

Elementary—Paula Bernabai, Jill Daley, Michelle Metzendorf, Vi Moser, Mrs. Scanlan; Mouqd-Westonka Secondary School—Mr. Kaeter; Mount Calvary Lutheran School—Karl Schmidt, James Spitzack; Mount Hope Redemption—Lutheran School—David Polzin; Mount Iron-Buhl High School—Ted Louma, Luke Weinens; Mount Olivet Nursery School—Sandra Kuehn; Mountain Lake High School—Jerry Cogue, Wade Nelson; Nellie Stone Johnson Elementary—Jonathan Berry; Neveln Elementary—Maryanne Heimsness, Linda Lind; New City Charter School—Mary Spoor; New Haven Community School—Elaine Arft; New Hope Elementary—Stephanie Hill, Paula Roberge; New London-Spicer High School—Lloyd Bakke; New Prague Intermediate Elementary—Margaret Kartek, Mark Shaughnessey, Mrs. Witt, Irma Langer; New Prague Middle School—Heidi Hagen; New Prague Senior High School—Pat O'Malley, Dan Puls, New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Genera Elementary—Sylvia Boettger; New Richmond Senior High School—Jim McCollum;

FIGHTING TERRORISM IN LATIN AMERICA

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, as we contemplate reforms to better equip us to prevent and fight terrorism, I hope we will bear in mind the importance of the Western Hemisphere. As chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, I am encouraged by the opportunities we have to work cooperatively with our regional neighbors on issues we all can benefit from. We have shared interests in promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We are stronger when we stand together as a hemisphere against terrorism, money laundering, and the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and people. Our greatest asset in the war on terror in Latin America and the Caribbean is the fact that we have so many willing partners throughout the region who share our values.

I recently came across an interesting study, written by Michael Johnson of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, that discusses the threat of international terrorist groups in the Triborder region of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina. I hope my colleagues will read this study and reflect upon the importance of addressing terrorism wherever it exists around the world.

I ask unanimous consent that study be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN SOUTH AMERICA'S TRIBORDER REGION

A REGION IN NEED OF SECURITY

Unstable institutions, rampant corruption and a struggling economy made Paraguay appear as an attractive venue for would-be terrorists to base their operations just a few years ago. However, with the newly formed Three Plus One Counterterrorism Dialogue consisting of Argentine, Paraguayan, Brazilian and an American intelligence-gathering team, terrorists seem to have decided to shy away from creating havoc in the region. Though no terrorist initiatives seem to have occurred in the tri-border region of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil, experts from each of the countries feel that signifi-

cant amounts of money laundering is taking place in the area—ending up funding terrorist acts in the Middle East. Current U.S. foreign policy in the area, therefore, will play an integral role in cleansing the area of terrorists as well as contain other illicit activities endemic to the region.

U.S. agencies have been monitoring clandestine activity in Paraguay for a number of years. However, only recently have they begun to increase their physical presence. According to various reports, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has more than doubled the size of its office in Asuncion. However, this does not automatically represent any change in the status quo. In the wake of terrorist strikes in the U.S., Paraguay's recent history of allegedly serving as a staging ground for militant Islamic groups such as Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad certainly is drawing closer scrutiny.

On September 21, 2003, foreign ministers from the Organization of American States (OAS) nations met to discuss terrorism-related hemispheric security concerns. Portions of the talks dealt with the Southern Cone countries' long-standing belief that Paraguay has shown little concern in addressing the terrorist elements operating within its borders. Evidence shows that the U.S. has stepped up pressure on the tri-border countries to clean up the area and eliminate "rogue elements." Hopefully, such an increase in the U.S. presence will yield all the returns that the Pentagon anticipates.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE TRI-BORDER REGION

President Bush's call to sustain the war "until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated" explains U.S. authorities' increase in the monitoring of developments in the tri-border area. For their part, tri-border countries have indicated that they intend to fully cooperate in helping the U.S. eliminate any terrorist threats in the region. Although Brazil and Argentina have increased their border security, Paraguay has perhaps assumed the strongest position in support of U.S. anti-terrorism efforts by asking the OAS to firmly support any U.S.-led retaliation.

Nevertheless, rhetoric and strong anti-terrorism stances by these nations fail to quell fears about the potential terrorist threat posed by illicit forces in the region. Paraguay's Foreign Minister, Jose Antonio Moreno, stated that 40 FBI agents arrived in Paraguay and were headed to Ciudad del Este, a "transit point for shadowy groups." The inevitability of U.S. involvement in the area was reflected in statements made by the State Department and the former director of the FBI, Louis J. Freeh. The FBI's concern was rooted in a trip that Freeh took to South America in 1998 to assess security concerns. At the time, Freeh called for a multinational crackdown on crime, something he saw as an important step to establishing a hemispheric police alliance. He called the tri-border region "a free zone for significant criminal activity, including people who are organized to commit acts of terrorism." Last April, the State Department warned that the governments of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina are not capable of preventing Islamic terrorist actions originating from Paraguay's hub of militancy, Ciudad del Este.

The U.S. has offered its Special Forces to train and advise the Paraguayan military and national police in anti-terrorism and anti-drug tactics to combat the identified groups. U.S. Special Forces took a first step to making their presence felt in Paraguay earlier this year by participating with the country's military in a "training exercise" focused on combating drug traffickers. At

the time, many thought that this maneuver closely resembled an anti-insurgency operation. Such an approach could signal a change in U.S. military policy in Paraguay, as further training could focus on anti-terrorism tactics.

9/11 CONNECTION

Ciudad del Este provides the kind of uncontrolled environment that can sustain criminal organizations—and terrorists. The 1992 Israeli Embassy bombing and the 1994 Argentine-Israeli Community Center bombing cast a spotlight on the baleful role being played by some elements of the Arab community in Ciudad del Este that it has since been unable to avoid. Because much of Paraguay's export business is underground, basically based on contrabanding, the situation leaves the Arab community suspect of helping to financially support Arab terrorist groups, although without clear proof is wanting. Although it may be unwise to assume that all black-market contrabandists are terrorists, police authorities believe that the amount of funds being generated by smuggling and money laundering that is being transferred within Paraguay to overseas banks is far more than any presumptive business activity in the country. It raises some suspicions in the minds of local police officials that some in the Arab community are supporting radical terrorism with the spoils of illegal trade.

Indeed, the U.S. State Department clearly advises that there are individuals and organizations operating in Ciudad del Este and along the tri-border area between Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina, with ties to extremist groups. Brazilian Judge Walter Fanganiello Maierovitch, former National Drug Enforcement Secretary and now with the Giovanni Falconi Brazilian Criminal Sciences Institute, reports that Osama bin Laden is setting up an al-Qaeda unit near Ciudad del Este under the cover of the Arab community. The U.S. Government cannot confirm an al-Qaeda presence in the tri-border area. However, other radical Islamic extremists routinely rely upon illegal activities, such as drug and arms trafficking, to help fund terrorist activities throughout the world.

To achieve some control, 10 member countries of the OAS Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) participated in exercises in the tri-border area to highlight solidarity against extremist activities. The United States, Argentina, and experts from other countries are providing training to Paraguayan anti-terrorist police and military personnel. The objective is to "maintain a presence in the area and to be able to raid homes of persons suspected of being involved in financing terrorism or of radicalized members of Islam residing in the tri-border area."

THREE PLUS ONE COUNTERTERRORISM DIALOGUE

In 1998, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay formed the Comando Tripartito—an operational body in which the three countries exchange information and perform work on the ground dealing with specific regional problems. This Tripartite Commission of the Triple Frontier served as a security mechanism, meeting several times a year in each of the member countries. However, due to the sensitive nature of the information exchanged, the data swapped between countries is not available to public scrutiny. In reality, the Comando Tripartito did little more than serve as a nominal organization, doing little to clamp down on money launderers and neutralize drug traffickers in the region.

Talks began to take on a more serious nature in the post 9/11 atmosphere, and the Southern Cone joined the bandwagon of anti-terrorist rhetoric. December of 2002 marked the first 3+1 Counterterrorism Dialogue between the tri-border countries and the U.S.

According to official State Department records, dialogue between the countries “serves as a continuing forum for counterterrorism cooperation and prevention among all four countries.” Argentine Embassy Political Counselor, José Luis Sùtera, in an interview with COHA asserted, “The 3 +1 Counterterrorism Dialogue, without question, is the chief board of exchanging information. The first meeting in Buenos Aires stemmed from American suspicions that Hezbollah and Hamas groups were harbored in the [tri-border region].” The next meeting is scheduled to take place in Washington, DC on December 6, 2004.

“NO OPERATIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS,
NO AL-QAEDA PRESENCE”

In an interview with COHA, Dr. Jorge Brizuela, a high-ranking official in the Paraguayan Embassy in Washington, DC, stated, “Terrorists have not been found in the zone. No information would indicate that terrorist activities exist in the zone—this has been reiterated on various occasions by the corresponding authorities and the necessary steps are being taken so money obtained in the tri-border region is not being sent to Arab countries.” Though he agrees with Brizuela’s assertion that “al-Qaeda is not in Ciudad del Este,” Argentina’s Sùtera recognized that “suspicions still loom over Arabs who are sending money to terrorist groups in the Middle East.” Such groups pose as charity organizations that seek to aid socially and economically stricken areas of Iran, while what they do is to donate the newly acquired funds to the terrorist cause of Hamas and Hezbollah.

The transcript of the 3+1 Counterterrorism Dialogue’s December 3, 2003 meeting held in Asunción emphasized the delegation’s stance that “Although there continued to be reports in 2003 of an al-Qaeda presence in the tri-border area, these reports remained uncorroborated by intelligence and law-enforcement officials.” Still, those assembled agreed that international terrorist funding and money laundering in the area remained an area of primary concern. Considering the priorities of money launderers and piracy crooks, the 3+1 understandably has organized a Financial Intelligence Organization under the umbrella of the Counterterrorism Dialogue. Last May in Buenos Aires, the four government delegations discussed the threats of banking activities that could lead to funding of terrorist organizations. Sùtera has concluded that most of the terrorist-funding organizations had traveled to other parts of South America, though he declined to comment where he believed such groups had gone.

ARGENTINA’S COOPERATION

In separate interviews with COHA, Argentine officials like Sùtera and Congressional Liaison, Mariano Enrico, both expressed the belief that Argentine authorities had initiated and bolstered Southern Cone efforts to clean up the tri-border region. According to a recent State Department document, “Argentina continues to express strong support for the global war on terrorism and worked closely with the UN, the OAS, MERCOSUR and the U.S. to ensure full implementation of existing agreements.” In particular, Argentine officials have shown their disposition to freeze assets of alleged terrorist-funding organizations/individuals.

Among the channels of communication connecting U.S. and Argentine officials is the line between the CIA and SIDE (Intelligence Sector of the Argentine State). Both SIDE and the CIA work in concert with Brazilian and Paraguayan secret service personnel. Another perhaps more crucial element in the war on terrorism in Latin America began as a result of an Argentine initia-

tive; CICTE was organized in 1998 as a multinational security plan for the region. Since then, Paraguay has cooperated openly with the Argentines. But, Brazil has had some reservations about instigating any anti-terrorism plans without proof of terrorism. However, since 9/11 the Brazilian sector of the CICTE team has offered full support for the organization as information among the three countries has passed with little inhibition.

PARAGUAY’S COOPERATION

Paraguay’s role in the war on terrorism has never held a more important role than it does now. Though few terrorists per se have surfaced in the region, rumors of the possibility of some al-Qaeda connections to the region simply will not go away. While President Nicanor Duarte Frutos has determined that there is a domestic problem in Paraguay with fundraising that might support terrorist causes, many State Department officials have concluded that Paraguay’s greatest impediment to the prosecution of suspected terrorists is the absence of an anti-terrorist law.

BRAZIL’S COOPERATION

President Luiz Inácio Lula has taken a greater initiative than perhaps has been the case of his predecessors in terms of combating terrorism, especially in the tri-border region. Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil’s portion of the region, has received considerable scrutiny from the once aloof, but now rather concerned, Lula administration. The Brazilian president has “vigorously condemned terrorism” and calls such acts “the insanity of perpetrators of terrorism.”

Though Lula’s intentions merit praise, his country’s shortage of resources and training have hindered its role in acting as a watchdog over the region. In an exclusive interview with COHA, Brazilian Embassy First Secretary of Political Section, Breno Costa, offered an explanation as to why Brazilian officials appear to act lethargically when it comes to terrorist concerns: “At first it seemed like the U.S. was constantly alleging that the tri-border area harbored criminals and terrorists, yet they never specified where exactly in the region such evidence was forthcoming. So Brazil asked the U.S. for concrete evidence and, of course, not one piece of evidence. Just as the State Department reported last year, no terrorist cells are acting in the region.” Costa went on to say that once evidence of money laundering was presented to the Brazilian government, officials in Foz do Iguaçu began to examine cash flow entering and leaving the city. Overall, Brazil has cooperated considerably with the other three countries involved in the counterterrorism dialogue, having signed all of the 12 UN conventions on terrorism and is a party to nine of them.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, the effort to prevent terrorism in Latin America has become a more salient issue since 9/11. With cooperation among the Southern Cone countries in conjunction with participation of the U.S., terrorist acts have a lower likelihood of occurring. Still, as the Afghanistan mountains provide a haven for terrorists in the Middle East, Ciudad del Este—if not properly monitored—could evolve as yet another hub for terrorism. Whereas the U.S. has supported and participated in the 3+1 Counterterrorism Dialogue, American leaders merit commendation.

TRIBUTE TO PAM BULINE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a key member of my team who I have worked alongside for

almost 10 years now and most importantly, to mark a milestone of dedicated service to this body, the U.S. Senate.

On September 24, 2004, Pam Buline marked her 25th anniversary of working for the U.S. Senate. Twenty-five years all spent as a valuable aide to two Senators from the great State of Wyoming.

Pam began her career in the Senate back in 1979, working for former Senator Malcolm Wallop. In those days, Pam worked out of a little office in a town called Lander, WY. Upon my election to the U.S. Senate, Pam agreed to join my staff and continue her efforts to serve constituents in our State. I was extremely pleased to have a person with her degree of knowledge on so many important issues—she is invaluable.

Pam remains a crucial person on my staff. Her domain in Wyoming covers a wide array of issues, from land swaps, to American Indian issues, to snowmachines in Yellowstone and Grand Teton. I can always turn to Pam for good advice and a very thorough explanation of the issue at hand or as she says, “the long and the short of it.” Pam loves her job and the people she works with and I am extremely grateful that she is on my staff.

We are part of a team, my staff and I. Along with my wife, Susan, we all feel strongly bound to service for the people of Wyoming. Pam continues to be an invaluable member of that team. Her loyalty, while not rare in this great body, is special nonetheless.

As U.S. Senators, we all know how important it is to have staff around us that are trustworthy, and will do whatever it takes to make things work. I have been particularly fortunate to know Pam and work with her for the past 9 years. Wyoming and the U.S. Senate have been blessed by her service for the past 25 years. I know my colleagues, and her husband Jim, and son Robert, join me in saluting Pam. I look forward to working with her for many years to come.

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to note the importance of the week of October 3–9, 2004, which is National Mental Health Week. This annual event was created in the hopes that Americans would recognize and honor the challenge encountered by the mentally ill and their loved ones. This year, the theme of the National Mental Health Week is “unity through disparities”.

Mental illnesses affect 22.1 percent of Americans over the age of 18. According to a National Institute of Mental Health 2001 survey, approximately 44.3 million Americans suffer from some form of mental illness. Conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and obsessive compulsive disorder, together are ranked fourth of the ten leading causes of disabilities in