

THE TRI-BORDER AREA (BRAZIL, ARGENTINA AND PARAGUAY) TERRORISM OR CRIME?.

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The region of the Triple Frontier, also known as tripled Fronteira (Portuguese), is the area bounded mainly by the cities of Foz de Iguazu (Brazil), Ciudad del Este (Paraguay) and Puerto Iguazu (Argentina), whose surface is about 2500 km². The population is almost 700 thousand inhabitants, considerable number if we considerate that in 1961 were 60 thousand inhabitants. The increase in population was due to the construction of the reservoir Itaipu providing cheap energy for businesses in the region, while generating jobs.

It is an area where different cultures converge: Argentines, Brazilians, Paraguayans, Arabs, Chinese, and Koreans, descendants of Italians, Germans and more. This combination of cultures gives a colour to this area in permanent cultural transformation that reflects a real melting pot of ethnicities.

Despite the foregoing, it is impossible to dissociate the Triple Border region of its reputation regarding illegal activities that take place there. Ciudad del Este would be the epicentre of these activities.

The main criminal activity principally is counterfeiting and smuggling of various goods (cigarettes, electronics, weapons and drugs). What this particular phenomenon, is the extent of exchange of goods that there exists. This smuggling of items set up an area where it has become very difficult any control, while it has been installed in the collective imagination of the inhabitants of the southern cone, the existence of a zone (Ciudad del Este) where, by example, electronic products can be obtained at a cost lower than the domestic market. This is not a hidden area or exclusive only for those who develop large-scale illegal trade, but also for any tourist who desire to obtain such goods.



Piracy and marketing of goods smuggled in Ciudad del Este is facilitated by Paraguayan law, which allows patenting in the National Register of Trademarks international companies that are not settled in the country.

The Triple Frontier is also an area popularly known by its reputation for receiving stolen cars from urban centres like Buenos Aires (Argentina), to be sold later in Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia.

Smuggling to Argentina and Brazil from Ciudad del Este, and more generally from the south-east of Paraguay, usually takes place across the river Parana, and to Brazil, by the artificial lake formed by the reservoir Itaipu.

Clarifying the confusion that raises an illicit business is not necessarily organized crime, in turn dynamics and organizational structures of criminal groups sometimes surpass those of first-class companies.

The Triple Border, is now a multiethnic area where has shaped different idiosyncrasies that is home to diverse cultures. At the same time and speed as tourism increases, trade in goods (legal and illegal) forms a unique phenomenon in the region that symbolizes the inherent history of the area.

If it becomes over time, you can check the rise of trade, which had in times of the Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru in Buenos Aires. The spread of businesses based in smuggling was generated by the inefficiency of the trading system monopoly with the

mainland and the growth of a city, proceeds from this illegal trade which resulted in the founding of the Viceroyalty of the River Plate for the city Buenos Aires had increased its size to become a rival of Lima.

This analogy to show that urban growth generated by the illegal trade is not always taken into account when planning or population migration policies, which translates into numerical growth, which may be an outbreak of conflict.

For the National Directorate of Customs of Argentina contraband and counterfeit goods in the Triple Frontier also will result in considerable economic damage, produces assets that can be used to finance terrorist activities. The importance of this kind of illicit would not be alone in the high amounts that make escape from the hands of the Treasury and companies to whom such misrepresents the mark, but that these illicit funds can be used to serve as a logistics to other more dangerous and complex crimes such as drug trafficking, terrorist financing and organized crime.

As for other forms of crime, the Triple Frontier is suspected of being a centre for sexual exploitation. A report by the government of Argentina warns of the serious problem of sexual exploitation in the area bordering Brazil and Paraguay. The report was given by the Council of Children, Adolescents and Family and is part of a larger study led by the American Institute of the Child in five other countries in the region. It is estimated that in the tri-border area there are over 3500 children under 18 suffer some form of sexual violence.

The Security and Intelligence Services of the three countries that make up the region as part of the Tripartite Command created in 1996, have gradually increased controls to transport goods and people. This command is what gives the pattern control to be followed, but advised by the State Department of the United States which in turn puts pressure on individual governments bordering the area by the assumption that this link is with international terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime.

The hypothesis in the area are terrorist 'sleep cells', both of Islamic origin as the Colombian guerrillas, has been noted with greater force since the attacks of 11/09 in U.S. territory. For this position gray legal and insecurity that it would present Triple Border, is the factor that would allow fundamentalist terrorism obtains logistics, funding, arming and an operations centre outside the scope of control of Justice. The city most

damaged by these allegations is Ciudad del Este, on the Paraguayan side, due to smuggling and selling counterfeit merchandise.

About the Paraguayan connection with the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), in Paraguay, investigations around the Gusinky abduction of Cecilia Cubas, daughter of former president of that country, have so far determined that six members of the Colombian FARC, joined through Bolivia two months before the kidnapping. After the death of the daughter of former president, Colombians have escaped from Paraguay. His entry into the country allegedly was not recorded because they did so clandestinely. According to sources from the Justice of Paraguay, the gang had a rather complex structure made up of planners, recruiters and other class members as negotiators.

The prosecutor of the case believed they were between 40 or 50 hijackers. Among those arrested include members of Patria Libre of Paraguay, a group that belongs to the Forum of Sao Paulo. For its part the Intelligence System in Colombia have discovered emails related to kidnapping, sent between Raul Reyes (maximum leader of the FARC) Rodrigo Granda Escobar (known as the chancellor of FARC) and processing Osmar Martinez as head of the group of kidnapers. In electronic messages provide guidance in the kidnapping of Cecilia Cubas, and \$ 5 million that called for redemption.

For the Paraguayan Attorney, in the Province of Buenos Aires in Argentina would be operating a cell of the FARC. Osmar Martinez would have had communications with that group for the kidnapping of Cecilia Cubas in Paraguay. The same would be organized by professionals with high-level training in kidnapping operations. Thus, the FARC would seek to form cells in other countries, mainly to take routes where receive weapons, which are exchanged for drugs or money. The Colombian government found itself in military operations, weapons stolen the Paraguayan army to be returned to that country.

The Paraguayan government is reported that following the trail of a member of the FARC known as 'Hermes', who gave advice to the kidnapping and subsequent murder of Cecilia Cubas. The vice president of Paraguay, Luis Alberto Castiglione said after a visit to Colombia, in his country there was the presence of advisers of the FARC, including a Colombian known as Hermes who would have advised Paraguayan

criminals. He added that according to research, Hermes is very close to the leaders of the FARC who resides in Brazil, probably also closely linked to the Brazilian Mafia. He also noted that thanks to cooperation from Colombia was reached dismantle the criminal organization that kidnapped and murdered Cecilia Cubas. It also began training by Colombian officers the prosecutors and Paraguayan police, intelligence and counter-narcotics.

A situation that is affecting the vision of security in the Triple Frontier, are in joint operations and new legislation taking Colombia and Brazil. These two countries conducted the Operation 'Colbra' (Colombia and Brazil) which was designed to shoot down aircraft illegal suspected of belonging to drug trafficking cartels or guerrillas (FARC and ELN).

The aim is to start an action to jointly fight border that the military detachments coordinated by the borders of both countries and carried out with elements of the respective Air Forces. These actions do not allow the aircraft to escape illegal because at the moment of take off from either national territory, were intercepted by radar systems that alert fighter aircraft and communications units and ground support.

In principle this new surveillance system is being implemented in a strategic area for both countries, stretching from San Gabriel to Leticia, covering some 240,000 Km². Significantly, both countries have domestic legislation that enables this kind of conduct military exercises to shoot down planes suspected.

In turn the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) monitors airspace in the border area between Paraguay and Brazil. This measure was announced by the Commander of the Brazilian Aeronautics, Brig. Luiz Carlos da Silva, and established with the aim of halting the continuing violation of Brazilian territory by drug traffickers operating in this part of the country, referring to the area of Pedro Juan Caballero and Captain Bado.

They are responsible for controlling airspace over 24 hours. between 10 and 12 aircraft with a total of 90 troops from the FAB. Its base is located in the city of Campo Grande, capital of the state of Matto Grosso del Sur.

After the capture in Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia), Antonio Ramos and Elsoni Roberto de Oliveira, both Brazilians, Miguel Linker, Bolivian, and the finding in possession of one of three planes in Curumba stolen, it was discovered that one of

these ships was reduced in an establishment located in Cologne Pirá and Captain Bado area known domain border traffickers.

In less than six months, about seven Brazilian aircraft were stolen from Campo Grande and Corumbá by gangs of drug traffickers and brought to Bolivia and Paraguay, from where they are used to transport drugs, weapons and ammunition to the Brazilian market, taking advantage of poor control of airspace of Brazil in the area.

In this country the FARC and the narco Brazilians would be working together. This is carried out through the passage of drugs from Colombia to Brazil through Paraguay. According to documents from the United States, the Brazilians narco have not been allied with the Colombian guerrillas but with its roots in Paraguay. For O Globo, cooperation occurs after the Brazilian government strengthened the law that authorizes the Air Force to shoot down planes suspected national flying over their country. Then, like cocaine trafficking becomes more dangerous inland area of Colombia to Brazil, the alliance committed to the FARC, now installed in Paraguay.

Cocaine runs from southern Colombia on small planes that take off on runways clandestine FARC, passing by landing in Bolivia and Paraguay. That drug is discharged from farms in the narco, then continues by road. On routes comes from Paraguay to Brazil, via Triple Frontier, where some drugs for domestic consumption is from Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and another little remains to the United States, Europe, Japan, Australia and South Africa. The weapons and some of the money would pay for the FARC as a sort of toll for the use of their tracks.

Brazil in recent times is, of the countries that make up the triangle of Triple Frontier, which controls more doing this. Mainly the passage of persons entering Brazil in Foz de Iguazu from Ciudad del Este. This has led to successive complaints from traders in the area. This new security policy in the area by Brazilians, demonstrate alignment that this country is having with the foreign policy of the United States regarding the existence of organized crime on three borders.

This situation affects the self Brazil, which has lost revenue from tourism that permission from Ciudad del Este. In this connection Federal Revenue, the Brazilian agency charged with collecting, has also tightened inspections, a situation that provoked the dismissal of two thousand employees from shops in the area who have

been forced to close, while the loss occurred ten million dollars in trade. This situation pushed both nations to sign an agreement that has so decompress fiscal controls in Ciudad del Este, the second most important center of Paraguay.

Regarding the terrorist threat, the United States since the bombing of the Embassy of Israel (1992) and IMA (1994) both in Buenos Aires, said the idea that Triple Frontier is the most dangerous Latin American sub region from the standpoint of security. Clearly this position falls into the reductionism to obviate the Colombian conflict, in which insurgent forces dominate more than 40% of the territory of Colombia, which administer justice and directed the local economies of the occupied areas.

The same position was taken by the judge Galeano in the judicial process by the terrorist attacks in Buenos Aires. For the Argentine judge all tracks indicate that the attacks were perpetrated by cells belonging to fundamentalist groups affiliated with the pro-Iranian Hizbullah, while they would have had the logistical and operational support of the Muslim community in Triple Border. This theory covered suspicions of the citizens of Arab origin in the area since the 70 'are engaged in commercial activity.

Galeano's position, but could be influenced by information from foreign intelligence services, including the CIA and Israeli Mossad North America, found a framework of acceptance due to the fact that Triple Frontier was historically known mainly by trade Illegal activity that had as most important, which joined the confirmed participation of mafias and drug cartels from different countries (China, Korea, Colombia, Russia). Despite this, even today has not been able to demonstrate convincingly that in the border triangle of three cells exist or logistical assistance to groups like Hizbullah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad or Al Qaeda.

The 11-S was the beginning of a new era of suspicions about the region. Douglas Feith, one of the top directors of the USA Department of Defense advised after the terrorist attacks on Washington and New York, which invaded the three cities that make up the area, presumably because this would be one of the 'sanctuary' of Al Qaeda. The idea was exposed on the third anniversary of terrorist attacks, in a report of the independent commission on the attacks of 11-S and was published in Newsweek magazine.

These trends harsh regarding security in the region, were crucial to the creation in 2002, the group called '3 +1' which is formed by members of diplomacy of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and U.S. and that aims to assess security threats in Triple Border.

You can ensure that Puerto Iguazu has certain advantages in relation to insecurity. Being considerably less populated than Foz do Iguazu and Ciudad del Este, it is easier to monitor and enforce existing laws. In this aspect the little economic development and population of Puerto Iguazu has been its main advantage from the standpoint of security. Significantly, the biggest border controls, even correspond to the Argentine side, while naval prefecture is that the more control exercised over the Rio Parana and Iguazu.

The highest alert status on the Argentine side, causing vehicles to reach people or by the Tancredo Neves Bridge, the security of Brazilian side is limited to only ask for documentation, perhaps in the certainty that the Security Forces and performed Argentine for inspection. As a security policy, Brazil has historically opted to be more permissible on admission of vehicles and goods, upon leaving the same. This situation is based in the logic that if you enter any proceeds from smuggling, counterfeiting money or dark it will be in Brazilian territory. The transition from Brazil to Paraguay virtually devoid of controls, allowing trade ant with its cargo entering or undocumented.

For his part, the 11-S has been a hinge in the controls and suspicions that were about the presence of terrorist organizations (Hamas, Hizbullah, Islamic Jihad, Gamaa Al Islamyia, Al Qaeda and Latin American groups like the FARC) . The assumptions that support the theory of existence in the area of such groups, ranging from propose that the terrorists take refuge isolated place until the assertion that exist in the tri-border terrorist training camps. These visions will also support the allegation that the bombings of the Embassy of Israel (1992) and The Argentine Jews Community Centre- AMIA(1994) in Buenos Aires, there was support and logistics from the triangle of the three borders.

It is likely that the assets derived from illegal you get in the zone, intended for different purposes and can reach between these capitals to organizations supporting terrorist activities, but this hypothesis has not yet been convincingly demonstrated, in a way because the evidence are based on reports from intelligence agencies such as argentine SIDE, the American CIA and the Mossad and Shabak (former Shin Bet)

Israelis. It may be recalled that the evidence that can make the activity of intelligence, not substitute for judicial evidence, in domestic legislation of the three countries that comprise the Triple Frontier.

Although there since the 1996 Tripartite Command of the Triple Border, for purposes of control and monitoring activities of organized crime and terrorism, after 11-S has intensified the U.S. pressure they are exerting in its global war against terrorism, local governments to take steps against the terrorist scourge In this regard the creation of the Group 3 +1 (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and the U.S.) are a significant breakthrough in the activity terrorist in the Southern Cone sub region.

In this sense there are visions they see in the American position, a strategy for achieving military control of the Triple Frontier that would have geopolitical control gas from Bolivia, which continuously supply is threatened by pressure groups led by Evo Morales, as well as having a basis for directing the Plan Colombia and control over social movements in the region.

We believe that the potential development of fundamentalist terrorism does not depend on the characteristics of a region, but of human elements integrating communities. In this regard the fight against terrorism is the duty of every nation from the international community, as this scourge is one of the most important determinants critics, because their actions cause deep fear in society and thus becomes in an actor who has the capacity to destabilize constitutional regimes.

Finally, we can say that the U.S. are under a regime of police state, therefore are obliged to other Latin American countries are aligned under the same system. In turn this new legal regime that will impose criminal throughout the world since the world powers have determined that in the 'War on Terrorism' collective security must prevail over individual rights. Certainly we anticipate that the pressures made by the U.S. government, primarily through economic factor, to the governments of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay that will engage more in regional and global agenda against terrorism.