities on the FARC Secretariat, or only the most senior leaders of the insurgent organization. For a variety of reasons, this approach had yielded disappointing results—some attendees cited the potential infiltration of informants within the Colombian military and police, the logistical difficulties of projecting a task force into remote areas to "snatch" a time sensitive target, or the risk aversion of senior Colombian military leaders. Beyond these obstacles to successful execution, some participants also pointed out that removing the top level leaders in the organization might be counterproductive—that without these leaders, the organization might "splinter" in the same way that the drug cartels have since the death of Pablo Escobar, or in the way that paramilitaries have after the incarceration of Salvatore Mancuso, "Jorge 40," and others. For all of these reasons, both practical and strategic, some participants advocated a military strategy focused more on targeting mid-to low-level leaders and classic counterinsurgency programs to protect the civilian populace. Some of these changes have already been realized within the past six months: Colombian operations have recently shown a willingness to go after

"lower-hanging fruit." In some attendees' opinion, this type of approach is more likely to put the necessary military pressure on the FARC to cause one of two outcomes: Either the Secretariat feels compelled to negotiate an agreement with the Colombian government, and/or low-level members of the organization feel compelled to surrender and reintegrate into society. As one panelist explained: "The message we should send to the rank-and-file insurgents should be 'We're going to put a lot of pressure on you up front, with a lot more military operations, *but* there's a way for you to get out.' And the government's been working very hard on propaganda to try to get that information to the guerrillas in the field. More than 10,000 FARC and ELN have surrendered. And the number this past year has been increasing—2007 is set to be the highest number of guerrilla desertions ever."

Chapter 3:
Religious Extremism in Latin America

The State Department recently published a report on global terrorism that asserts that terrorism in Latin America is "primarily perpetrated by narco-terrorist organizations based in Colombia and the remnants of radical leftist Andean groups." The report goes on to state that there is "*no corroborated information* that Hezbollah, Hamas or any other Islamic extremist groups have an operational presence in the area." This McCormick Foundation panel brought together experts with extensive experience in Latin America counterterrorism issues and the Tri-Border Area (TBA) to discuss the viability of these claims. Is there a religious extremist threat in Latin America? Why or why not? What are the key challenges associated with the threat? What can the U.S. government to protect itself and the region?

Is the Tri-Border Area (TBA) terrorist threat real? If so, what is the nature of the threat?

The "TBA"—a lawless region where the borders of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay intersect—lies at the center of the Latin American terrorism debate. While most of the ongoing investigations are shrouded in strict secrecy (for security reasons), there was little disagreement that the threat *does exist* and that current governmental institutions are inadequate to properly address the problem.

Terrorist financing is the biggest concern: Hezbollah derives large sums of money directly from the TBA. In the opinion of most attendees, the number one religious extremist-related security issue is the illegal financing activities conducted in support of Hezbollah. In the words of one participant: "We estimate that there are billions of dollars of "gray market" good being sold in Ciudad del Este [in Paraguay]. And we have evidence that out of that flow of money, some 200+ million dollars is going to Hezbollah." The existence of these funding networks is no secret: Even though Ciudad del Este's population is only 300,000, the city contains more than 55 banks and exchange shops. Public figures released by the Department of Justice estimate that more than $6 billion in illegal funds (half of the Paraguayan GDP) are laundered there annually. Separate figures released by the Library of Congress place Ciudad del Este, Paraguay as the number three city worldwide for cash transactions—behind Miami and Hong Kong. Significant contributions from Lebanese emigrants living in the TBA are often sent directly to the web of fundraising organizations associated with Hezbollah—often disguised as

humanitarian relief. The narcotics trade also figures prominently into the equation—one of the conference participants highlighted the 2003 arrest of the Hezbollah-affiliated, Lebanese merchant Hassan Abdallah Dayoub, who was stopped in a Paraguayan airport with 2.3 kilos of cocaine hidden in an electric piano. High-level police investigators pointed to Dayoub's capture and several related arrests as overwhelming proof that Hezbollah had established a "wing of narco-traffickers."

Hezbollah has conducted terrorist attacks against symbolic targets in Latin America in the past—the possibility for future attacks cannot be ignored. Investigations into two major terrorist attacks in Buenos Aires, Argentina (the bombing of the Israeli Embassy on March 17, 1992, and the bombing of a Jewish community center on July 18, 1994) found that Hezbollah or associated radical Islamist elements used the TBA as a base to carry out their operations. In May 2003 Argentine prosecutors linked both Ciudad del Este and Foz de Iguazu to the AMIA (Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association) bombing and issued arrest warrants for two Lebanese citizens living at the time in Ciudad del Este. One of those individuals—Assad Ahmad Barakat—was later identified as Hezbollah's military operations chief in the TBA and its chief Southern Cone fund-raiser. In the words of one conference participant: "Most of the newspaper writings and official investigations of those attacks identified them as being aligned with Hezbollah. So if the majority of people involved in those attacks still haven't been arrested, prosecuted, and put in jail, the operational capability that existed then still exists now." The narrowly averted bomb attack on the U.S. embassy in Asuncion (in late 2000) serves as a grim reminder of this capability. The participants also pointed to the existence of latent cells and/or smuggling networks that could facilitate future attacks in the event of an escalation with Iran: "I think it's pretty clear that part of the threat is Iran's indirect influence through Hezbollah-based networks in South America. We all watched when the president of Iran visited Venezuela, we've all seen the public pronouncements that if we attack Iran, they'll attack in a thousand different places. Iran doesn't have the ability to attack us through traditional military strikes. The ability they *do* have is to use suicide bombings or car bombings and other irregular means. And it seems to me Venezuela is the port of easy entry into the Americas." To this end, the TBA was cited by some participants as a critical part of Hezbollah's response capability—though the extent to which this region supports active cells was still subject to debate.

The AMIA bombing aftermath, July 18, 1994. (Source: AP, BBC Mundo, December 23, 2000)

Part of the problem is a lack of governance: The TBA is essentially an "international zone" where illegal organizations thrive. One participant who has worked in the TBA for many years described the situation as follows:"In the beginning of the '70s, the Paraguayan government installed a free trade zone in Ciudad del Este, and since then that part of the world has become a lawless corner. Why? Because Paraguay has a weak government, unstable democracy, and pervasive corruption. These problems together create an environment that supports a multitude of transnational illicit activities like narco-trafficking, contraband weapons, diversified piracy, and money laundering. If you have a car stolen in Rio de Janeiro, you go to Ciudad del Este, and 48 hours later you'll find your car there legalized, and ready to be sold again. In Ciudad del Este anyone can buy an AK-47 Kalashnikov rifle with ammunition for $400 in 24 hours. I've been there. It's lawless. The situation is not easy." Participants agreed that since 9/11, the governments of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil have made efforts to restrict travel and monitor financial transactions—but the situation is still far from controlled. Individuals still enjoy tremendous freedom of movement through the TBA.

Additionally, one panelist remarked that the somewhat myopic attention on the TBA had only shifted illicit networks to nearby border towns such as Pedro Juan Caballero and Capitán Bado to the north or Posadas to the south. Without a broad, coordinated strategy, the porous borders and poor controls of the region will continue to cripple interdiction efforts.

More than 40,000 people cross the "Friendship Bridge" connecting Paraguay and Brazil daily. Border controls are often limited to spot checks, even for cargo shipments. (Source: Library of Congress report, "Terrorist and Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area of South America, July 2003)

Part of the problem is demographics: The TBA is home to large, complex, and insulated Muslim communities where religious extremist elements are difficult to pinpoint. Panelists were quick to point out how broad and diverse the Muslim demographic is in the TBA: "There's a number of writings about how many Muslims are in the Central-South American-Caribbean area. Most estimates place the number at more than three million. This is a major demographic in South America—part of the identity of the region." Another panelist went on to explain that the Muslim community was also much more heterogeneous and much more insulated than commonly assumed: "There are some Muslim families, particularly in the Southern Cone, that have been established in the region for many, many years—generations in fact—while

there are many other families that emigrated to the region much more recently. There's a divide between a Sunni population and a much more widely dispersed Shia population. However, the farther away from Mecca these various groups are, the less severe the divisions between them. The community in the TBA is much stronger and more tightly knit than you'd ever see in North America. Many people in this country don't really have a sense for how Lebanese much of Brazil and the Southern Cone is." The nature of Muslim communities in the TBA—with their own schools, clubs, and associations—makes outside penetration extremely difficult.

"Radicalization" of existing Muslim communities is not regarded as a major threat—business is too good, and Latin America's geopolitical environment is relatively inhospitable. While South America has a much stronger Muslim identity than North America, the majority of attendees asserted that the "radicalization" of these communities and/or the indoctrination of terrorist recruits from the Muslim immigrant population is not a major threat. One participant asserted that something in Latin America's social, economic, geographic, or religious climate is *inhospitable* to extremist ideology: "Religious extremists have made significant inroads in every major hemisphere in the world, with the notable exception of Latin America. Now, surely, there are some anecdotal examples, but these movements don't have the same scope or the same level as they do elsewhere. It seems to me that there's something about Latin American culture or geopolitics that seems to make it less of a great target for Islamic radicals. I mean, we've got a major Muslim demographic and these huge lawless regions that would seem to be perfect for exploitation, and yet we're not seeing the ideology incubate in the same way. Maybe it's the strength of the Catholic religion there, I don't know, but it merits further study." Another attendee explained it in terms of economics and profit: "We don't see radicalization because there are three [Muslim] groups—the Hijazi, the Barakat, and what we call the "Scorpion"—who control all the trade that's going on in the TBA, and they keep order—it would drastically affect their profits if any sort of "radicalization" starts becoming evident. There's a great deal of money being made, and overt extremist activities can only ruin the arrangement."

The ease with which small, external, radicalized groups can plan operations from within these communities is a more relevant concern. Instead of focusing on the "radicalization" of communities, many attendees saw a greater threat in the freedom of movement associated with the TBA: "I was working in Buenos Aires the week of the attack against the

Israeli Embassy, and also when the Jewish AMIA building was destroyed. It killed about 90 people and created a hell of a mess. But I don't think this is a problem for the Southern Cone's Islamic communities. I'm not persuaded that there was a significant number of people in those communities who are actively engaged in these activities. I think that those events in '92 and '94 demonstrate that you don't need many people to be actively engaged—the region's highly permissive nature made it possible for [extremists] from outside the region to operate with a high degree of impunity and freedom of action in order to mount those attacks. That's what I worry about in the area. I don't worry about the radicalization of Islamic communities there."

What factors make counterterrorism so difficult in Latin America?

Perception Problems and Semantics. U.S. policymakers are consistently confronted with "perception problems" when trying to enlist international support for CT initiatives. The United States and each of the tri-border countries simply do not subscribe to the same definitions of terrorism. In the words of one attendee: "We, the United States, recognize Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. Other countries do not. Brazil doesn't want to grapple with terrorism—perhaps for very good domestic reasons they consistently deny that a terrorist threat exists. We may disagree strongly, but that's Brazil's sovereign right." This sentiment was supported by another participant, who stated that "Brazil doesn't like to talk about terrorism issues, period. So we say terrorism and they say crime—and the difference may seem like semantics, but politically and legally, it really influences policy." The reluctance of many Latin American allies to acknowledge either the War on Terror or U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts was clearly revealed during a 2004 Defense Ministerial of the Americas: Argentina's defense minister, Jose Pampuro, cited public opposition to a policing role for the military and CT-focused strategy: "The vision of the United States [for the role of the military] is more one of policing and internal control. Our vision is diametrically opposed to that."

Reluctance to pass CT laws. The differences in opinion regarding "terrorism" have translated into a strong reluctance to pass substantive counter-terrorist laws for the TBA. As explained by one conference attendee:"Another problem that we have is the lackluster support for United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373, which calls on all mem-

ber states to pass counter-terrorism laws and money laundering laws against material support. The United States has made some big changes; we call them 2339A and 2339B, which are laws that make it illegal to give material support or resources to any terrorist organization. And Brazil has refused to pass that law, even though they signed on that they would eventually do so. Argentina passed it only recently. Paraguay still has not passed it—largely because Paraguayan citizens associate counterterrorism with fascism and their repressive years under Alfredo Stroessner."

Large segments of Latin America remain unengaged and regional attitudes towards U.S. policy are at an all-time low.
The strategic impact of Hugo Chavez and the Populist movement is not limited to the Andean ridge. U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts, which rely heavily on multilateral cooperation, have been weakened by political divisiveness. Overt cooperation with the United States—even on matters as pragmatic as terrorism—has become increasingly costly for Latin American political leaders. Beyond the ideological changes, some participants also blamed policy signals from the United States: "The overwhelming emphasis on the Middle East over the past years has left Latin America feeling somewhat like a forgotten neighbor," said one, "We all saw how President Bush's visit last year was treated in the Spanish-speaking papers—too little too late. Large segments of the population feel unengaged and ignored. This is as much a strategic communications problem as it is a diplomatic problem."

What policies can the U.S. adopt to better interdict religious extremist groups operating in this region?

Rethink our human intelligence (HUMINT) strategies.
Emphasizing the importance of using human intelligence networks against extremist elements, one participant stated: "The most critical part of our counterterrorism effort in the TBA is human intelligence—not signal intelligence, not image intelligence. Technology and satellites are just a component. The main source of information is the crowd. To get to the enemy, you have to infiltrate the crowd, the mosques—you have to understand the environment." At the same time, another participant highlighted the relative ineffectiveness of current HUMINT efforts by the U.S., stating that deep cultural differences between either handler and source or source and target prevented the collection of useful information: "Americans bribe Paraguayans and the Paraguayans will say anything to

collect their money, often providing false information. What people overlook is the large community of what we call Braziguayos—Brazilians with double citizenship living as farmers on the Paraguayan side. Many of them speak Arabic fluently, they blend in, they have standing relationships. This is the key to a successful HUMINT strategy—cooperating with the government that has the best access and placement to the problem."

Continued interagency (IA) reform and cooperation. Many conference participants pointed to the continued need to improve sharing between interagency partners. One intelligence official with a long career in the region said: "From my perspective, there is still a strong tension between CIA, DIA, FBI, DEA, and NSA—they don't share as much as they should because they're in a contest fighting for budget and they don't crosstalk the way they need to." Other participants were not so emphatic about the lack of sharing, but still pointed continued institutional shortcomings: "In the TBA, we need to make sure that the information we have on suspicious financial transactions, on the shipments of goods, isn't just collected in our own institutional stovepipes, but rather, that we're sharing the information in a meaningful way. A Department of Justice team needs to be able to—and have the authority to—share information with an investigating magistrate in Brazil. . . and that magistrate in Brazil needs to be able to introduce information into court from Argentinean customs, and so on—so that you can take these multiple strings of a transnational operation and attack the problem in a way that sovereign states can act. We don't want to be faced with a situation where any single actor—a magistrate in Brazil or a U.S. agent in Paraguay—has general knowledge about these offenses but no way to act upon it. Moreover, we have to think about this cooperation in a fairly tedious and detail-oriented way, and we have to do it consistently day in and day out or we will not be successful."

Focus less on dictating counterterrorism policy for our international allies—and pragmatically look for issues where we can cooperate; Use the "Al Capone" method. Many attendees agreed that Latin America, given current political realities, will remain unlikely to "see eye-to-eye" with American policymakers on terrorism issues. As one participant explained: "I think we all realize that—especially in Latin America—we can't just go into somebody's backyard and tell them 'this is how you do everything.' That approach doesn't work. Instead of terrorism, we should talk more about transnational crimes." Calling this type of cooperation the "Al Capone" strategy, another participant

described a more nuanced approach in the TBA: "Instead of talking about who is giving material support to 'terrorists,' let's talk about money laundering or drug trafficking. We should adjust the language and reframe the issue enough to facilitate the cooperation we need." To some degree, this criminal focused approach has already been started. One attendee explained, "We're working hand-in-hand with the Paraguayan, Brazilian and Argentinean governments to set up trade transparency groups. We are beginning to take a better look at imports and exports between the United States and the tri-border area to determine discrepancies between what's being reported on each side. This approach de-emphasizes the pure terrorism angle and focuses on criminal networks that clearly impact all the involved governments." Whether interested governments recognize certain elements or activities as "terrorist" is less important than the recognition that the massive money laundering and drug trafficking occurring in the TBA is socially destabilizing and a very real problem.

Partnership with the Department of Homeland Security: Push the border outward. Beyond the interagency actors already described, partnership between the United States and the three tri-border countries must also extend to the Department of Homeland Security. In one participant's words, "Our Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) need excellent working relationships with their counterpart institutions in all three TBA countries. To some extent this already exists. . . but improved relationships can yield even greater benefits. Database pooling, Visa coordination, monitoring the activities of people crossing back and forth between our borders, sharing information even if we disagree on what kinds of 'watch lists' to use—are all ways to cooperate. At the same time, we need to share training and information to improve the capabilities of our respective agents."

Chapter 4:
U.S. Homeland Security and Homeland Defense

Historically, the United States has been able to separate foreign threats from domestic public safety concerns. While there have been occasions when foreign powers have threatened our shores, for the most part, we have been able to rely on the oceans to separate us from foreign threats. Secure in this knowledge, domestic law enforcement has long gone about its business with little notice or concern about events in the outside world. The 9/11 attacks ended this way of thinking. Foreign threats can no longer be neatly separated from domestic public safety issues—a reality that was officially recognized in the creation of a Department of Homeland Security. As one NYPD Chief put it, "If it happens in North Africa, the Middle East or Indonesia, I want my people to react like it is happening in New Jersey, Connecticut or Pennsylvania." This McCormick Foundation Panel brought together experts in domestic law enforcement and maritime security in order to explore the impact of hemispheric security and public safety issues on the U.S. homeland. What general security and crime trends in South and Latin America are of concern to domestic and maritime security? What specific examples illustrate the growing interconnectedness of the hemisphere with respect to national security and public safety? How can U.S. homeland security and public safety agencies adapt to meet these challenges?

What general security and crime trends in South and Latin America are of concern to domestic and maritime security?

The conference participants generally agreed that homeland security is part of national security. The threat and criminal trends south of the U.S. impact public safety and security here and are of growing concern to U.S. domestic agencies. The most pressing problems include: transnational gangs, increasing levels of violence linked with gang and criminal activities, the continued viability of drug cartels, the exploitation of sea lanes to advance criminal and potentially terrorist agendas, uncontrolled immigration patterns, and the exploitation of under-governed spaces.

Transnational gangs are a growing and increasingly lethal threat to regional and hemispheric security. Gangs such as Mara Salvatrucha and the Eighteenth Street Gang originally formed in Los Angeles, but have gone on to establish a presence in multiple countries in the hemisphere and throughout the United States. Increased migration, lax border enforcement, rule of law shortcomings, and the ability to stay

connected and communicate across vast distances have all fueled the rapid expansion of transnational gangs. Among the most significant factors driving the achievement of a transnational status was the U.S. effort to deport violent gang members in the '90s taken in response to acts of extreme violence perpetrated by those individuals. The sudden influx of violent offenders exceeded the capacity of home countries to incarcerate, rehabilitate or otherwise manage them. Gang members were thus free to move about relatively unmolested, precisely at a time when modern conveniences were making it easier to be mobile while maintaining local networks and connections. Just as gang members became increasingly capable of crossing borders, so too did the criminal enterprises they nurtured. Today, transnational gangs run sophisticated criminal enterprises, including narcotics trafficking, money laundering, weapons dealing and human smuggling. Coincidentally, these are exactly the illicit enterprises that could be exploited to support terrorist organizations and cells. In fact, while there remains a divergence in motivation between terrorist organizations and gangs, there is an alarming similarity in tactical approaches. In December 2004, for example, gang members armed with automatic weapons ambushed a Honduran bus, killing 28 people and wounding several more. This savage act was intended to effect a change in the Honduran government's *Supa Mano Dura* or "strong hand" policy against the gangs. The brazen confidence behind such acts stems from the wealth that transnational gangs obtain through illicit enterprises. That wealth translates into securing the means to conduct coordinated violence (e.g., the group ambush of civil transportation using automatic weapons), which has traditionally been the province of state actors. U.S. cities are feeling the impact of the violent culture that characterizes transnational gangs. In fact, nearly every major U.S. city, and a growing number of rural areas, reports having exposure to gang-related violence. Many executives identify gangs as a top priority.

Gangs, drug cartels, and other criminal actors are becoming increasingly capable of planning and coordinating violent acts, often using military-style weaponry. As the ambush of the Honduran bus described above demonstrates, the trend line is that violent acts are increasingly the work of organized groups that have an ability to obtain military hardware and have displayed at least a working knowledge of military tactics. A quick review of the region reveals that these incidents are widespread.

Brazilian Organized Crime: The First Capital Command (PCC), a prison-based gang in Brazil, staged prison riots in Sao Paulo in 2006, which resulted in the deaths of dozens of police officers and hundreds of criminals. The violence spread to Brazil's transportation system—one of the favored tactics is to burn city buses. Similarly, the Red Command criminal gang controls much of Rio de Janeiro's drug trade with violent tactics.

Mexican Drug Cartels: The competition among Mexico's drug cartels has resulted in an alarming increase in violence during the past few years. Beheadings and acts of torture are common place, as are videos documenting gruesome acts, which serve as a warning to rival gang members. The weapons of choice include pistols, grenades, AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers.

Urban Violence in Venezuela: In February 2006, three teenagers and their chauffeur were kidnapped in Caracas and killed execution style, with a shot to the back of the head. The murder rate in Venezuela has nearly tripled in the past decade. In April 2006, a former police officer shot photographer Jose Aguirre, killing the journalist. The killer pulled his motorcycle up to Aguirre's car in a traffic jam, dismounted, and fired the deadly shots.

The production and trafficking of illegal drugs is fueling organized violence. It is noteworthy that in almost every instance, the production and trafficking of illegal drugs is fueling the rising level of violence in the region. The generation of resources allows those gangs controlling the drug trade to purchase arms and to project power. The competition for those same resources is extreme in its brutality. As Mexican drug trafficking organizations consolidate their dominance over the North American market, for example, the rising competition among cartels manifests itself in increased levels of violence. Several conference participants noted that the demand for illegal drugs in the U.S. and Canada and the profit opportunity it presents must be addressed in any comprehensive plan to check the violence associated with the drug trade.

Illicit enterprises, as well as national governments, take advantage of uncontrolled migration patterns to threaten U.S. domestic security. While the U.S. government has begun taking steps to gain better control of its border with Mexico, the uncontrolled flow of people across the border and via maritime routes continues at significant levels. Illicit enterprises are able to take advantage of this movement for profit opportunities, as well as to conceal trafficking patterns. Several panelists commented that gang members frequently boast about the ease with which they move back and forth across the border. Human smuggling and associated businesses like document forgery are flourishing. And the trafficking of illegal drugs continues with great success. In some cases, illegal migration has become a strategic objective of governments in the region. Cuba, it was noted, has purposefully exported undesirable citizens to southern Florida, where they are accepted unconditionally. There are indications that the Venezuelan government is facilitating the illegal movement of people into the U.S. by providing official government identity documents. One participant noted how the Chavez government has waived Visa requirements for many countries in the Middle East, including Iran, thus making Venezuela a more attractive base.

Under controlled spaces in the region facilitate illicit enterprises and violence-based activities. Spaces in which national governments exercise limited control in the region are frequently areas of concern. The U.S.-Mexican border and the TBA are two examples. Arguably, the *favellas* in Brazil and other slums in the region also fall under this category. It is widely suspected that some of the illicit enterprises operating out of the TBA support jihadist groups. While there was universal agreement that jihadist organizations have yet to exploit these conditions to threaten the U.S., it was also accepted that such conditions offer unique opportunity to the global jihad. For example, one participant noted how easy it was for Hezbollah to attack Jewish targets in Buenos Aires.

What specific examples illustrate the growing interconnectedness of the hemisphere with respect to national security and public safety?

The panel discussion touched upon several specific examples that demonstrate the reality that threat groups and criminal enterprises cross international boundaries and present shared security and public safety concerns. These included a discussion of MS-13, the plot against New York City's JFK Airport, patterns in maritime drug trafficking, the impact of U.S. immigration policy in Miami, and the Hezbollah attacks in Argentina.

Mara Salvatrucha: As noted above, MS-13 presents a classic example of the interconnectedness of the region. The Maras have grown to present a threat to public safety across the U.S., as well as in Mexico and Central America. It is an organization that started in the wake of El Salvador's civil war, was formed on the streets of Los Angeles, and metastasized after its forced exile back to El Salvador. The culture of violence that surrounds MS-13 and its peers is clearly evident in the U.S. The Phoenix Police investigate 40 percent more kidnappings in 2007 than they did in 2006. These are virtually all the result of criminals victimizing other criminals in rival, border-related criminal enterprises. In New York, a local district attorney used state terrorism laws passed after 9-11 to prosecute a gang member, who, after a perceived slight, fired a weapon into a christening party and killed a 10 year old girl. In another high profile case, gang members—one of who was in the U.S. illegally—shot four victims in the back of the head on a playground in Newark, New Jersey.

JFK Airport Plot: The plot against JFK is particularly instructive of the possibilities. In that case, a Guyanese immigrant to the U.S. teamed up with three others—two from Guyana and one from Trinidad—on a plan to explode gas storage tanks and pipelines at the New York City airport. The cell had strong connections to an extreme jihadist organization in Trinidad known as Jamaat al Muslimeen. One of the cell members was arrested in Trinidad, while attempting to board a plane to Venezuela for further travel to Iran. Although most experts agree that the plot was poorly planned by incapable people and had almost no chance of success, the connections that the case presents are nonetheless alarming. One can easily imagine a more sophisticated group leveraging ties with a Caribbean-based group with ideological sympathy for al Qaeda to capitalize on active or passive

support from the Venezuelan and Iranian governments, and having legal access to the U.S.

Bombings in Buenos Aires: The bombings of the Israeli Embassy and AMIA building in Buenos Aires demonstrate that, unlike the JFK cell, a sophisticated terrorist organization can successfully attack targets in the Western Hemisphere. In October 2006, two Argentine prosecutors officially charged that Hezbollah was complicit in the AMIA bombing. In both cases, a vehicle borne IED (Improvised Explosive Device) was the weapon of choice. The destructive results, coupled with an official failure to generate investigative results, indicate a level of sophistication that is the hallmark of a well-trained organization. Such an organization is better positioned to seize upon the advantages that the JFK cell could not.

How do U.S. homeland security and public safety agencies adapt to meet these challenges?

Several policy, organizational and resource allocation recommendations emerged from the discussion.

Expand U.S. information sharing initiatives, particularly with foreign law enforcement agencies. This analysis signifies the increasing interconnectedness with respect to regional security and public safety interests. As the threats and criminal enterprises become increasingly transnational in nature, U.S. information sharing initiatives must leverage and combine both foreign and domestic sources in order to enhance understanding and improve decision making at all levels.

Encourage state and local law enforcement to plan for the effects of regional and global security trends. State, local and tribal law enforcement, public safety and homeland security agencies must be integrated into hemispheric security discussions, planning, and solutions. One participant argued that police throughout the region must be educated on regional and global security and public safety trends, especially as these trends impact domestic security. For example, in Miami and New Jersey, local law enforcement officials have started to think through how Fidel Castro's death will impact their respective jurisdictions. Both are home to large Cuban-American communities that can be expected to react to this event with some emotion.

Invest in education and training that gives local operators a regional/ hemispheric perspective. The federal government can facilitate such learning by allocating resources to existing educational programs such as the Naval Post Graduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security. This program is open to state and local operators. Another strategy is to invest in new institutions, such as the National Counter Terrorism Academy in Los Angeles, that are sponsored by state and local agencies (the Los Angeles Police Department in this case).

There is work to be done to build understanding of the impact and importance of hemispheric trends on U.S. homeland security. The popular media pays little attention to such matters as gang violence in Brazil or the counterinsurgency in Colombia. Yet the threat from hemispheric actors is arguably greater on U.S. cities than that of al Qaeda or affiliated jihadist groups. To the extent that policymakers at all levels can focus the discussion on issues and trends that are impacting U.S. cities, they should.

Participant List

Gabor Beszterczey
International Journalist / Consultant

Jay Chesnut
U.S. Southern Command

Peter L. Coker
Tryon Capital Ventures

Timothy P. Connors
Manhattan Institute

MG Mario Enrique Correa Zambrano
Embassy of Colombia to the United States

Kevin Cronin
U.S. Southern Command

Ferdinand Cui
Office of the President of the Philippines

Kenneth R. Curley
Raymond Associates, LLC

CPT Gary Dahmen, USCG
U.S. Coast Guard

Edward J. Dillenschneider
Special Operations Command South

Fred Eshelman
PPD, Inc.

LTC Joe Felter
Combating Terrorism Center at West Point

Frank Flores
Los Angeles Police Department

COL Ken Irish
Oakley Strategic Services, LLC

Darryl L. Long
U.S. Military Group—Colombia

MAJ Fernando Lujan
Combating Terrorism Center at West Point

Mark Maldonado
U.S. Dept. of Justice Counterterrorism Section

Dr. Michael Mitchell
Arizona State University
Department of Political Science

COL Walter Navarro
WHINSEC

Kevin Michael O'Reilly
U.S. Department of State
Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism

Robert L. Pelegreen
U.S. Army South
International Military Affairs

MG (Ret.) Alvaro S. Pinheiro
Brazilian Army

Susan Reichle
USAID/Colombia
American Embassy USAID

MAJ Lorenzo Rios
Combating Terrorism Center at West Point

COL (Ret.) James Stevens Roach
U.S. Embassy, Colombia

Juan Salcedo Lora
Advisor to the Colombian Government

Thomas E. Stocking
Bureau of Diplomatic Security

MG (Ret.) Alfred Valenzuela
SOUTHCOM
(Former Deputy Commander)

CPT Richard Walterman
Miami Police Department

Andrew Webb-Vidal
Private Consultant

McCormick Foundation Conference Series Call for 2009 Conference Proposals

McCormick Foundation constantly seeks to build on the quality and tradition of our Conference Series by addressing a range of timely and challenging issues.

We welcome submissions from academic institutions, policy experts, and public, nonprofit and private sector professionals from all fields.

For detailed submission guidelines, application instructions or to see a list of past conferences, visit the Foundation's Web site at www.McCormickFoundation.org.

Proposals must be received no later than August 29, 2008, to be considered for the conference support.

McCormick Foundation

The McCormick Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to making life better for our children, communities and country. Through its charitable grantmaking programs, Cantigny Park and Golf, Cantigny First Division Foundation and the McCormick Freedom Museum, the Foundation is able to positively impact people's lives and stay true to its mission of advancing the ideals of a free, democratic society. For more information, please visit our Web site www.McCormickFoundation.org.

Combating Terrorism Center at West Point

The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point contributes relevant scholarly perspectives through education, research and policy analysis to combat terrorist threats to the United States. We maintain expertise in four primary areas: terrorism, counterterrorism, homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction. By developing a curriculum of the highest quality, producing theoretically informed studies, and crafting relevant policy recommendations, we remain an internationally recognized center of excellence dedicated to the advancement of terrorism knowledge and expertise.