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By

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INTRODUCTION

The history and background of the Shining Path Movement is documented by many academics, historians, journalists and anthropologists, who all corroborate the information that will be presented in this paper. The writings of journalist Gustavo Gorriti, Professors Cynthia Mc Clintock\(^1\), David Palmer and anthropologist Carlos Ivan Degregori\(^2\) are referred to throughout this paper and are used to analyze the history and development of the Shining Path.

The Shining Path, also known as *Sendero Luminoso* (SL) is a Peruvian left-wing terrorist organization that waged extreme terror in Peru from 1980 to 1992. It was born from a political split in the Communist Party of Peru that had started at the San Cristobal of Huamanga University (located in Ayacucho City, southern Peru) in the 1960s, and led by Abimael Guzman, a University professor. Guzman recruited university students who were

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\(^2\) Carlos Ivan Degregori was part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that investigated the crimes and human rights violations committed in Peru. He is an internationally renowned author, journalist, and public intellectual. He is best known for his works on the Shining Path and the current political process in Peru. He is a senior researcher and former director of the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and professor of Anthropology at the Universidad de San Marcos in Lima.
disenchanted with the economic climate in Peru and indoctrinated them with a Maoist doctrine adapted to the Peruvian environment. These students represented the majority Amerindian and mestizo population who had felt neglected and marginalized by Peru’s political elite. The group extended its influence under the umbrella of academic teachings by initiating people’s schools in the rural communities while propagating an ideology based on the principles of Mao Zedong and Jose Mariategui. The group therefore capitalized on the lack of government presence and infrastructure in rural parts of Peru at that time, especially the inadequate education facilities. This deficiency, coupled with the Andean people’s quest for education, truth and a way out of poverty provided an avenue for Guzman to offer Maoism as the social and political solution.

During its 15 years of preparation before the revolution, the SL also became involved in study groups, works in the countryside and sought to control the San Cristobal of Huamanga University. Guzman also received some leadership training in China. David Palmer, whose work is cited throughout this thesis, was also a professor at the San Cristobal of Huamanga University at the same time as Guzman. This was not surprising given the rise in popularity of hard-line Marxist-Leninist tendencies in Peru’s

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3 A Peruvian Communist theoretician of the 1920s.
universities during the 1970s, an era when students of Andean origin embraced Maoism as their only hope to move up the social pyramid.

The main objective of the SL was to propagate Maoism - democratization by revolution and violence. They had a highly organized secret cell structure, a starfish\(^5\) structure. Guzman became known as the “fourth sword of Marxism”\(^6\), after Marx, Lenin and Mao and the group ideology and strategy was developed based on this doctrine. The group employed terrorist tactics to discredit the government and win the hearts and minds of the Peruvian people to join their cause.

In the twenty-first century, more than thirty (30) years after the initial “reign of terror,” with its main leaders imprisoned, the group continues to commit terrorist acts against Peru's military, police and civilians. The group also engages in the drug economy, extorting taxes from coca farmers in exchange for protection.

While the SL evolved, the government of Peru was also evolving, from a military-led autocracy to a democracy with elections every five years. This

\(^5\) A decentralized structure made up of many smaller units capable of operating, growing and multiplying independently of each other, making it very difficult for a rival force to control or defeat them.

thesis is therefore a case study of the Shining Path and the extent of its ability to adapt and overcome Peruvian government’s counter terrorist operations for over thirty years. Despite the arrest and imprisonment of its main leaders and the Peruvian government's counter terrorism strategy (which involved an aggressive use of intelligence and the armed forces), at least three known regional factions\textsuperscript{7} are still conducting terrorist attacks in the group’s original strongholds – Ayacucho, San Martin and the Lima Metropolitan areas.

In Diagram 1, we see the areas in Peru that were under such heavy attack from the SL that the Peruvian government had to institute a state of emergency in these regions. A comparison of diagrams 1 and 2 reveals the group’s current areas of influence. One can see that the SL maintains its strongholds in its original areas in Ayacucho and has ceded South-East Peru (Puno) to rival coca farmers.

\textsuperscript{7} The Provincial Metropolitan Committee in Lima, The Huallaga Regional Committee in San Martín and the Main Central Regional Committee in Ayacucho.
Diagram 1
Areas of Peru that were under a state of emergency

Diagram 2
Shining Path’s Current Areas of Operations

(Compiled from Janes’ Terrorism and Security Monitor)
Audrey Cronin, Seth Jones and Martin Libicki identified several variables which are applied to this case and tested for correlations to explain why terrorist groups do not end. This thesis will then offer possible reasons as to why groups like the SL continue to endure. The contribution to literature is that this case study can be used to develop possible theories about domestic terrorist groups’ endurance. But before proceeding further with the discussion, there are some terms used in terrorism analyses that have many definitions and interpretations. These terms are clarified and defined in the context of this case analysis.

**Terrorism** in the context of this paper means politically motivated violence used by non-state actors to intimidate the government and any government supporters and institutions. **A terrorist group ends** when the group renounces violence, enters the government or legitimate political process, is eliminated or when the group ceases to commit terrorist acts. **Intelligence** in this paper means information that is covertly collected and that gives the authorities a decision advantage over the enemy and can allow them to pre-empt attacks.

This paper first examines the initial effectiveness of the group’s leader, group structure and Maoist ideology – the three-stage strategy of strategic defense, strategic equilibrium and strategic offensive and the influence of
Jose Mariategui’s doctrine. The SL was able to execute the first two stages of Maoism but failed to win the war in the 1990s. Yet the group endured.

The first stage of Maoism relies mostly on guerilla warfare to create rural bases, undermine state control and acquire weapons by hit and runs. The SL practiced this in the 1980s. They then went on to the second stage of Maoism in the 1980s and engaged simultaneously in guerilla warfare and urban terrorism, which proved to be more effective in achieving their goals. At the third stage - from the countryside to the city, although they made their way into urban Lima, it was at this point that the leader was discovered and captured, thus pre-empting their urban strategy.

The paper then continues with the evolution of the group’s rise from the 1960s to the 1980s when it was not considered a security threat. During this incubation period the group was able to consolidate in the most vulnerable parts of the rural Peruvian society, not under any watchful eyes and literally unnoticed by the Peruvian authorities. The government’s neglect of these remote rural areas provided a safe haven and opportunity for the group to gain sympathy and support from the peasants. Thus the SL established strongholds in remote areas in Peru.
The Peruvian government’s counter terrorism strategy is then examined for its failures and successes. The strategy changed and evolved with the change of government leadership, with President Fujimori being the one to inflict the most damage on the group. For the first three years, the government did not respond to the group’s attacks because it was initially felt that the problem was regional and confined to certain rural areas. The police then responded but failed to defend the towns and communities. When they did respond, from around 1983, they lacked resources and intelligence to counter the attacks. The thesis will then offer policy recommendations for how Counter Terrorism Strategy can be adapted to eradicate non-religious and non-ideological groups such as the SL in the 21st Century.

This question is important because there is very little literature on ending terrorist groups. The RAND study8 used to develop the hypotheses in this paper alleges to this fact. Audrey Cronin states “the question of how terrorist groups decline is insufficiently studied, and the available research is virtually untapped.”9 In addition to Cronin’s comments, much of the terrorism literature, post 9/11, done by terrorism experts such as Bruce Hoffman and Jessica Stern has focused on groups operating in the Middle-

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East, Europe and Asia. Minimal attention is paid to the Western Hemisphere and potential terrorist threats in the region, except for studies on the Colombian FARC\(^{10}\), narco terrorism, and unconfirmed reports of Hezbollah activities in the Tri-Border Region.\(^{11}\) The author therefore hopes that this case study will spark renewed interest in academic studies on terrorist threats in the Western Hemisphere.

\(^{10}\) Such as Council of Foreign Relations Reports and International Crisis Group Reports and the works of Fernan E. Gonzalez and Francisco Sanin.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In previous studies on ending terrorism and decapitation done by experts such as Daniel Byman\textsuperscript{12} and Martha Crenshaw\textsuperscript{13} there has been no academic review of why the Shining Path has endured. During the 1980s and 1990s, there was a vast amount of open source data and analysis done on the group’s beginning and rise to power.\textsuperscript{14} As Cronin explains, “work on a declining or defunct terrorist group is therefore typically sparser than is the tackling of its origins and evolution.”\textsuperscript{15} She therefore published a book in 2009, a study used in arguments in this paper, to provide some explanation as to why terrorist groups like the SL have endured.\textsuperscript{16}

Post 9/11, some analysis was done on the SL’s tactical escalation, its rise and fall, a military target analysis and speculation of the group’s potential threat to national security\textsuperscript{17}. But to date, no scholarship is available on what has sustained the Shining Path from its inception at the San Cristobal of Huamanga National University in the 1960s, through the capture of Abimael Guzman in 1992, through the 1992 Repentance law and now, almost five decades after its inception, the group is still able to commit

\textsuperscript{12} Byman, Daniel. "Do Targeted Killings Work?" Foreign Affairs. 85.2 (2006)
\textsuperscript{14} Studies by Robert Kent, William Yaworsky, just to name a few (see bibliography).
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Studies by James Rom and Sergio Coc-Menard (see bibliography).
terrorist acts. This case study is therefore a first attempt at developing such scholarship with the intention that this case will add to the literature of why terrorist groups survive.

The studies by Audrey Cronin, Seth Jones and Martin Libicki that will be examined are from Cronin’s 2009 book\textsuperscript{18} and Jones and Libicki’s 2008 Rand Study\textsuperscript{19}. Using some of their recommendations, I will propose an effective counter terrorism strategy for non-religious domestic terrorist groups, a strategy that would be unique to the socio-political and socio-economic climate that exists in Latin American countries like Peru.

This scholarship is important for the following reasons: Cronin, Jones and Libicki are the only known authors who have actually included the SL in their studies on ending terrorism. It is therefore only fitting that their contribution to this subject be incorporated in this paper and analyzed for its true relevance to the SL’s endurance. The variables they use in these studies can offer some explanation as to why groups end: decapitation, policing, politics, military force, group splintering and group success and failure. These will be explored to explain why the SL has not ended and continues to survive.

Table 1
Cronin’s Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE NAME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECAPITATION</td>
<td>Removal by arrest or assassination of the top leaders or operational group leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGOTIATIONS</td>
<td>Government’s direct or indirect talks with group members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPRESSION</td>
<td>State’s use of overwhelming, indiscriminate or disproportionate force against the terrorists and suspects, usually by military force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUCCESS</td>
<td>Achievement of group’s political aims and ceasing of violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REORIENTATION</td>
<td>The violence takes another form like criminal behaviour, insurgency, conventional warfare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAILURE</td>
<td>To pass on the cause to the next generation, internal fightings, loss of operational control, acceptance of amnesty or other exit pathways offered by government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 provides the explanations of the six variables Cronin uses in her study. Cronin claims that the average life span of a terrorist group is eight years\(^\text{20}\), so for this study, we assume that groups existing over eight years have endured. In the case of the SL, they thrived for 13 years of terror (1980-1992). Cronin claims that activity fell by 50% after Guzman’s capture in 1992, from 21 terrorist incidents in 1991 to 9 in 1992 and then to less than 3 in 1994.\(^\text{21}\) She ascribes this decline in the group to the decapitation, when Guzman and top leaders were arrested and imprisoned.

\(^{20}\) Ibid. p92. Martha Crenshaw uses over ten years to depict longevity of a group.
\(^{21}\) Ibid p19 and 20. Cronin acknowledges that these numbers, derived from the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge database, are artificially low.
with Guzman put on public display. Decapitation executed in this manner is more effective than killing the leaders, claims Cronin. Cronin’s argument is confirmed by statistics indicating a significant reduction in the number of terrorist incidents recorded after Guzman’s public display in 1992. Cronin argues that even though the SL structure was a tiered group structure, the leader, Guzman, was highly personalized and new militants had to pledge their lives to the SL and to Guzman via letters. It was this personality leadership style that makes groups like the SL vulnerable to extinction when the leader is removed.

In addition to the leadership style, most group members had never seen their “deified” leader and few knew the identity of the Committee leaders. This “secrecy” had made counter-terrorism efforts futile as the army and military were initially unable to identify group members until they adopted an intelligence-led counter-terrorism approach that eventually led to Guzman’s identification, location and capture. Yet the SL continued with its terrorist attacks, though not to the same degree as before decapitation.

Though Cronin claims the SL has failed to revive, she also claims that if the jailed leader is still communicating with outside followers, like through his lawyer, the group could become a resurgent threat. I argue that this is the

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22 MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Database.
case with Guzman and the SL, so much that he was able to publish a book in September 2009 via his lawyer.\textsuperscript{23} This third party communication with the outside world provides an avenue for Guzman to give instructions and direction to the militants.

With respect to negotiations, Cronin alleges that this is only effective in the short term and it does not end the violence except in certain cases identified in her book such as the Northern Ireland Peace Process. Negotiations are a useful strategic tool to manage violence, splinter the group and facilitate a long-term decline. In the case of the SL, there were instances where the public accused the government of negotiating with the terrorists, even though the Peruvian government denied this.\textsuperscript{24} In addition to an alleged attempt at negotiations, the 1994 Repentance Law passed by the Peruvian government was another means to negotiate with the SL and offer amnesty if they ceased fire. The most recent attempt at negotiations was in 2008 from SL leader \textit{Comrade Artemio}\textsuperscript{25} in a radio interview in which he rejected earlier calls from the national police commander for the SL “to

\textsuperscript{23} Title of book is \textquotedblleft De Puño y Letra\textquotedblright (Of fists and letters). This book is an exaltation of all types of terrorism within Peru and was published by a fellow terrorist who had been charged and released from prison in Peru. Source: Peru21.com

\textsuperscript{24} From Jane’s Intelligence and Insight: “In February 2000, President Fujimori admitted that the government had been communicating with SL guerrillas in \textit{Valle del Ene} before the October 2000 deaths of four army officers in a helicopter crash. The president insisted communications were devoted to intelligence work and not negotiations.” http://www8.janes.com/Search/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/binder/jwit/jwit0269.htm@current&pageSelected=allJanes&backPath=http://search.janes.com/Search&Prod_Name=jwit&keyword

\textsuperscript{25} Head of Huallaga Regional Committee, see Diagram 4.
surrender its arms, and instead called for a negotiated political settlement with the government to include a general amnesty and national reconciliation.”

Unless this occurs, the SL will continue its fight.

Cronin justifies the demise of the SL, claiming that repression is a state’s natural response, the strongest means of defending itself against terrorism and that the Peruvian government effectively used this method to stamp out the SL. However, she also claims that the inept use of military force by the government actually initially boosted the SL campaign and resulted in the bloodiest terrorist and counter terrorist campaign ever seen at that time. But when the military counter terrorism strategies improved, the SL was crushed. Cronin argues that the use of force is essential to protect the state but when used indiscriminately, it propagates more violence and the terrorism continues. It is on this point that I support the argument that terrorism endures in the absence of a counter terrorist strategy and when the military and police abuse their power. Cronin’s justification for the use of repression to end the SL is therefore flawed and contradictory.

Cronin’s success refers to the group joining the political process where the group has taken over the functioning and governance of the state. According to Cronin, this rarely occurs and only when the group’s goals...

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26 Ibid.
27 Under President Fujimori’s government, the military engaged in targeting, intelligence gathering, hearts and minds programs and counter insurgency tactics.
have been well defined and attainable as was the case with Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress. When objectives are short-term and tactical and the group succeeds with them, this perpetuates terrorism as the group feels that their use of terrorism as a tactic is getting their demands met. In my opinion, this variable has no relevance to the SL’s endurance. The same is true of Cronin’s failure variable and reorientation variable.

However, reorientation can be applicable to the SL based on one’s definition of terrorism and insurgency. Cronin claims that when the group diverts its goals from political to material gains, then terrorism has ended. This is not the case with the SL as their political goals are still clearly stated by Comrade Artemio, that is, national reconciliation, even though the group is engaged in protecting coca farmers and coca dealers in exchange for arms. This could be a shift from terrorism to narco-terrorism. The extent of this shift is not yet known and is still speculation because the group is again targeting university students with its modified Maoist doctrine, an indication that the SL may not have completely disbanded its Maoist ideology.

We will now examine the variables proposed by Jones and Libicki in their Rand study. They claim that terrorist groups end when they join the political process or when effective policing and intelligence leads to the arrest or
killing of key group members. In the case of the Shining Path, they list this group as still active contrary to Cronin’s conclusions. Jones and Libicki focus their study on the most significant factors that contribute to ending a terrorist group as this approach would best inform policymakers on where to focus counterterrorism efforts. Table 2 lists these variables which we will examine and apply to the SL to test for correlation and causality.

**Table 2**  
*Jones and Libicki’s Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE NAME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>Percentage in RAND study Ending This Way</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MILITARY FORCE</td>
<td>Use of military to fight terrorists as an army.</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFECTIVE POLICING</td>
<td>Use of intelligence to target group and arrest members.</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLINTERING</td>
<td>Group breaks up because of competition among terrorist groups. Terrorists sometimes calculate that they have a better chance of reaching their objectives if they join a stronger group or start a new one.</td>
<td>SL members still continue in terrorism so this is not a viable variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICS</td>
<td>Use of nonviolent political means. Nonviolent alternatives to terrorism usually involve cooperation with the government on a collective or individual level. E.g. participate in politics following a peace settlement with the government.</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jones explains that policing\(^{28}\) supported by an effective criminal justice system and antiterrorism legislation can lead to the defeat of a terrorist organization. In my opinion, it was bad policing that prevented any victory by the government in the early 1980s, since the authorities lacked intelligence on the identity of group leaders, its members and modus operandi. Peru’s intelligence services had been too busy competing with each other and were not exchanging information. In addition, the military-led intelligence services lacked the resources to engage in effective intelligence collection and analysis. However, with assistance from the CIA and the Soviet Union stations in Lima, the government eventually succeeded in locating and capturing Guzman and some of his senior committee leaders.

Jones also argues that military force can be used against a terrorist group that is seeking “to overthrow the government or secede from it.” He claims that it was military force that hastened the decline of the SL. However, as discussed in an earlier section in this paper, the military in Peru committed extreme brutalities and human rights abuses against the peasants. In addition, the military engaged in conventional warfare tactics against an

\(^{28}\) Jones defines policing as the use of police and intelligence units to collect information on the group, penetrate cells and arrest key members. Although this definition is used broadly in Jones’ study, it does provide some explanation as to why terrorist groups end.
unconventional enemy who used rural and urban warfare tactics. For example, after attacks and during police search operations, SL members disappeared into tracks carved in the mountains and forested areas. In addition to this, the use of military force only temporarily discouraged some peasants from supporting the SL but only out of fear and intimidation. The military was basically committing “sanctioned terror acts” in the name of counter terrorism. According to Jones, “militaries tended to be most effective when used against terrorist groups engaged in an insurgency in which the groups were large, well armed, and well organized.” But this was not the case with the SL and the SL was a highly decentralized organization. I therefore suggest that, contrary to Jones’ claims, military force actually strengthened the SL’s agenda in the medium and long-term.

Jones’ definition of splintering is when the group joins a stronger group. In the case of the SL, the MRTA\(^{30}\) went to the shadows after the rise of the SL. The SL therefore was not competing with the MRTA for any resources neither for a hospitable environment, as they always had a support base. Whether by will or by force, SL militants stole or received food and safe houses from the rural villages, money from coca growers and drug dealers and any other material from their vast network developed with family members and relatives. As Jones states, the splintering of a group does not

\(^{29}\) Ibid. p xiv  
\(^{30}\) Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
mean the end of their terrorist acts. It simply means that members will regroup, join another group or be reformed. In the case of the SL, after the capture of its leaders in the 1990s, members regrouped and have resurged, though not to the same strength as in the 1980s.

Jones’ ideological motivation is an important explanatory variable for the SL’s rise and strategic direction. In fact, it was the ideology that Guzman propagated that won over the intellectuals and gave them a cause and a solution to their social woes. However, after Guzman’s arrest and public embarrassment, the psychological effect on group members diffused much of this ideology. Group members also had less to inspire and motivate them and this could be why, today, the group seems to lack strategic direction and a clear purpose. This variable is therefore listed as relevant in this paper.

Jones also argues that Ideological Motivation, Economic Conditions, Regime Type and Breadth of Goals have no correlation to ending the terrorist groups in his study. In my opinion, these variables ought to be considered when studying ideological groups in countries with persistent or extreme economic conditions and with democratic and autocratic governments as these factors can impact the start of inter-state and intra-state conflicts. These variables can also serve as indicators for policy makers of potential
conflicts and the possible extent of the conflict. For example, if a leftist group is dormant in a country and economic circumstances change (like during a crisis or recession) and group members are marginalized by the government, as was Peruvian peasants in the Andes region, then the possibility exists that this group may become violent again, in reaction to oppression or negligence by the government. There are other factors that cause internal conflict, but Jones’ and Libicki’s denial that these have no relation to a terrorist groups’ end is questionable.
WHAT IS THE SHINING PATH

To examine why the SL has endured, one would need to understand why and how the group started and evolved into the bloodiest terrorist organization of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{31} In this section, the group leader, group ideology, structure and evolution will be discussed in the context of the group’s ability to adapt and endure over decades.

Group Leader

Margaret Hermann uses an individual-level, first image theory of wars to describe the effects of powerful individuals and the role played by two world leaders in influencing their countries in times of war and peace\textsuperscript{32}. This first image or individual level explanation of why inter-state wars occur can partially explain the rise and endurance of the SL in Peru.\textsuperscript{33} The individual-level theories of war claim that it is evil men and their behavior that cause inter-state wars. By examining the charismatic nature of the SL leader, Abimael Guzman, one cannot deny that he played a key role in maintaining the fervency of the group throughout its terrorist campaign and to some extent, after his arrest. This “cult of personality” is what kept the

\textsuperscript{31} Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Report Volume 1. 69,000 people died or disappeared from 1980-2000. 50\% of these were attributed to the SL and about 30\% attributed to government security forces.


\textsuperscript{33} Kenneth Waltz describes three images in his book Man the State and War. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. Waltz describes the first image as the behavior of individual charismatic leaders (such as Hitler) who individually influence a country’s decision to go to war or not.
organization strong in spite of its internal conflicts. Guzman (also called the Red Sun and Shampoo by his followers)\textsuperscript{34} was viewed as a philosopher-emperor who used the universities to recruit, educate, organize and subsidize the growth of SL cadres.

His role was so important that it was a major psychological blow to the group when the government displayed Guzman on the streets of Lima dressed in jail clothes and in a cage. This psychological warfare tactic was effective in dispelling immediate strong actions by the group. So much, that violence fell by 50% after Guzman’s arrest. But the SL is still actively involved in terrorist tactics and continues to endure.

Vanda Felbab-Brown claims that, of all the Latin American leaders after Fidel Castro, Guzman has come the closest to bringing down the state\textsuperscript{35}. Comparing Guzman with Castro in itself reflects the high level of importance policy makers and even Guzman placed on himself. It was Guzman’s intention to be “the fourth Marx”.\textsuperscript{36} But he failed in achieving this goal. Byman and Pollack also support the first image explanation\textsuperscript{37} for the causes of conflict. However, if it were Guzman’s charismatic leadership that

\textsuperscript{34} His disciples claimed that he brainwashed them
\textsuperscript{36} Guzman himself was aspiring to be the Fourth Sword of Communism, after Marx, Lenin and Mao. He therefore referred to himself in this way.
triggered and maintained terrorism in Peru, then decapitating the SL should have defeated the group, which was not the case. While Guzman’s capture did disrupt the SL movement, other factors played a role in maintaining the strength of the group and making it an enduring terrorist group. These factors will be examined in the following sections.

**Group Structure**

Terrorist groups have evolved as powerful non-state actors influencing world security and economics, much like transnational organizations. The structure of these groups have changed as they have adapted to the environment for their survival. Organized crime groups such as the Italian mafias, the Colombian FARC and the Russian mafias decentralized their command structures to make them less vulnerable to attacks and penetrations. Somehow, Guzman, a brilliant professor, was successfully able to develop a militarized party with a vertical authoritarian structure and cell organization that was impossible to infiltrate or break. The party was centralized strategically, for long-term planning, but was decentralized tactically to allow committee and column leaders operational autonomy. Guzman knew that this structure, one that would conceal his identity and that of his strategic planners, would give him and his group longevity.
Brafman and Beckstrom refer to such a structure as a starfish structure as opposed to a spider structure\textsuperscript{38}. If one piece of a starfish is cut off, it eventually grows back because all the vital organs are duplicated in each arm so each arm could stand on its own. Conversely, if a spider’s leg is cut off, it does not grow back and the spider eventually dies, as it cannot function without that leg. This was and still is the case with the SL organizational structure and this structure was a significant contributing factor to the group’s longevity.

Diagram 3 illustrates the structure that existed in the 1980s. At the center of the starfish was Guzman and the National Central Committee, who coordinated the master plan and general strategy. Guzman was based primarily in the Ayacucho region (see Diagrams 1 and 2). Then, each regional committee and cell decided who and when to attack in their areas. These attacks were well-coordinated and timed and followed the Maoist three-level strategy that we will discuss in the next section.\textsuperscript{39} The Central Committee also assigned tasks to the other committees. The Metropolitan Committee’s duties were to protect the war staff and to conduct counterintelligence against traitors and dissidents. The urban strategy was divided into three legs – people’s schools, generating organizations and


metropolitan coordination. Lima was also divided into six zones, each with centralized command but with operational freedom, and then divided into cells and sectors, each with political and military officers. But the SL had to adapt its rural strategy since it could not openly exercise political power nor create a guerilla army in urban areas.

To recruit members in the urban areas, the SL capitalized again on the state’s weaknesses by making house calls on migrants that had been forced out of Ayacucho and migrated to Lima. These house calls were made via the SL’s network of close relatives and friends. The SL also used myths to gain sympathy and new recruits. This will be discussed further in the next section on the group ideology.

In addition to this hierarchical and decentralized structure, the group also had a highly efficient information/intelligence network, as it was able to identify enemies and supporters in the rural villages and deal with them accordingly. This strong intelligence network is what protected the group members and gave them a decision advantage over the military, the police and their opponents. But this changed after Guzman’s capture.

Although today the group still has a starfish structure using regional Committees and Columns, it is questionable whether the current attacks are coordinated with any grand strategy in mind because of the absence of the National Central Committee and its supporting network (the first two levels
in Diagram 3 are absent from the current structure shown in Diagram 4). Currently, there are three main regional groups each led by a Comrade (see Diagram 4). These groups operate in Ayacucho, Metropolitan Lima and San Martin in the north and it is possible that they operate either independently or with instructions from one main leader. From open source reports, Comrade Artemio is the most outspoken of the militants and the authorities continue to target his geographic area, San Martin, a main coca producing region. The other cell group leaders are remaining low profile but still executing terrorist attacks. However, the basis of the current attacks may or may not be linked to the group’s original Maoist ideology. This will be discussed in the next section.

http://www.livinginperu.com/news/2784. Artemio is the only remaining SL top commander. His real identity is unknown.
Diagram 3

Shining Path’s Hierarchical Structure in the 1980s\textsuperscript{41}

- NATIONAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE – headed by Abimael Guzman Reynoso aka Presidente Gonzalo aka Red Sun aka the fourth sword of Marxism
- lieutenants (sets SL ideology, strategy and policy)

- 6 Regional Committees each led by a commander (plan and evaluate activities in their region e.g. indoctrination and military ops.)

- Zones, sectors, cells (decide who and when to attack)
- guerrilla warfare (the military role of challenging security forces).
- sabotage (against foreign interests and infrastructure);
- ‘armed propaganda’ (responsible for tasks such as graffiti campaigns, radio broadcasts, organising anti-government rallies and strikes and printing pamphlets)
- selective killings’ (assassinations of public figures, collaborators and opponents)

Diagram 4

Author’s View of Current Structure of Shining Path

- Unknown Leader
  - Provincial Metropolitan Committee Lima
    - North/Zonal Committee
    - South/Zonal Committee
  - Mobile Units/Columns led by local commanders

- Comrade Artemio
  - Principal Committee
    - Mobile Units/Columns led by local commanders
    - Mobile Units/Columns led by local commanders
  - Huallaga Regional Committee
  - Upper Huallaga Valley, San Martin
  - Mobile Units/Columns led by local commanders

- Comrade José and Comrade Alpio
  - Main Central Regional Committee VRAE, Ayacucho
  - Southern Company
    - Mobile Units/Columns led by local commanders
  - Central Company
    - Mobile Units/Columns led by local commanders
  - Northern Company
    - Mobile Units/Columns led by local commanders

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42 Armed-Groups.org, Transnational and Non-State Armed Groups, Legal and Policy Responses, Sendero Luminoso (SL; Shining Path). The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, the Graduate Institute, Geneva with the Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research at Harvard. 
Group Ideology

The group’s ideology was its strength and its staying power and was steeped in Maoism. Mao Zedong died in 1976 and the Gang of Four was defeated so the SL proclaimed itself the next beacon of world revolution, with Guzman aspiring to be the “fourth sword of Marxism”. The SL espoused the most radical Maoist ideology, advocating a strategy of "prolonged people's war," following the Maoist slogan "from the countryside to the city." The group placed itself in line with the Pol Pot of Cambodia and China's "Gang of Four," fighting against "deviationists." This was combined with a radical racial rhetoric, taken from the work of the Nietzschean agent of the Comintern, José Carlos Mariátegui, who promoted Indian "messianism" under the prophecy that "the Indians will come down from the hills and kick the white scabs into the sea." A general outline of Mao’s three-stage strategy is shown in Table 3.

The SL also functioned as a fascistic death-cult, steeping its members in rituals organized around slogans advocating rivers of blood, death, subjective myths, purifying fire, etc. The group’s cadre—primarily youths forced into ranks through terror and blackmail, were hardened into satanic killers, through repetitive brainwashing sessions, while all were required to "cross the river of blood," i.e., to kill, to prove themselves. Party literature urged members, "To die in order to invent the great subjective myth," and to work
toward "the supreme moment, total deliverance of the purifying fire of armed struggle." Guzmán stated in a 1988 interview with SL's paper, *El Diario*: "Marx, Lenin, and Chairman Mao teach us what the quota is: to annihilate in order to preserve. If one has a clear plan, then one is capable of confronting any bloodbath—a bloodbath for which we have been preparing since 1980, because this bloodbath had to come." The SL’s indoctrination papers, captured from Army raids, also echo the blood fixation: "The quota is the stamp of commitment to our revolution ... with that blood of the people that runs in our country.... They form lakes of blood, we form pools. The blood strengthens us." Maoist “people’s war” ideology believes that victory is gained, not through purely military tactics, but through the political mobilization of the population and army. This was a particularly important factor in populous and agrarian China and was adapted by Guzman in the rural parts of Peru.

One aspect of the SL’s ironclad ideology is the myth about *Presidente Gonzalo* and *The Gonzalo Thought* (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism adapted to Peruvian reality) that the SL was to be the germ of a global Maoist revolution. This religious idolization of Guzman was cultish as he was portrayed as incarnate.
## Table 3
The Stages of Maoism as Adopted by the SL\(^{43}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sendero’s tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960-1976 Organizational Preparation and Geographic Consolidation in Rural Areas 1960-1980</td>
<td>Sendero soon moved beyond Huamanga to begin recruitment among the Indian populations of Ayacucho and established local cells in the surrounding departments of the region.</td>
<td>Academic teaching via people’s schools in rural communities, Study groups, Control of the University of Huamanga, Leadership training in China, Work in the countryside. Used the classrooms to indoctrinate rural and urban secondary and university students with Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1 1976-1980 strategic defensive</td>
<td>Relies almost entirely on guerrilla warfare as rural bases are created, state control is undermined by sabotage and weapons are accumulated through hit-and-run raids.</td>
<td>SL appealed to the poorest areas of the Peruvian highlands which all had common problems of economic pressures on the peasantry, exploitation by the state, frustration with agrarian reform and no alternative but the SL. Car bombings, assassinations, massacres using machetes, eradication of “public enemies”, extreme brutality against the indigenous communities that did not support them and alienating those that might otherwise have offered support, change to a ‘hearts and minds’ approach and assaults at the armed forces, boycott government elections, disrupt campaigns and polling. To evade detection, guerillas travelled by night along the mountain trails in the jungle or remote valleys where patrols could not drive. They were also facilitated by network of safe houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2 1980-1982 Strategic equilibrium</td>
<td>The development of the guerrilla force into a standing army capable of massed infantry attacks, but still largely in rural areas.</td>
<td>Urban terrorism and guerrilla warfare - Low intensity and indiscriminate (knocking down vital hydroelectric power lines to Lima), bombing campaigns (principally using fuel oil and ammonia nitrate bombs),</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sendero’s tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kidnappings and political assassinations, political propaganda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From 1987, the SL gained control of thousands of coca growers and thus access to financial resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>The final assault on the surrounded cities but disrupted by decapitation of leadership.</td>
<td>Seizure of the cities. Car bombings and armed strikes against middle and upper class civilians in Lima who, prior to this, had been immune from their attacks. The spread of SL propaganda was facilitated by radio broadcasts, graffiti and pamphlet campaigns, and supportive publications and websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982 to 1992</td>
<td>Splits in hierarchy that had existed developed into two factions – Guzman and The Red Path.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>Develop mass political action.</td>
<td>Public acts of political violence against political candidates and Peruvian military and police forces, bombing of municipal buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offensive (or</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment starts again in local universities and factions continue with terrorist attacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>counter-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offensive).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 onwards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the SL, strategic culture, as identified by Johnston\textsuperscript{44} and Desch\textsuperscript{45} played an important role in their conflict. Johnston\textsuperscript{46} and Desch\textsuperscript{47} explain that myths are passed on from generation to generation and can be one of the possible second image explanations for the causes of inter-state wars (and can be applied to this internal conflict in Peru). In the case of the SL, their ideology and “mytho-history” spanned for decades and offered hope especially in times of crisis. Today these myths are retold in ritual activities and dances in local Peruvian communities. The SL also adapted a recruitment culture of

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid. Alastair Ian Johnston.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid. Desch, Michael C.
nepotism, drawing its recruits from a tight network of interconnected families, marriages and even political and incestuous relationships.

Culture was also reflected in the authoritarian style leadership and the relationship between the SL group leaders and the masses. The *mestizos* always considered Indians inferior and thus the SL leaders, who were mostly *mestizos*, adopted an authoritarian teacher approach with absolute power over their students (the masses) and who believed that the masses needed the leadership of a communist party.

The SL’s stated goal in the 1980s and 1990s was to destroy the then existing Peruvian institutions and replace them with a communist peasant revolutionary regime. The SL sought to achieve this, not by joining labor unions but by generating small nuclei that were ideologically rigid and organically dependent on the party. These nuclei comprised the SL proletariat and so the violence was not mass-triggered, but was elite-driven, with a rigid ideological basis.\(^\text{48}\) The group opposed any influence by foreign governments, and by other Latin American guerrilla groups, especially the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA).

In continuing to examine SL’s ideology, left-wing terrorism literature will be discussed. Bruce Hoffman suggests that left wing terrorist groups seek to

\(^{48}\) Concept taken from Michael Brown’s article on the causes of internal conflict (see bibliography).
destroy the system they live in by setting broad, radical goals\textsuperscript{49}. They usually pursue violent acts with clear symbolic content, and armed propaganda to educate the masses. Left wing groups see themselves as a revolutionary guard and they usually target specific, selective and discriminate persons who represent the state and capitalism. From Table 3, one can see that the SL pursued such selective targets and adapted these left-wing strategies. The group committed political assassinations, bombing of vital power lines in the cities and assaulting armed forces.

Hoffman also claims that left wing group members are usually highly intelligent, well-educated, middle-class and mentally sound, as is evident with Guzman and his recruited university students. However, Hoffman proposes that left wing terrorism ideology comes across as “vague, idyllic and divorced from reality”. As a result, the movement has the “least clear and most ill-defined vision of the future”. It is this weakness in left-wing group strategy that can cause the demise of a group. But this weakness still did not defeat the SL. The following section explains why the group’s weak left-wing ideology still did not lead to its defeat.

**Evolution of group from 1960-1980**

To understand how the group consolidated in certain rural parts of Peru, it is necessary to know the background and the local events that led to the

\textsuperscript{49} Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. Columbia: Columbia University Press. 2006
group’s inception. Guzman joined the Peruvian Communist Party in 1960 while he was a university student. After graduation, he joined the faculty at the University of San Cristobal De Huamanga and became involved in the local Communist Party there, reviving the organization and recruiting young student activists, following the same activities he had learned from his college group. He mentored many young, poor Indian students and had begun to organize a military arm of the pro-Chinese Communist Party that had split from the Peruvian Communist Party.

He did this and distinguished his movement from other student rebellions by using a well-developed strategy, disciplined cadre and the personality cult. Through many lectures and conferences at universities throughout rural Peru, Guzman’s lieutenants were successful in expanding their influence among undecided, quechua-speaking university students.

Guzman also contended with students wanting to leave his party to join the Che Guevara movement in 1965 and it was at this point that Guzman had to flee from Peru to China. There, he became immersed in the “people’s war” doctrine. On his return to Peru, he took up the mantle of reviving the pro-Chinese Communist Party and he brought with him the tremors of China’s Cultural Revolution, receiving training and financing from the Chinese. Around 1970, Guzman eventually formed his own Communist Party and reorganized the group’s ideology, incorporating Mao’s Cultural Revolution
rituals and “people’s war” doctrine. During all this time, the Shining Path was controlling the administration and the teaching faculty at the University of Huamanga and using its influence and power to convert students to its cause.

From about 1976, Guzman started to prepare for an armed insurgency while other Marxist groups in Peru transitioned to elected legitimacy. He was skilled in overcoming opposition and inner conflicts by breaking the opponent’s resistance. He knew how to quell group fears by delivering persuasive speeches to his converts. Finally, in 1980, the election year, he had an opportune moment for the SL to make its first strike, at the very fabric of democratization. This attack was successfully executed and the terrorist attacks continue to this day. But other factors strengthened the cause of the SL. The world economic crisis and other internal factors favored the rise of the group, as its leaders sought to capitalize on worsening local economic conditions and thus win more sympathy and support. These factors are discussed in the next section.

The group’s rise from 1980-1992

In the 1980s, the entire world was experiencing an economic crisis and an oil crisis but many countries did not resort to internal conflict and wars, except
in places like Peru. To analyse what actually triggered the first violent act in Peru in 1980, authors such as Michael Brown suggest four categories to explain the proximate causes of internal conflict as – internally driven, externally driven, elite triggered and mass triggered. In the case of the SL, the conflict was internally-driven because of power struggles and the ideological contests between the SL elites and the politicians as to how best to manage and organize Peru. The conflict was also elite-triggered, by Guzman and his university educated leaders who viewed the masses as not having the capacity, on their own, to execute the violence and rebellion. In fact, part of SL’s ideology is similar to the old provincial misti elites who disregarded grass roots organizations such as peasant communities, labor unions and neighborhood associations and therefore did not support their national efforts and strikes. It was the misti elites, which the SL called “organisms” that decided when and where to strike and attack. This elite-triggered internally driven conflict caused by the decisions and actions of the domestic elites is what Brown identifies as one of the proximate causes of internal conflict.

Michael Brown also claims that class-based movements with Marxist agendas often trigger internal conflicts. He then explains what Collier et al and

Fearon and Laitin\textsuperscript{52} describe as the conditions that make conflict feasible in some places. Brown refers to these as structural factors – ethnic geography and weak states. The former played a major role in the SL’s ability to consolidate in the rural areas of Peru as the ethnic minorities (underprivileged Quechua and Ayamara-speaking Indians) comprised 40% of Peru’s total population and lived in the Andes. This extreme geographic separation did not facilitate the Indians’ integration into Peruvian society.

Political factors also played a major role in triggering the conflict and it still plays a major role today. Peru’s discriminatory political institutions created the conditions for internal conflict where there was inadequate representation in the government by the indigenous peoples and exclusionary national ideologies where peasants were excluded, as a group, from civil rights and privileges.\textsuperscript{53} To date, many Peruvians are seeking justice from the government for lost loved ones from the government’s 1990s counter-terrorist strategies. Scholars such as Michael Brown and Collier and Fearon therefore argue that economic and social factors make countries like Peru prone to internal violence and conflict. Additionally, it can be argued that internal conflict hinders development and thus stirs more conflict.

Once the conflict was triggered, the group sought to consolidate itself in rural areas in Peru through moralization and consciousness-raising campaigns and public meetings. Masked group members executed and publicly whipped village thieves, police informers, and persons who were the most hated in the villages (public enemies). This was to eliminate opposition and to win favor and support from the villagers. The group also held tribunals to convict persons “living in sin,” like adulterers. After winning villagers’ support and trust, the SL would return to the villages and start to establish Class Movements and Committees for intellectuals, women, peasants and youths. They then tried to impose a way of life for the villagers but failed miserably in some provinces yet gained control of other villages. It was this ability to adapt in different environments and circumstances in Peru that gave the SL staying power.

Anthropologist Ronald Berg claims that the SL was so flexible that it was able to organize factory workers in Lima and coca-growing peasants in the Huallaga Valley. The group began to emphasize its urban strategy from 1989 via political and terrorist activities in Lima and Callao. Attacks were well coordinated by using different squads, with militants knowing each other only by their “noms de guerre”, to protect identities if captured. This worked effectively in the metropolitan region. According to Berg, the secretive cell

structure was effective for small-scale guerilla tactics. Michael Smith explains that part of the SL’s urban strategy was to solicit the support of existing local organizations and sympathizers in the cities – legitimate organizations that would engage in counter intelligence and other clandestine work for the SL, such as recruitment, indoctrination, medical and legal assistance, professional advice, promoting demonstrations and other non-military exercises. The SL then adopted the principle of covert action in its own cities (the action is public but the source of the action is secret).

Another part of its urban strategy was to target the educated persons in the cities. The group also gained control of one of the daily newspapers to target the urban educated audience by distributing party documents and advertising the group’s position on key political domestic issues – the terrorist method using the media for propaganda. When militants committed terrorist acts in Lima, several cell groups would be involved in it and the hitmen were not usually from the Lima cells but were from out of town SL networks. This maintained a level of secrecy among group members who did not know each other.

The group aimed at controlling elements of education and culture and sought to control shanty towns by winning trust and mentoring university students.

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55 Smith is an American sociologist and journalist who had lived in Peru for seventeen years and wrote a chapter in David Palmer’s book on The Shining Path’s Urban Strategy.
and by setting up schools in these towns. The SL also controlled the teachers’ unions and infiltrated village groups by engaging in extensive work in folk dance, music and the theater. Members also engaged regularly in activities such as soup kitchens, school feeding programmes, political parties and church groups for the purpose of identifying, cultivating, recruiting and running intelligence sources in these towns. The group saw these cultural clubs as an effective means to propagate its ideology.

Robert Berg states, in his chapter in Palmer’s book,\(^56\) that the SL had the ability to exploit historically unresolved grievances in Peru such as inflation rates that rose from 3,000% to over 7,000% between 1989 and 1990.\(^57\) The group accomplished this by establishing themselves as a voice for the people’s grievances - a moral authority. But this explanation was written by Berg about fifteen years ago. The question now is whether the Maoist doctrine is relevant in the twenty-first century and in a continent that is currently leaning more to the left. If this leftist doctrine has relevance today, then it is possible for the existing three factions of the SL (shown in Diagram 3) to consolidate once again, adapt, and prey on the current weaknesses of the Peruvian society. The latest US State department country reports claim that the group has begun again to recruit university students and to post

\(^{56}\) See bibliography
\(^{57}\) CIA World Factbook.
revolutionary songs on YouTube. But before discussing current events, it is necessary to assess what happened after decapitation in 1992.

**The group’s retreat 1992-2000**

When the majority of SL militants surrendered in the Ayacucho region in 1992, at least two hundred members fled into the mountains. After Guzman’s arrest, it was estimated that incidents and levels of political violence declined sharply by about 50%, as was stated earlier in this paper.

In addition, the psychological damage caused by the public display of Guzman on the streets of Lima was a major setback for militants and followers. The national and regional committees then lost their focus and direction and operations lacked the careful planning and strategic genius that characterized the leader. No longer was the movement stamped with Guzman’s personality – dogmatic, uncompromising, diligent, compulsive and dominating.

But it is said that a good leader makes leaders. So if Guzman had not reproduced after himself, then he would have failed as a leader and the movement would have failed. This was not the case with the SL because its

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58 A dissident faction of Peru's Shining Path -- VRAE -- is now making its case online, with a website and YouTube uploads of revolutionarily inspiring songs. The songs are performed by the VRAE leader, in the Andean musical style of Huayño, to attract the peasant youth. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQRFXI4Igs&feature=player_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQRFXI4Igs&feature=player_embedded)

59 Data derived from the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) Terrorism Knowledge Database.
starfish structure facilitated promotions from the bottom of the hierarchy and thus leaders were fairly easily replaced and reproduced. In addition, key foundational leaders were still untouched by the authorities and so the terror continued, though not to the same magnitude. Even after the arrest of Comrade Feliciano in 1999, and a drastic reduction in membership from 5,000 to about 2,000 by the end of this century\textsuperscript{60}, the idea of revolution by violence continued to live on through the group’s violent acts, as can be seen in Table 4.

To lay low, the group therefore adapted a different strategy – strategic hibernation, with its American and European political and academic activist circles coming to the fore and distributing tracts and letters. Even \textit{El Diario} was used to encourage debate over the repentance law. This shifted the focus from the group’s psychological humiliation to solicit sympathy for the group. Although it lay low, the group still commemorated important dates and events with violent surges. In addition, the group remains active in its rural strongholds. This will be discussed in the next section.

\textsuperscript{60} US State Department. Background Information on Foreign Terrorist Organizations - Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism - October 8, 1999. \url{http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/fto/2801.htm}
### Table 4
Some of SL’s Activities After Guzman’s Capture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. killed</th>
<th>No. of Key members Arrested</th>
<th>Types of Attack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Assassination of political candidates and peasant militias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bombings and attacks against gov’t security forces and commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Killing security forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Counter terrorist operations, raids, bombings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Decapitation of village militias, ambushes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Executions by rebels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bombings, helicopter killings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>US Embassy Bombing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ambush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ambushes on police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grenades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Explosions and firefight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bombing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ambushes, grenade attacks, shooting down military helicopter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**

### The Shining Path in the 21st Century

There is little open source information on the current structure of the group but speculations have been made based on current activities, news reports and documentaries produced by journalists. These reports suggest that the
group now numbers about six hundred militants and has a new tactic but still maintains a similar operational structure as in the past (see Diagram 4).

US State Department Reports of 2009 indicate that the group has resurfaced with mafia and gangster like tactics and violence targeted, not against civilians, but against the government. The SL has been gaining strength over the past few years, as can be seen in the significant increase in death tolls – from 8 to 19 recorded deaths between 2006 and 2009 (see Table 4). The data in this table was compiled based on open source accounts of the violent attacks and are only the reported deaths. These numbers are most likely much higher than has been openly reported.

It is believed by some that the SL is now operating like the FARC, providing protection to drug dealers in exchange for superior weapons. But this was their method back in the 1980s when they were training their armed forces for combat. The question is why would they currently want such weapons and why have they started again to recruit university students? It is my opinion that these are indicators that the SL is possibly planning a resurgence, not to the intensity of the 1980s but with the same political agenda. In addition to this analysis, the Peruvian government, possibly worried and driven by the surge of terrorist activities, granted the US Army permission to establish a medical base in the Ayacucho region (the heart and
soul of the SL) to provide health care and other social services to the peasants.

In addition to these indicators, the social and economic extremities in Peru continues to facilitate an environment for conflict. Peru’s real GDP grew from 4.8% in 2003 to 9.8% in 2009 but there is still over 30% of its population living in poverty. In spite of this growth, active terrorist cells still exist in some of these remote areas and are generally associated with drug trafficking. The 2007 World Bank report also states, “Family and social disintegration due to armed conflict is considerable”. The report continues to say that “additionally, children’s fantasies provide evidence of the marks left by armed conflict that are expressed, for example, in their artwork, for example, the students carve machine guns out of wood to hang in the classrooms as decoration”. These “marks” are what Brown refers to as problematic group histories or ancient hatreds that live on for generations to come and that can create conditions for conflict to occur. In the case of Peru, this cultural factor could be one of the reasons why the armed conflict continues today.

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61 CIA World Factbook. The poverty levels have improved since 2004
THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT'S COUNTER TERRORIST RESPONSE TO THE SHINING PATH

1960-1980

David Scott Palmer provides some insight into the historical developments during the cultivation phase of the SL. His account of these events were corroborated with the accounts of anthropologists and journalists, as was mentioned earlier. From the mid 1960s to the 1990s, the Peruvian economy was badly deteriorating. Dissatisfaction with widespread economic inequality and extreme poverty led many Peruvians to pursue radical social change. In addition to rising tensions and frustrations, the two governments that tried to lead the way – led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-75) and Alan García Pérez (1985-90) respectively, failed to find any effective solutions or to maintain viable macroeconomic policies.

In addition to these problems, rural violence took on a profoundly destructive character with the growth of the SL and the cocaine industry. Also, the governments’ inability to maintain order coupled with worsening conditions of employment led to growing security problems in the cities. These were all ripe conditions for the cultivation of an alternative solution to managing the society. The government was focussed on the cities and the urban areas and neglected the rural regions which were far removed and isolated from the

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more elite urban life and society. The government also initially ignored the activities of the SL, claiming that the problem was confined to the rural areas and did not affect the cities. It was this neglect to address the security threat at its embryonic stage that gave the SL the freedom to consolidate its presence in rural Peru.

After experiencing four coup d’etats during this period, Peru transitioned from a military dictatorship to a more democratic rule. Then in April 1980, with Peru's economy in deep depression, the military administration permitted an election for the restoration of constitutional rule and Peru held its first democratic election and elected the exiled Fernando Belaunde. Actions taken by his regime will be discussed in the next section.

**1980-1992**

After a promising beginning, Belaúnde's popularity eroded under the stress of inflation and economic hardship, thus terrorism and violence rose steadily. Regarding the SL, Belaúnde personally did not pay too much attention to the group, as other insurgent movements were already active during his first term, but seemingly without much support from the masses. During the next few years, the economic problems left over from the previous military government continued to persist. It is this discontentment with the economy that led many of Guzman’s students and other intellectuals to seek
alternative solutions and a way out from extreme poverty and social hardships.

When the government finally acted against the SL, some three years later, poorly equipped police forces were sent into the rural areas to defend the villages but their inexperience, disorganization and lack of resources led to their defeat in these areas and their subsequent removal. The army then took over the counter terrorist strategy but had adopted a conventional approach to an unconventional enemy, abusing civilians and committing gross human rights violations. Then the combined armed forces entered villages and, instead of pursuing the fleeing guerillas, they continued with thee violations, taking hostage peasants and blowing them up or making them “disappear”.

Initial Police response was futile. In some villages that were put under a state of emergency and with counter insurgency units and police garrisons, the SL was still able to issue death threats and assassinate public figures because the authorities could not enforce the curfew neither guard the network of mountain trails at nights. The tactics and intelligence of the guerillas were far superior to the police forces and this demoralized them to the point of their withdrawal from village posts.
New forces were then brought in – plain clothes security officers and guards with machine guns were placed on every street corner. But the harsh interrogation measures continued with suspects. The counterinsurgency became more brutal when the military entered the fight and atrocities against civilians increased. Suspected guerillas were detained and interrogated and accused were beaten or tortured and imprisoned or shot and buried secretly. Electric shock was used on political prisoners. Old persons and children were indiscriminately beaten by the police and women were raped. Such was the police violence against peasants in the emergency zones.

In spite of this military repression, some villages demanded that a military defense post be establsihed in their villages. It was a matter of the lesser of two evils. Civil patrol groups were also organized by the armed forces, to counter Sendero attacks. Military orders were given to capture suspected Sendero militants and there were alleged nighttime raids on villagers by the police anti-terrorist unit.

There was eventually overwhelming military force against the group but this came at a cost to the civilians in the villages – brutalization in the emergency zones, kidnappings and murders of political prisoners, massacres of entire villages and torture of prisoners. This aggressive military counter terrorist
approach was used by the Peruvian military to obtain information about the guerillas.

In spite of these efforts, the police were unable to identify SL militants because they lacked intelligence on the entire SL group – structure, operations, names of leaders and members, modus operandi. This weakness in counter terrorism efforts is highlighted by Paul Pillar⁶⁴ in his article on the importance of counter terrorism intelligence to identify and locate terrorists and their leaders and cells. Even in today’s war on terror, it was intelligence that led the US Special Forces and CIA agents to the hub of Osama Bin Laden’s activity, the nucleus of his cell network. Unfortunately, it was too late, but intelligence was able to locate the terrorists’ safehavens. This is a crucial element in any counter terrorist effort – knowing one’s enemy.

The Peruvian government’s mutinies in the prisons in 1986 was an example of an intelligence failure. Both the police and military intelligence had been wrong about the persons behind the SL’s urban network. The authorities thought that by destroying the inmates that the SL would be completely disbanded. However, the intelligence was misinterpreted and thus many lives were lost, thus fuelling further reproach from the group.

1992-2000

After the capture of the Guzman and his leaders, government response was significantly reduced. According to Vanda Felbab-Brown\textsuperscript{65}, Fujimori wanted to claim international victory for defeating the group and future governments did not want to acknowledge that the SL was still active and still posed a threat to national security. So the government downplayed the SL attacks and resources were allocated to improving general economic conditions. Although the government’s public display of Guzman in jail clothes did have a profound psychological effect on the remnant group, the group executed counter attacks in that same year.

Riding on his international acclaim for defeating terrorism, Fujimori disbanded the Peruvian National Police’s National Counterterrorism Directorate in late 1992 and permitted 90 percent of the intelligence effort. The outcome was, first the intelligence failure of early 1995 in the brief war with Ecuador (along Peru’s Northern border), where Peru lacked knowledge not only of Ecuadorean intentions but also of its capabilities, and second the MRTA\textsuperscript{66} standoff at the Japanese ambassador’s residence in late 1996. Fujimori’s actions were all the more irresponsible given that intelligence indicators had warned since 1993 of a new Shining Path in terms of ideology, appeal to the population in the countryside, and extensive “silent propaganda” and political

\textsuperscript{65} From structured discussions with Dr. Felbab-Brown at the Brookings Institute, Washington DC in August and November 2009
\textsuperscript{66} Spanish acronym for the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement.
indoctrination activities, mainly in Lima’s shantytowns. He knew that Shining Path was entering into a stage of “strategic hibernation” that could allow it to return with a certain degree of strength, but acknowledging this fact would have been a concession to those critics who had warned that the country could not lower its guard against the insurgency and admitting to the politicization and misuse of the intelligence service. The dissolution of the National Intelligence Service (SIN) was completed, notwithstanding new early warning indicators pointed to some degree of accelerated restructuring of Shining Path. Peru became a country without eyes and ears. In addition to these security shortcomings, extreme poverty continued\(^{67}\) and this fuelled the discontent with public institutions.

But politically, the Fujimori administration’s corrupt practices were being exposed during this time and this weakened his popularity to the point where the Peruvian Congress declared him "Morally Unfit" for the Presidency and impeached him on November 22, 2000.

**21st Century**

At the beginning of this century, the government had allocated significant amounts of money towards development projects, counter terrorism and counter narcotics operations. But government anti-drug policies failed to reduce the production of coca or to provide meaningful alternative

\(^{67}\) World Bank Report 2005
employment for coca farmers. The coca industry therefore continued to provide a main source of income to the peasants.

The government maintains a vigilante posture towards the SL, increasing police presence in SL-active areas and improving the coordination between the police and the army. The government also sought to increase the social conditions in these communities to deter peasants from supporting and joining the SL. The government has had some success in some regions, but in other regions, according to Vanda Felbab-Brown\textsuperscript{68}, a de facto government has been established by the SL militants. In addition to this lack of government presence, in those areas where Plan VRAE was implemented, the troops failed to overcome the SL because of lack of security, poor intelligence and resistance from the rural poor who have been promised government infrastructure, health and education.\textsuperscript{69} In fact, senior generals complained that since President Fujimori left office in 2000, government funding for intelligence collection and provision of high quality military equipment declined drastically. This could be because the support that came from the US government’s intelligence agency was no longer available or was reduced significantly. Also, the government’s continued political victory claims that

\textsuperscript{68} From structured discussions with Dr. Felbab-Brown at the Brookings Institute, Washington DC in August and November 2009.

the SL has been defeated (after Guzman’s arrest), has contributed to a reduced focus on the group as a threat to national security.

The peruvian government established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) to investigate the atrocities committed by the SL from 1980 to 2000. According to the CVR report, 69,000 deaths were reported to have occurred at the hand of the SL and the military. The Commission established teams who visited villages and victims and interviewed persons who witnessed the murdering of their relatives and neighbours. The government intended that by allowing the peasants an avenue to express their grievances from the past, that some measure of healing will begin and that the people will be discouraged from sympathizing or supporting the SL.

The report was finally completed in 2009 and is publicly available. From the report, the SL was accused of at least two hundred deaths during this period. In reality, the numbers are much more, but lack of evidence and bodies has restricted clarification of these numbers.

In spite of government victory claims, in 2009, the Peruvian government continues to institute state of emergencies, an indication that the terror has not yet ended and that the authorities have ceded control of parts of Peru to the terrorists, either willingly or because of government inaction. Vanda

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Felbab-Brown also attests to this fact, that, although the number of attacks has significantly decreased since 1992, the SL is still a threat in the areas where the state is weak and where the group has established a de facto government.
WHY THE SHINING PATH CONTINUES TO OPERATE IN PERU

The current existence of the three active SL Committees in SL stronghold areas, and each with a Comrade leader, units and columns is evidence that the SL still has remnants in Peru and still has a presence in its original strongholds (see Diagram 2). From data provided by an organization conducting threat assessments in Peru, the remnant Committees are adopting similar terrorist tactics as was done decades ago but the group is still not classified by the Peruvian government as posing any threat to national security. The SL is currently seen by Peruvian authorities as a mere “criminal nuisance”, engaging in the illicit drug economy.  

However, from this study, I will show that the the SL militants may be more than just criminals and there are indicators that the group is attempting to resurge. This has implications for the government’s national security and foreign policy. We will analyze and compare all the variables discussed in the previous sections and formulate a possible strategy for countering such terrorist groups.

Variables that Best Explain the Shining Path’s Endurance

From Table 5, we can see that both authors have some variables in common – military force, politics and victory. In the context of the SL, Cronin argued 

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71 This organization preferred not to be identified.
that military force led to the demise of the group but Jones and Libicki argue that only 7% of the groups studied ended because of this. So then how applicable is this variable to the SL? Both authors claim that the abuse of military force does propagate the violence and, as this was the case with the SL, I suggest that misuse of military force and use of a repressive counter terrorist strategy is one reason why the SL continues to endure. Instead of demising the group, such strategy gains the sympathy of civilians and supporters because of the anger and fear it creates in the hearts and minds of the masses.

Table 5
Testing Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronin</th>
<th>Jones</th>
<th>Applicability to the SL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REPRESSION</td>
<td>MILITARY FORCE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGOTIATIONS</td>
<td>POLITICS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUCCESS</td>
<td>VICTORY</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECAPITATION</td>
<td>POLICING</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REORIENTATION</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAILURE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>SPLINTERING</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 summarizes the findings from this case study. Politics, or what Cronin calls negotiations with the government, is currently being pursued by the Peruvian authorities. Only time will tell how effective this would be, but
prior to this, the government had failed in negotiating with SL members. Even when Guzman had called for peace and to drop arms in 1994, factions of the group did not heed his call and these factions continued to rein terror. The group has also not achieved success. Original group objectives were:

1. To overthrow the Peruvian government and its armed forces.
2. To establish themselves as the new government – political power.
3. Social revolution by violence and terror - to change society from semi feudal and semi colonial to a new democracy.

It is not clear if the group goals have changed but we know that they have not yet been achieved, thus the group continues to endure. These goals also do not synchronize with Peru’s current political agenda. In addition, even though the Guzman agreed to the 12-year “struggle for peace” in 1992, this did not mean a reform of the group. However, recent news that some original group leaders may contest in the next elections could be an indication that the group is willing to join the system, negotiate and engage in the political process.\(^{72}\)

Jones explained that 40% of the groups in his study were destroyed by policing and intelligence – better civilian network and HUMINT in the towns and villages. Local law enforcement’s arrest of key members of the SL in the 1990s had disrupted the SL but did not completely eradicate the group. Jones claims that police’s task is to eliminate the command structure, the militants, and their logistical, financial and political support.

Jones incorporated Cronin’s decapitation variable into his policing variable. But Cronin argued that decapitation works only if the leader is involved at the operational level. This was not the case with Guzman but would be applicable to his regional committee leaders who managed their regions and planned operations. In the case of the SL, there was decapitation but the militants remained at large because there was still communication between leaders and militants. Cronin even acknowledges that if Guzman were to reconnect with his followers and communicate with them, the group can be revived.

In addition to the ongoing communication between leaders, the SL continues to receive financial support from the coca farmers and dealers and some peasants still fear for their lives. The SL has also always sought to disassociate itself from the normal social and political groups in the society; therefore, they were not dependent on these for their survival.

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73 Human Intelligence – recruiting informants
Reorientation, as discussed in the Literature Review Section, may or may not be relevant to the SL based on the definition adopted for terrorism. Cronin argues that groups can change their strategy from one of terrorism to insurgency or guerilla warfare or conventional warfare or simple criminal acts. But in either case, the group is still engaged in violence of a different form. To argue that reorientation in this way ends terrorism is a gray area. What if the group commits less terrorist acts and more guerilla warfare? Then have they reoriented? Who decides when the violence it is no longer terrorism? If it is not committed against civilians is not an adequate justification to claim that the group has reoriented. In the case of the SL, analysts speculate that they have reoriented to a narco terrorist group, protecting drug traffickers. However, my argument is that the group continues to attack and kill military and police authorities and informants and instill fear in their stronghold areas.

A scholarship such as this would be incomplete without considering and furthering some discussion on group structure and ideology. These variables were not used in the two works examined but because this case is an ideological group and because its structure was its main strength and made the group resilient, it ought to be given some consideration as to why the SL has endured.
The SL was able to generate and regenerate leaders (like a starfish) in spite of the capture and death of key members because it had a cadre of militants who were able to step into leadership position. The pyramid and starfish structure of the group facilitated this mobility as members easily rose through the ranks\(^74\) by proving themselves. This system enhances loyalty and a clear sense of purpose. Funding was also not mentioned in the selected literature but the SL was financially self-sufficient during the 1990s thanks to the narco economy and this eliminated their need for foreign sponsors or support.

\(^{74}\) Diagram 1 illustrates that members can move up from sympathizers to activists to militants, going through extensive indoctrination at each level of the pyramid. Therefore, leaders would already have had hands-on experience at the lower levels.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above analysis, several recommendations can be made as to how best to defeat the SL. Jones claims that a network is vulnerable at its hub, so to defeat the network, destroy the hub. In the case of the SL, the committee secretaries are the only ones who have the list of all the militants’ full names. If they were targeted, their houses searched and they were constantly harassed by the authorities, then this is one way to frustrate the group efforts.

Jones also adopts a two-front strategy with policing and collaborative intelligence as the backbone. Even though the SL is a domestic group with no known international links, Jones’ approach using intelligence and policing is relevant to counter terrorism efforts in Peru. This intelligence network will be the eyes and ears of the government throughout rural Peru and in the cities. The purpose of this network is to pre-empt and prevent future attacks long before they occur. This network will take time to develop but, had the government aggressively continued this intelligence effort from 1992, it could have established a network of reliable and regular sources. The government would have had information on who, where, modus operandi, strategy, support networks used for attacks and all the actors in the network.

In addition to aggressive counter terrorism intelligence, Peru ought to establish and execute terrorism financing laws and institutions and judicial
reforms to reduce the illegal revenues generated from illegal coca production. The government should attempt to dry up the SL’s funding by disrupting those who bank and store the money in the local cooperatives (the support groups). Otherwise, if the government fails to counter the illegal fund raising and thus cut off their financial support, communities can lose confidence in the state’s ability to protect them. This can also undermine the people’s faith and trust in the law.

Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission has sought to bring some justice to the gross violations committed by the SL. However, if the government does not establish and consolidate its presence in rural Peru, then the doors remain open for terrorism to reign. In addition, there is need for a reorientation of policing methods to community policing – changing the public’s perception of the police from brutal and indiscriminate to a friendly face in the neighborhood. This would encourage the people to approach the police and offer information on the SL. Of course, this would depend on the public’s view of the government as being no longer corrupt and brutal, but as one caring for the rich and the poor. This national healing will take time but will be a necessary milestone to win hearts and minds.

All the works analyzed in this paper have endorsed the importance of intelligence in counter terrorism efforts. Paul Pillar calls this counter terrorism intelligence, used to penetrate and infiltrate cells in cities and
villages. The good old spy network can be developed through peasants and university students who are quechua-speaking and who want change in their areas, but not the SL-way.

In the early part of this decade, the U.S. State Department and others warned of a possible resurgence of the SL. That warning appears to have come to fruition. In referring to the SL, General Barry Mc Caffrey, an ex-anti-drug czar claims "I've been watching them reappear now with a sense of dread ... like dying embers that have been brought back to life." Peru continues to experience the same political and economic inequalities that had fuelled the rise of the Shining Path. An International Crisis Group (ICG) 2005 report states, “Democratic governance, prospects for equitable socio-economic development and social peace in Peru and Bolivia are in serious jeopardy”. If these conditions still exist, it creates an opportunity for the uniting of like minds to continue to fight for a better life.

In addition to these conditions, there also exists the financial and military capabilities to support a fight as Peru’s illegal coca industry has grown, thereby providing funds to sustain the resurgence of the group. The same

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ICG report states that the Andean region continues to experience considerable instability and the threat of links between Bolivian and coca grower movements and international drug trafficking networks. A holistic approach is therefore needed to counter terrorism. The response is not just policing, politics or cutting off the supply of funding.

The solutions are deeply embedded in the largely polarized societies where the state, the community, the media, the learning institutions and the church need to get involved in the political processes, thereby adding value to the decision-making. The ICG Report recommends a restructuring of policies to focus on rural development, law enforcement and interdiction to preserve the democratic institutions in these rural areas that can be a breeding ground for terrorists. Soft solutions like this will disrupt the source of terrorist financing and therefore reduce the financial feasibility of engaging in violent terrorist acts. It can also reduce the military feasibility, as funds are limited to purchase weapons and ammunition and to pay and maintain full-time fighters.

Terror, propaganda by deed and coercion were very important tactics used by the SL to gain support from the Peruvian peasants. Instead of looking at why the group started its reign of terror, this thesis has emphasized why terrorist groups end or endure. “Contrary to what many assume, when it
comes to dealing with terrorism it may be important to understand how it ends than how it begins."\textsuperscript{77} As long as the SL can continue to use violence as a tactic to facilitate its goals, then the group will continue to remain viable.

This is how policymakers can hasten the decline of terrorist groups. By examining variables proposed by Audrey Cronin and Seth Jones, this thesis has presented the most practical and relevant methods to use to eradicate domestic, non-religious terrorist groups that operate in a narco economy.

This work shows that there is no single hypothesis that can explain why terrorist groups survive government counter terrorist tactics. However, once it continues to be feasible and government response is inadequate, a rebellion can be sustained. The many reasons identified in this project testify to the need for domestic and regional governments and policy makers to adopt a holistic approach to addressing this menace. Counter terrorism policies therefore must engage all disciplines instead of just a few.

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