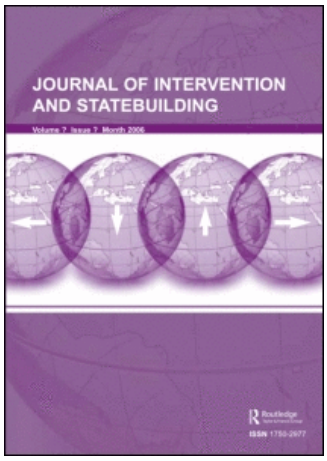

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The Myth of the Failed State and the War on Terror: A Challenge to the Conventional Wisdom

Aidan Hehir

A central hypothesis in the articulated rationale inspiring the war on terror suggests that failed states play a key role in the international terrorist nexus and require external intervention and guided democratization. This logic is based on two related premises; first that there is a direct link between failed states and international terrorism, second that democratic governance reduces the recourse to terrorism. This article suggests that there is no causal link between failed states and international terrorism and that the asserted ability of democratic governance to catalyze a reduction in terrorism is exaggerated if not wholly inaccurate.

Keywords failed states; terrorism; democracy; war on terror; intervention

Introduction

Failed states have become a critical issue in contemporary international relations having made 'a remarkable odyssey from the periphery to the very center of global politics' (*Foreign Policy 2005*). The 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States* (NSS) famously suggested that the US was threatened more by failing than conquering states and that this necessitated a concerted emphasis on the ostensibly causal link between intra-state collapse and the proliferation of global terrorism (NSS 2002: 1). While 'rogue states', namely those that actively sponsor terrorism such as the 'Axis of Evil' triumvirate, have additionally been identified as targets in the war on terror the centrality of failed states in the terrorist nexus has remained a persistent mantra.

Proponents of the war on terror routinely identify failed states as causal variables in the threat posed by global terrorism citing Afghanistan's links to the September 11, 2001 (henceforth 9/11) attacks as evidence (Rice 2005). An increasingly dominant corollary to this hypothesis is the premise that democratization, in addition to its ethical benefits, mitigates the terrorist threat. Advocates of policies orientated towards preventing and repairing intra-state collapse therefore extol the virtues of inculcating democratic governance on

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moral and, with increasing voracity, security grounds (Gow 2006). Failed states have thus become a primary target for Western statebuilding initiatives.

There has been a pronounced lack of inquiry, however, into the validity of this hypothesis. While failed states[1] certainly evidence internal problems and pose a challenge to international politics their relationship with terrorism has not been subjected to significant examination. The 'failed-states-breed-terrorists' hypothesis has instead been treated as though it was axiomatic, certainly among political leaders engaged in the war on terror (Blair 2002). There is some evidence of disquiet with the linkage between failed states and terrorism, particularly from established terrorism scholars (Cronin 2004). Michael Innes argues that the guiding hypothesis has 'served as an intuitive model and polemic referent for military planners and policy makers interested in confronting terrorist actors abroad'. He suggests that these 'conventional assumptions' have come to pervade academic enquiry and notes that: 'there has been little scholarly attention to defining terrorist sanctuaries [beyond this conceptual model]' (Innes 2005: 298). David Chandler challenges the notion that 'the problems of drugs, crime, terrorism, etc. are manufactured in some strange exotic location and exported to the West', arguing that: 'The idea of failed states as a security threat is, I believe, an exaggerated one.' (Chandler 2006: 189–90)

This article seeks to build on the inadequacies Innes identifies by highlighting the extent to which terrorist groups do not evidence any pronounced association with, or preference for, failed states and, in fact, display a capacity to locate in many established Western democracies. Quantitative data regarding failed states and the dispersion of terrorist organizations will provide empirical evidence to complement Chandler's suspicions.

In challenging the dominant logic this article will interrogate the two central propositions underlying the hypothesis. First it will be asserted that the centrality afforded to failed states in the terrorist threat is exaggerated and fundamentally flawed. Certain ostensibly failed states have indeed been associated to some extent with international terrorism but this link is not causal. State failure in itself does not attract or breed terrorists and the attractiveness of a state as a locus for terrorists is contingent on a specific coincidence of variables. Additionally, state failure is caused by a variety of factors and this divergence undermines the accuracy of broad extrapolations derived from a hypothesis predicated on a presumed homogeneity among 'failed states'.

The second critique will focus on the supposed capacity of democratic governance to reduce the recourse to terrorism. It will be suggested that the relationship between democracy and terrorism is more complex than is often presented and that there is little evidence to justify prescribing democracy as a universally effective panacea. Democratic governance may influence inter-state relations and alter intra-state dynamics but democracies are susceptible to becoming the unwitting locus for both domestic and international terrorist groups. Advocates of the perspective that the proliferation of democracy is a

solution to terrorism have conflated the capability of democracy to pacify inter-state relations with its ability to mitigate terrorism.

This article does not suggest that intra-state instability never contributes to international terrorism nor that democratic government has no effect on the recourse to terrorism. Rather, the aim is to demonstrate that the motivating rationale behind the focus on failed states exaggerates both their centrality in the international terrorist network and the capacity of democracy to mitigate terrorism. Given the clear leadership role exercised by the US in the war on terror, the primary emphasis throughout will be on the US's articulation of this thesis, though coalition partners, and the Blair government in the United Kindom (UK) in particular, have frequently made similar claims.

The State Failure Hypothesis

The motivating rationale behind advocacy for intervention in failed states is broadly divided between moral and security-orientated perspectives. The former manifested itself most prominently in the 1990s in the humanitarian intervention debate when advocates stressed the 'responsibility to protect' incumbent upon states towards their own citizens and upon those states with the capacity to 'save strangers' in other states (see Holzgrefe and Keohane 2003; Nardin and Williams 2005). As Anthony F. Lang notes, 9/11 'eclipsed' the issue of humanitarian intervention and state strategy within the West reverted to a primary emphasis on national security (2003: 1). Yet, while the emphasis on morality driving the humanitarian perspective differed from the security-orientated rationale primarily motivating those who advocated the primacy of the national interest, the shared endorsement of intervention and democratization led, post 9/11, to a coincidence of interests between these perspectives (Ignatieff 2003; Gow 2006).

Neo-Conservatism and September 11th

During the 2000 Presidential election campaign George W. Bush disavowed any US responsibility to forge world peace and explicitly rejected the use of US forces to undertake such activity, stating: 'I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-building.' (Jenkins and Plowden 2006: 2) September 11th catalyzed the emergence of the radically expansive 'Bush Doctrine' and the launch of the ambitious war on terror, rationalized through a mixture of moral trailblazing and national security concerns (Singh 2006). By the time of his second inauguration speech in 2005, Bush stated: 'it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture' (Bush 2005a).

This change was greatly aided by the neo-conservative theoretical outlook which became more influential within the Bush administration post-9/11. The

neo-conservative approach, as explored in depth by Michael C. Williams, articulates a coincidence between US national interests and international progress whereby 'creating an international order of values, is good for both America and the world' (2005: 319). This perspective advocates a 'muscular patriotism', with foreign policy driven by expansive international missions. The war on terror's global orientation and its melding of morality and security concerns, specifically in the case of the failed state hypothesis, clearly complemented this ideological outlook and owed much to the advocacy of prominent neo-conservatives within Bush's administration.

The Failed State Threat

The articulated rationale behind the administration's defining foreign policy initiative has consistently emphasized the link between intra-state collapse and national security. The *Commission on Weak States and US National Security* provides an indicative statement of this hypothesis:

> Weak and failed governments generate instability, which harms their citizens, drags down their neighbors and ultimately threatens US interests in building an effective international system, providing the foundation for continued prosperity, and, not least, protecting Americans from external threats to our security. (CWS 2004: 6–7)

According to this perspective, the threat menacing Western society derives from sub-state groups that thrive on the conditions endemic in failed states. The 2005 *National Intelligence Strategy of the United States* describes failed states as 'breeding grounds of international instability, violence, and misery' (NIS 2005: 1–2). The US National Intelligence Council outlined the logic underpinning this perspective: 'internal conflicts can produce a failing or failed state with expanses of territory or populations devoid of effective governmental control. In such instances those territories can become sanctuaries for transnational terrorists like al-Qaeda' (NIC 2004: 14). Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice echoed these sentiments arguing:

> Today ... the greatest threats to our security are defined more by the dynamics within weak and failing states than by the borders between strong and aggressive ones ... Our experience of this new world leads us to conclude that the fundamental character of regimes matters more today than the international distribution of power. (Rice 2005)

More recently, the 2006 *US National Security Strategy* reaffirmed this perspective stating that: 'failed states ... become safe havens for terrorists' (NSS 2006: 15). The threat was considered so great that in 2004 the US government established the *Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization* (OCRS). The OCRS's mission statement describes failed states as 'one of the greatest national and international security challenges of our day, threatening vulnerable populations, their neighbors, our allies, and ourselves' and describes failed states as 'breeding grounds for terrorism' (OCRS 2004a: 1). Ambassador

Carlos Pascual, Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, affirmed the centrality of the failed state threat in contemporary US foreign policy:

> [The importance of] weak and failing states, cannot have been more dramatically and horrifically demonstrated than it was on September 11th ... We put the reality of weak states and state failures into the national security strategy. The Secretary [of State Condoleezza Rice] has made it a top priority. It's been directly linked with her strategy on transformational diplomacy. She's elevated these issues to the top of her foreign policy agenda. (OCRS 2005)

The dangers posed by failed states and the importance afforded to tackling state failure is thus a 'top priority' and directly linked to the most pressing national security issue.

The Democratic Solution

The corollary to the premise citing state failure as a threat to US national security and Western civilization generally is the necessity of intervention to both prevent and repair state failure. In articulating the rationale behind intervention advocates go beyond asserting the need to merely stabilize a failing state and specifically suggest that democratic governance should be encouraged as this is good for the newly liberated citizens and the political system most likely to mitigate the catalysts for internal instability and, ultimately, terrorism. According to the 2005 *National Intelligence Strategy of the United States*: 'We have learned to our peril that the lack of freedom in one state endangers the peace and freedom of others and that failed states are a refuge and breeding ground of extremism' (NIS 2005: 8). The stated aim of the OCRS is 'to coordinate and institutionalize US Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife, so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy' (OCRS 2004b). The reconstruction process is therefore specifically orientated towards democratization rather than simply stabilization. This is evident in the post-intervention policies pursued in both Afghanistan and Iraq and is part of a broader ideological initiative described by Condoleezza Rice as 'transformational diplomacy' (Rice 2006).

Democracy is cited as the bedrock of stability and key to America's national security; the 2005 *National Intelligence Strategy* asserts: 'For US national security democracy is the stoutest pillar of support.' (NIS 2005: 1–2) The 2006 *US National Security Strategy* speaks of 'confronting the challenges of our time by leading a growing community of democracies' (NSS 2006: ii). The rhetoric has been given financial support through the establishment in the US of the Millennium Challenge Account which is 'devoted to projects in nations that govern justly' (MCA 2005). President Bush requested $3 billion from Congress for this fund for 2006 and pledged to increase this to $5 billion in future years (MCA

2005). Democracy is clearly seen as a panacea and a key weapon against terrorism; the 2006 *US National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* declares:

> [democracies] ... exercise effective sovereignty and maintain order within their own borders, address causes of conflict peacefully, protect independent and impartial systems of justice, punish crime, embrace the rule of law, and resist corruption. (NSC 2006)

This perspective is not unique to the US and has been a key component in the foreign policy agenda of many Western governments. The United Kingdom's foreign policy since the Labour Party came to power in 1997 has reflected a desire to expand the community of democracies and this has increased post-9/11. Prime Minister Tony Blair regularly emphasized the consequences of ignoring intra-state instability, arguing: 'September 11 showed us what happens when we don't take action, when we leave a failed state basically living on terrorism and drugs, repressing its people brutally. When we leave that state in place then sooner or later we end up dealing with its consequences.' (Blair 2002) The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit launched in 2005 advocated further extensive involvement in stabilizing fragile states (PMSU 2005). Australia (Australian Government 2006) and Canada (FAIT 2007) have launched equivalent schemes with a similar rationale and the European Union's 2003 Security Strategy made a similar argument in favour of increased involvement in weak and failed states with a view to 'fostering democracy' (EUSS 2003: 7).

Failed States and Terrorism

As the preceding section attests, the argument linking failed states to terrorism has been repeatedly made and widely endorsed becoming, as Justin Logan and Christopher Preble note, 'alarmingly widespread' (2006: 3). This hypothesis, however, comprises questionable assumptions and overlooks many relevant variables. The following sections will examine the accuracy of the hypothesis by, first, investigating the ostensible link between failed states and terrorism and, second, the accuracy of the asserted capacity of democratization to reduce the terrorist threat.

The Diverse Nature of Failure

The first problem with the link is the ambiguous nature of 'failed states'. While Somalia ostensibly represents 'the quintessential case of state failure' (Langford 1999: 61), the term has been applied to less categorical instances of state collapse, thus suggesting variations of failure rather than a standard manifestation. Estimates as to the number of failed states vary considerably: Robert I. Rotberg (2003a) suggests there are seven; while Stuart Eizenstat, John Edward Porter and Jeremy M. Weinstein suggest there are 'about fifty' (2005: 136).

Analysts use a wide variety of criteria by which to judge state failure and differ over the validity of their methodology; Rotberg, for example, rejects the accuracy of the Central Intelligence Agency-funded research into failed states in the 1990s because of the flawed methodology it employed (2003a: 2). The terminology is also inconsistent: the UK's Department for International Development suggests there are 46 'fragile' states; the World Bank lists 30 states as 'Low-Income-Countries-Under-Stress'; the *Failed State Index* lists states according to their 'level of instability'; while terms such as 'weak', 'failing' and 'collapsed' also abound.

In terms of the manifestation of failure, a broad divergence is evident according to whether the failure manifests itself in terms of coercive or administrative incapacity. In terms of the former, Robert H. Jackson believes a state to be failed if it 'cannot or will not safeguard minimum civil conditions, i.e., peace, order, security, etc. domestically. [Failed states are] hollow juridical shells that shroud an anarchical condition domestically.' (1998: 3) This conception is echoed by I. William Zartman (1995: 7), and Rotberg similarly describes failed states as those characterized by the presence of secessionist elements that persistently, and occasionally violently, challenge the government's authority (2003b: 5–6).

However, another feature regarded as indicative of state failure is the 'capacity gap' – the inability to govern (Eizenstat, Porter and Weinstein 2005: 136). In this case, the state fails to meet the needs of the population. This is highlighted by the definition provided by *Foreign Policy* (2005):

> ... a government that has lost control of its territory or of the monopoly on the legitimate use of force has earned the label [failed state]. But there can be more subtle attributes of failure. Some regimes, for example, lack the authority to make collective decisions or the capacity to deliver public services. In other countries, the populace may rely entirely on the black market, fail to pay taxes, or engage in large-scale civil disobedience.

Jean-Germain Gros echoes this perspective, identifying states as failed if 'public authorities are either unable or unwilling to carry out their end of what Hobbes long ago called the social contract, but which now includes more than maintaining the peace among society's many factions and interests' (1996: 456). He identifies some of the factors to be considered when assessing the state's 'non-coercive, public services delivery capacity' which include refuse collection and the state's capacity to limit illegal poaching and logging (Ibid.: 457). This focus on state capacity is further advanced in the report produced by the Commission on Weak States and US National Security. Its attempt to clarify the term 'failed states' offers a threefold condition whereby a state can be said to have failed when it cannot (1) ensure security, (2) meet the basic needs of the population, and (3) maintain legitimacy (2004: 13); this is similar to Rotberg's definition which identifies states as failed when characterized by domestic insecurity and when they 'cease delivering positive political goods to their inhabitants' (2004: 1).

There are, therefore, two broad categories of failure – coercive incapacity and administrative incapacity – with no necessary correlation between the two. A failed state may exhibit pronounced failings with respect to its administrative capacity alone while demonstrating normal coercive capacity. As Rotberg notes: 'violence alone does not condition failure and the absence of violence does not necessarily imply that the state in question is unfailed' (2004: 4). If there are significantly different kinds of failed states, then it is highly probable that failed states as a group will manifest different relationships with phenomena like terrorism. The scope for major divergences between failed states according to these order and capacity cleavages, therefore, challenges the validity of hypotheses predicated on a standard conception of state failure.

The Failed State Index (2006), compiled by *Foreign Policy* and the Fund for Peace, illustrates this point. Using 12 indicators of failure, states are awarded a mark out of ten, with ten being the worst. The researchers derive aggregate scores and then list states ranked in order of failure.[2] There is an inherent degree of subjectivity in compiling this table and doubtless people would contest both the methodology and the scores awarded to countries under the various headings. It is employed here, however, not because of a belief in either its accuracy or the methodological framework but because it constitutes a reputable correlation of state failure that serves to highlight the differing manifestations of failure.

An examination of just the ten most failed states reveals a divergence as to the source of their failings. While Haiti (ranked 8th) scores 5.0 for Refugees and Displaced Persons, Afghanistan (ranked 10th) scores 9.6; Sudan (ranked 1st) scores 7.5 for Economy while Zimbabwe (ranked 5th) scores 9.8. Further down the rankings the differing scores become more pronounced; for example, Nepal (ranked 20th) differs markedly from Burundi (ranked 15th) in almost all the 12 variables. Certain variables employed in this study, such as 'Group Grievance' and 'Factionalized Elites', may possibly provide greatest insight into a particular state's susceptibility to attracting or breeding terrorists and states exhibit widely disparate scores for these very variables.

Lists comprising states judged according to 12 different criteria are highly likely to exhibit divergent scores, even among the top cluster. This, in itself, does not compromise the argument that these states, despite differing results under certain criteria, can be considered failed on the basis of an aggregate score. It does, however, undermine the accuracy of broad extrapolations derived from this diverse grouping.

Terrorism in Failed States

A further problem with the link between failed states and terrorism is that certain failed states do not exhibit any association with terrorism. The list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), compiled by the US Secretary of State, constitutes those groups said to pose the greatest threat to US interests (Office

Table 1 Foreign Terrorist Organizations and the Failed State Index

Failed State Index	State	Number/Name of Group(s)[4]
1	Sudan	(1) al-Qaeda
2	DRC	(0)
3	Ivory Coast	(0)
4	Iraq	(5) Abu Nidal Organization, al-Qaeda organization in the land of the two rivers, Ansar al-Sunnah, Mujahedin-e-Khalq, Palestine Liberation Front
5	Zimbabwe	(0)
6	Chad	(0)
7	Somalia	(1) al-Qaeda
8	Haiti	(0)
9	Pakistan	(6) al-Qaeda, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba
10	Afghanistan	(5) Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya, al-Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group
11	Guinea	(0)
12	Liberia	(0)
13	CAR	(0)
14	North Korea	(0)
15	Burundi	(0)
16	Yemen	(1) al-Qaeda
17	Sierra Leone	(0)
18	Burma	(0)
19	Bangladesh	(1) al-Qaeda
20	Nepal	(0)

of Counterterrorism 2005).[3] As Table 1 illustrates, the states ranked as the 20 most failed on the Failed State Index by *Foreign Policy* (2006a) do not exhibit unusually high numbers of FTOs. If failed states constitute 'breeding grounds' and 'bases' for terrorist organizations then one would expect those states listed as most failed to exhibit a high number of these especially threatening terrorist groups. However, only Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan exhibit a marked presence of such terrorist groups while 13 of the 20 states do not contain any FTOs.

Table 2 comprises a list of those states which contain more than one Foreign Terrorist Organization.[5] As is clear, there is no correlation between a state's place on the Failed State Index and the number of FTOs within its territory. Only three states listed in the Failed State Index's top 20 appear in Table 2 while states such as India, Lebanon, Israel and the Philippines, which rank low down on the Failed State Index, contain unusually high numbers of groups. There is therefore, demonstrably no correlation between a state's failure and the number of FTOs based there.

Table 3 further illustrates the points raised in the above analysis. It identifies the extent to which the states listed from 1 to 20 on the Failed State Index have

Table 2 States containing most Foreign Terrorist Organizations[6]

State	No. of Groups	Name of Groups	Failed State Index
Lebanon	6	al-Qaeda, Asbat al-Ansar, Hizballah, Palestine Liberation Front, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command	65
Pakistan	6	al-Qaeda, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Taiba	9
Afghanistan	5	al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, al-Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group	10
India (Including Kashmir)	5	al-Qaeda, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Taiba	93
Iraq	5	Abu Nidal Organization, al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers, Ansar al-Sunnah Army, Mujahedin-e-Khalq, Palestine Liberation Front	4
Israel	5	al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Hamas, Kach, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine	67
Egypt	4	al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, al-Qaeda, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group	31
Libya	4	Abu Nidal Organization, al-Qaeda, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, Palestine Liberation Front	95
Philippines	4	Abu Sayyaf Group, al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiya, New People's Army	68
Turkey	4	al-Qaeda, DHKP/C, Kurdistan Workers' Party, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group	82
United Kingdom	4	al-Qaeda, Continuity Irish Republican Army, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, Real Irish Republican Army	128
Algeria	3	al-Qaeda, Armed Islamic Group, Salafist Group for Call and Combat	72
Colombia	3	National Liberation Army, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia	27
France	3	al-Qaeda, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, Mujahedin-e-Khalq	129
Ireland	3	al-Qaeda, Continuity Irish Republican Army, Real Irish Republican Army	143
Syria	3	Abu Nidal Organization, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command	33
Uzbekistan	3	al-Qaeda, Islamic Jihad Group, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	23

Table 2 (*Continued*)

State	No. of Groups	Name of Groups	Failed State Index
Australia	2	al-Qaeda, Aum Shinrikyo	136
Belgium	2	al-Qaeda, Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group	
Germany	2	al-Qaeda, Aum Shinrikyo	124
Greece	2	Revolutionary Nuclei, Revolutionary Organization 17 November	121
Indonesia	2	Aum Shinrikyo, Jemaah Islamiya	32
Iran	2	al-Qaeda, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	53
Jordan	2	al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers	74
Malaysia	2	al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiya	98
Mauritania	2	al-Qaeda, Salafist Group for Call and Combat	41
Russia	2	al-Qaeda, Aum Shinrikyo	43
Spain	2	Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA), Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group	125
Tajikistan	2	al-Qaeda, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	42
Tunisia	2	al-Qaeda, Palestine Liberation Front	100
United States	2	al-Qaeda, Aum Shinrikyo	128

been the locus for terrorist incidents and the base for certain terrorist groups.[7] While the figure regarding terrorist attacks within the state suggests much about the nature of that state's internal politics, a low figure here does not necessarily suggest that terrorists are not based here – groups may use a state as a base without ever launching an attack within that state. However, when Table 3 is viewed in conjunction with Table 1 it is clear that, apart from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, failed states do not exhibit an unusually high score either for the number of terrorist groups based there (Table 1) or for the number of terrorist incidents which have occurred there (Table 3).

These tables demonstrate three key findings: first, the lack of any correlation between a state's level of failure and the number of terrorist groups based there; second, the extent to which states listed in the top 20 on the *Failed State Index* exhibit significant differences with respect to the incidence of terrorism (e.g., 11 of the states listed in Table 3 – Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Chad, Haiti, Guinea, Liberia, Central African Republic, North Korea, Burundi, and Sierra Leone – together account for just eight fatalities during this period and do not contain any FTOs); third, the presence of significant numbers of FTOs in states with low levels of state failure, some of which, as highlighted in bold type in Table 2, are democracies.

Afghanistan

The preceding argument has operated at a quantitative level. To test the link between failed states and terrorism a qualitative approach is also illustrative.

Table 3 Failed States and Terrorism[8]

Failed State Index	State	Incidents	Fatalities
1	Sudan	10	76
2	DRC	2	6
3	Ivory Coast	1	0
4	Iraq	6801	17,200
5	Zimbabwe	0	0
6	Chad	1	0
7	Somalia	11	43
8	Haiti	14	2
9	Pakistan	758	1255
10	Afghanistan	904	1444
11	Guinea	1	0
12	Liberia	1	0
13	CAR	0	0
14	North Korea	0	0
15	Burundi	2	0
16	Yemen	83	117
17	Sierra Leone	7	0
18	Burma	35	68
19	Bangladesh	136	224
20	Nepal	440	192

Thus the following section focuses on the case study which supposedly offers the hypothesis its strongest example. Taliban controlled Afghanistan (1996–2001) is the state most often cited to demonstrate the validity of the 'failed-states-breed-terrorists' thesis, typically described, in Condoleezza Rice's terms, as 'a source of global instability' (Rice 2006).

Afghanistan undoubtedly served as a base for al-Qaeda and UN Security Council Resolution 1378 in 2001 reflected the widespread international consensus linking it to the 9/11 attacks. The UN's position was premised, however, on the *active* support provided by the Taliban to al-Qaeda. The resolution '[condemns] the Taliban for allowing Afghanistan to be used as a base for the export of terrorism by the al-Qaeda network and other terrorist groups'. The rationale proffered by those explaining the attractiveness of failed states to terrorists is the lack of central control and the freedom from state interference this provides these groups (Takeyh and Gvosdev 2002: 97–108; NIC 2004: 14). Al-Qaeda did not establish a base in Afghanistan because the government lacked the coercive capacity to stop its activities. In fact, as highlighted by Resolution 1378, precisely the opposite was the case with the Taliban providing al-Qaeda with extensive support.

While al-Qaeda had no coherent links with the Taliban when it took control in 1996 they soon formed an active alliance. Taliban leader Mullah Omar, in fact, told Osama bin Laden: 'You are most welcome. We will never give you up to anyone who wants you.' (Bergen 2006: 164) Subsequently, bin Laden publicly

urged Muslims to move to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan as it was 'the only country in the world today that has Shari'a [law]'. He argued that: 'it is compulsory for all the Muslims all over the world to help Afghanistan ... because it is from this land that we will dispatch our armies all over the world' (Habeck 2006: 149).

Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy suggest that bin Laden, in fact, provided ideological leadership for the Taliban. They suggest that the Taliban were not initially radically anti-Western but 'underwent a neo-fundamentalist radicalisation under bin Laden's influence' (2004: 13). They highlight the Taliban's unpopular crackdown on opium production, the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhist statues in 2001, the obligation placed upon Sikhs and Hindus to wear distinctive symbols and the arrest of Christian aid workers as evidence of bin Laden's influence (Ibid.). Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, therefore, had a symbiotic relationship with al-Qaeda. That it sponsored international terrorism is not in doubt, though its ostensibly failed nature had no bearing on this aspect of its foreign policy.

Additionally, the question of whether Afghanistan under the Taliban was actually a failed state, and in what respects, is less than clear. Its qualification as a failed state has the greatest validity with respect to its administrative incapacity rather than its lack of coercive capacity. While anti-Taliban warlords did maintain a presence in certain areas in the North, the characteristic feature of the Taliban's rule was not its moderate or ineffectual approach to law and order but rather its authoritarian grip on power with Blair indicatively describing the Afghan population as 'being ground under the heel of the fanatic' (Blair 2002). Richard Perle and David Frum, key advisers to the Bush administration, similarly acknowledge that: 'Taliban Afghanistan was not a failed state. Indeed, the Taliban gave Afghanistan its strongest government in decades, even centuries.' (2004: 100) The Taliban certainly presided over a period of pronounced social unrest and were demonstrably ill-equipped to meet the needs of the population but, even if Taliban Afghanistan qualified as a failed state because of the 'capacity gap', there is no evidence linking this source of failure to al-Qaeda's decision to locate there.

Sudan's relationship with al-Qaeda is also used to bolster the hypothesis linking failed states to terrorism but again the facts do not fit the theory. As noted by Karin von Hippel, while bin Laden did stay in Sudan from 1991–1996 he did so not in the lawless south but in and around Khartoum where the government exercised most authority (2002: 31). While there, he enjoyed the protection of Hassan al-Turabi's ruling National Islamic Front. His departure was caused by the Sudanese authority's decision to discontinue their toleration of his presence and expel him, in light of the growing international pressure for them to do so (Tanter 1999: 264–266). As with Afghanistan under the Taliban, al-Qaeda's presence in Sudan was a function of active government support not administrative incapacity and the attractiveness of lawless zones.

This examination of the nature of al-Qaeda's relationship with Afghanistan and Sudan supports the analysis proffered by Audrey Kurth Cronin, who rejects the causal relationship between failed states and terrorism but accepts that failed states are occasional 'enablers of terrorism' rather than sources or breeding

grounds (2004: 33). State failure in Afghanistan and Sudan was incidental rather than causal in terms of these states' linkages with al-Qaeda. The case studies most often heralded as evidence of the purported link between state failure and terrorism do not, therefore, equate with the rationale underpinning the hypothetical link.

Location, Location, Location

The assertion that failed states, in addition to acting as the locus for terrorists, actually breed terrorists appears to have little empirical support. Al-Qaeda has demonstrated a pervasive global presence and the genesis of its volunteers does not exhibit any pronounced commonality unique to failed states. Table 2 highlights the extent to which many democracies (highlighted in bold) contain significant numbers of FTOs. Conditions in certain failed states may indeed be conducive to the emergence of terrorist groups but these factors are not peculiar to failed states and, as the attacks by 'home-grown' terrorists in Madrid and London demonstrate, stable democratic states have also 'bred' terrorists. The nature of the al-Qaeda cell which executed the 9/11 attacks exhibits a dissonance with the hypothetical genesis and incubation of terrorists in failed states. The attackers 'were educated and well assimilated in the West' and evidently became radicalized while living in Western societies (Zahab and Roy 2004: 50).

Many stable Western states exhibit features which actually attract terrorist cells. Giles Kepel notes how Scandinavia's generous welfare system and efficient communication and trade network contrived to make Stockholm and Copenhagen 'safe havens' for groups such as the Egyptian Gama'a al-Islamiya and the Algerian Groupe Islamique Armée in the mid-1990s (2002: 303). The UK became even more central to militants, becoming 'the axis around which the small world that had coalesced at Peshawar in the 1980s revolved', leading to the popular conception of the capital as 'Londonistan' (Ibid.). London, in fact, became the setting for a dialogue between radical Islamic groups who enjoyed free movement and free speech publishing daily newspapers such as *Al Hayat* and *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, which acted as a forum for groups opposed to both the West and those regimes, such as Mubarak's Egypt, deemed to repress Islam.

There is much to suggest that the terrorist threat which al-Qaeda poses to the West is not one which is state-based, or even clearly territorially-bounded. US intelligence asserts that al-Qaeda is present in over 70 countries (CRS 2005) while the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base (2006) suggests there are some 50,000 al-Qaeda members worldwide operating from cells in many countries – such as Switzerland, Belgium and Ireland – which are clearly not failed states. Timothy D. Hoyt (2004) suggests that international 'network' terrorist groups, like al-Qaeda, avoid concentrating in certain areas and do not seek the establishment of bases in the conventional sense as this makes them a sitting target. Terrorists do, of course, require some form of base, and prefer to locate in areas where they do not have to contend with adversarial police or military forces. The nature of al-Qaeda itself

does not correspond to traditional terrorist organizations and while there is some theological and organizational core the label is more 'a kind of brand name for anything anti-American' than a coherent organization (Kepel 2002: 321).

There are, in fact, factors common to failed states which quite possibly act as strong deterrents to terrorists looking for a base. As Rotberg states: 'Deteriorating or destroyed infrastructure typify failed states.' (2002: 88) It is therefore difficult to reconcile the ostensible attractiveness of failed states with the infrastructural deficiencies clearly evident in states such as the Democratic Republic of Congo or Haiti. Modern international terrorist groups require access to functioning communication lines and thus states lacking infrastructural capacity are patently unattractive. Additionally, failed states, such as the Ivory Coast, while generally characterized by a lack of effective central authority, are often host to heavily-armed warring factions and pose obvious risks even for international terrorists.

Revising the Link

The preceding analysis highlights the issues that compromise the accuracy of the asserted link between failed states and terrorism. Certain ostensibly failed states have acted as the locus for terrorist groups but the motivation behind the decision to establish a base in these states does not equate with either a generic quality of state failure inherently attractive to terrorist organizations or the particular attractiveness associated with the breakdown of law and order. Additionally, other states exhibit evident failure yet have no demonstrable association with terrorism.

The seven states, in the top 20 of the Failed State Index, which contain international terrorist groups, all exhibit a shared characteristic which has nothing to do with state failure: in each case, Islamic peoples are involved in conflicts. This is not to suggest, of course, that Muslims are unusually prone to resorting to terrorism but rather to demonstrate that Islamic terrorist groups are, unsurprisingly one might say, attracted to states where their co-religious are engaged in a conflict. The fact that these states exhibited some of the indicators of failure is less important than the nature of the intra-state conflicts which have attracted self-proclaimed defenders of Islam. Further areas cited as proof of the 'failed-states-attract/breed-terrorists' thesis are Bosnia, Serbia (Kosovo) and Russia (Chechnya) (von Hippel 2002). Yet, they too contain a Muslim community engaged in conflict. This factor, therefore, which is a variable independent of a state's failure, is potentially a more accurate common causal variable.

Democracy and Terrorism

In the post-Cold War era, democracy has achieved an increasingly exalted status as the paramount political system. Its ostensible triumph at the end of the Cold

War famously led Francis Fukuyama (1992) to declare that mankind had reached 'the end of history' through the manifest supremacy of the liberal democratic model.

While democracy undoubtedly contributes many positives, its curative capacity with respect to terrorism has been arguably exaggerated in the discourse surrounding the war on terror. The promotion of democracy abroad has long been, rhetorically at least, an aim of the US and is not peculiar to the Bush administration (Daalder and Linsay 2005: 3–12). The contemporary advocacy for democratization has, however, asserted a new security-orientated justification that presents democracy as conducive to counter-terrorism. This section will argue that there is little evidence to support the claim that democratization will catalyze a reduction in terrorism and suggest that the relationship between democracy and terrorism is more complicated.

Terrorism within Democratic States

According to President Bush: 'because democracies respect their own people and their neighbors, the advance of freedom will lead to [international] peace' (Bush 2005b). The US National Strategy for Combating Terrorism similarly extols the virtue of democracy in the war on terror because democracies 'maintain order within their own borders [and] address causes of conflict peacefully' (NSC 2006). The asserted positive outcome resulting from global democratization appears to be derived from a conflation of democratic peace theory and counter-terrorism. The basis of the democratic peace theory is that democracies do not go to war with other democracies and this mantra is often offered by those justifying democratization within the context of the war on terror (White House 2004). This hypothesis, derived from Immanuel Kant's 1795 essay *Perpetual Peace*, appears to have a strong empirical basis, though is not without its critics (for example, Layne 1994). The thesis, however, does not suggest that democracy will reduce the possibility of intra-state conflict or of international terrorism. As the professed goal of the war on terror is the elimination of threats to national security, and terrorism in particular, proliferating democracy is not necessarily a means of achieving this aim as the supposed peaceful effects of democracy relate to pacifying inter-state relations rather than to mitigating sub-state conflict or international terrorism.

One of the most lauded benefits derived from democratic government is its capacity to regulate intra-state interactions. Normatively, it provides a forum for competing groups to discuss their differing views and form representative governing assemblies through the electoral system. In a truly functioning 'pluralist' system differing perspectives are reconciled and accommodated. In practice this is rare and many commentators have pointed to the extent to which monetary resources, as an example, corrupt the pluralist ideal (for example, Schwarzmantel 1994).

However, in addition to the capacity for economic asymmetry to compromise the pluralist ideal, democratic states, for all their normative inclusive and consociational capabilities, have played host to, if not in fact 'bred', terrorist groups, that, by definition, reject the regulatory infrastructure provided by the system. A common catalyst for terrorism is the desire of a particular group to secede from their host state and its dominant majority community. Paul Wilkinson suggests that this ethno-nationalist terrorism is characterized by an evolution, whereby a minority group seeks independence, the host state refuses to facilitate the separatists and, owing to the power asymmetry, the separatists resort to terrorism (1986: 10). There is nothing inherent in democratic governance that compels a coincidence between nation and state or the neutralization of separatist nationalist aspirations. Democracies are often characterized by an internal fissure between a majority community, supportive of the state, and a minority, determined to subvert the existing state structure. Indeed many of the most prominent ethno-nationalist struggles – such as those in Northern Ireland, the Basque region and Palestine – occur within democracies.

Democratic states have, in fact, demonstrated a pronounced unwillingness to countenance secession and in many cases were among the most intractable opponents of de-colonization. Indeed, Robert A. Pape's survey of suicide terrorist attacks between 1980 and 2003, found that: 'most have in common ... a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland' (2005: 4). India, the world's most populous democracy, has been subjected to continual terrorist attacks and the primary source of this terrorism is the territorial dispute surrounding Kashmir. Democracy has not proved capable of providing a forum for the peaceful resolution of this territorial dispute; indeed the Kargil War of 1999 occurred prior to General Pervez Musharraf's coup when Pakistan was also a democracy. This weakness is not confined to ethno-nationalist terrorism; the Terrorism Knowledge base lists 16[8] democracies as containing al-Qaeda cells.[9]

Table 4 lists those states considered by Freedom House (2006a) to be representative democracies with the greatest freedom for their citizens and provides the figures for terrorist incidents and fatalities within these states since 1998. Adherence to the hypothesis citing a correlation between democracy, freedom and intra-state peace would suggest that these states should exhibit significantly low levels of terrorist activity. In most countries this hypothesis is born out, however, France, Italy, Spain, the UK and the US exhibit very high levels of terrorist activity.

If democracies are said to negate terrorism, which Table 4 disputes, then non-democratic states should exhibit a more prevalent occurrence of terrorism. However, as Table 5 illustrates, this is not the case. This table lists those states deemed least democratic and free by Freedom House (2006a) and provides the figures for terrorist incidents and fatalities within these states since 1998.

As is clear, there is no consistency in the figures and while certain states, such as Saudi Arabia and Sudan, exhibit high scores they are not as high as those achieved by Spain, the UK or the US. Belarus, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, North

Table 4 Democracies and Terrorism since 1998[10]

State	Incidents	Fatalities
Andorra	0	0
Australia	1	1
Austria	4	0
Bahamas	0	0
Barbados	0	0
Belgium	17	0
Canada	16	0
Cape Verde	0	0
Chile	1	0
Costa Rica	1	1
Cyprus	13	0
Czech Republic	4	0
Denmark	5	0
Dominica	0	0
Estonia	4	1
Finland	0	0
France	633	16
Germany	21	1
Hungary	4	0
Iceland	0	0
Ireland	8	0
Italy	169	4
Kiribati	0	0
Latvia	7	0
Liechtenstein	0	0
Lithuania	4	0
Luxembourg	0	0
Malta	0	0
Marshall Islands	0	0
Mauritius	0	0
Micronesia	0	0
Nauru	0	0
Netherlands	9	2
New Zealand	2	0
Norway	2	0
Palau	0	0
Poland	4	1
Portugal	0	0
St Kitts/St Nevis	0	0
Saint Lucia	0	0
San Marino	0	0
Slovakia	8	1
Slovenia	1	0
Spain	1031	247
Sweden	9	0
Switzerland	11	0
Taiwan	1	0

Table 4 (*Continued*)

State	Incidents	Fatalities
Tuvalu	0	0
United Kingdom	717	124
United States	110	2995
Uruguay	4	0

Korea and Zimbabwe, though definitively undemocratic, have a combined total of zero fatalities caused by terrorism for this period.

Tables 4 and 5 in themselves tell us little about the origins of terrorism but the figures certainly compromise the asserted correlation between the political system within a state and the extent of terrorist activity therein. Democracy and extensive civil liberties have not negated terrorist activity in a number of states listed in Table 4 suggesting the recourse to terrorism is not negated by democratic rule.

Democracy and Counter-terrorism

In addition to the lack of evidence supporting the premise that democracies are immune from terrorism, democratic states may in fact be less capable than authoritarian states in dealing with terrorists. Democracies, normatively at least, are characterized by their adherence to legal rules and a limitation on the powers vested in the government and security services. Democracies are therefore constrained by the nature of their own system and cannot execute

Table 5 Non-democracies and Terrorism since 1998

State	Incidents	Fatalities
Belarus	2	0
Burma	35	68
China	15	60
Cuba	0	0
Equatorial Guinea	0	0
Eritrea	3	8
Haiti	14	2
Laos	8	1
Libya	1	4
North Korea	0	0
Saudi Arabia	48	119
Somalia	11	43
Sudan	10	76
Syria	3	4
Turkmenistan	1	1
Uzbekistan	14	37
Zimbabwe	0	0

the kind of counter-terrorism measures employed in Belarus or China, for example, and this may well explain the low scores recorded in Table 5. As noted by Ted Robert Gurr:

> The leaders in most authoritarian states have more latitude than elected officials in whether and how they respond to discontent and disorder. They are less concerned than democratic leaders with maintaining a politically acceptable balance between suppressing violence and accommodating or deterring those who support the purposes but not the tactics of terrorists. (1998: 87)

This is supported by the Terrorism Research Center which notes: 'Ironically, as democratic governments become more common it may be easier for terrorists to operate ... Authoritarian governments whose populace may have a better reason to revolt may be less constrained by requirements for due process and impartial justice when combating terrorists.' (Whittaker 2001: 18) In support of this hypothesis, Jonathan R. White points to the pronounced increase in terrorist activity in Russia following the fall of the Soviet regime and suggests that relinquishment of the previously expansive powers exercised by the Soviet state in favour of looser democratic governance catalyzed the emergence of these groups (1998: 151).

It is, therefore, quite possible, though not necessarily always the case, that the transition from authoritarianism to democracy may well increase the capacity of terrorist groups by removing the extensive powers previously exercised by the government. This hypothesis is explored at length by Charles Tilly (1978) who suggests that terrorism and insurgency are more likely to occur in those polities which facilitate the emergence of disparate groups and provide the capacity for group action. This is not the case in authoritarian states but is a core tenet of democracies. In fact, William L. Eubank and Leonard B. Weinberg assert that far from democracy reducing terrorism it actually contributes to it, leading them to conclude: 'The more democracy the more terrorism' (2001: 160).

In relation to other negative potentialities, possibly derived from the creation of democratic governance, there is evidence to suggest that if elections were held in a number of currently undemocratic states the government returned would be hostile to Western interests and a possible source of increased international instability (Mueller, 1999). Robert D. Kaplan (2001) has, in particular, cautioned against the perceived correlation between a democratically elected government and a pro-Western government: 'Democracy in its early phases is more likely to lead not to peace but to demagogic politicians competing with each other over who can be more anti-American and more anti-Semitic.' The election of Hamas in the January 2006 legislative elections in Palestine indicates the validity of this hypothesis. Indeed some of the West's key allies in the war on terror, such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Kazakhstan are not democracies, yet this has not been a major obstacle to cooperation. Democratizing these states may well remove the very leadership supportive of the war on terror.

The Viability of Imposing Democracy

Aside from the factors listed above, regarding the effects of democracy, there is a large literature critiquing the very notion that democracy can be imposed successfully. Michael Mousseau, for example, notes: 'There is little evidence ... that democracy causes liberal values. History shows that democracy without liberal values results in illiberal democracy and the rise to power of antidemocratic regimes.' (2003: 23) Statebuilding projects in the post-Cold War era certainly show mixed results in terms of the ability of external actors to impose a functioning democratic system on a post-authoritarian state (Hehir and Robinson 2007). Implanting a democratic system in a failed state may well accentuate societal instability. The experiences in Bosnia, Kosovo and, most obviously, Iraq highlight that democratization does not necessarily create social cohesion. Therefore, in addition to the debate surrounding the effects of democratization, there are significant questions as to the capacity of Western states to achieve this goal.

A Complex Relationship ...

This section has highlighted the factors that compromise the hypothesis that democratization will increase global peace and specifically reduce the terrorist threat. Democracy may be lauded as conducive to human liberty and economic prosperity and a case can be made that democracies do not fight each other. However, proponents of the war on terror have sought to additionally link the democratization agenda to the broader counter-terrorism strategy. The claim that democracy reduces terrorism demonstrably lacks convincing empirical evidence and overlooks the body of literature which highlights the complex relationship between terrorism and democracy. The plethora of potential catalysts for terrorism lends significant credence to the prescription advocated by C. Christine Fair and Bryan Sheperd whose quantitative research into the support base for terrorism led them to conclude that broad generalizations were invariably inaccurate and thus '[counter-terrorist] interventions must be highly tailored [towards] highly detailed, country specific target audiences' (2006: 51–52).

Conclusion

The threat posed by failed states is regularly portrayed as global, occasionally apocalyptic, with some suggesting failed states 'could engulf the rest of the world' (Eizenstat, Porter and Weinstein 2005: 135). The argument for rebuilding failed states and promoting global democratization can be justified as a project of political liberation and human emancipation. This can certainly be challenged but disagreement will focus on differing subjective notions of freedom and

human liberty. The hypothesis regarding failed states, terrorism and democracy – which has become a key component in the articulated rationale behind the war on terror – is more capable of definitive objective assessment. This article has demonstrated that, empirically, there is no causal link or pronounced correlation between failed states and the proliferation of terrorism or between democratization and the negation of terrorism. Individually, these findings compromise the rationale behind the war on terror; when considered together, they challenge the fundamental rationale inspiring the present international outlook espoused, in particular, by the US and the UK.

The stated aim of the war on terror, that of eliminating global terrorism and fostering worldwide democratization so as to 'make the world not just safer but better' (NSS 2002: 1), is certainly a vast undertaking. While one may question the viability of ever achieving this monumental project, it is more objectively possible to question the guiding rationale and chosen modus operandi. It would be an exaggeration to say that failed states never facilitate terrorism or that democracy has no effect on intra-state dynamics and it is not the intention to do so here. It is asserted, however, that the factors that give rise to terrorism are not exclusive to failed states and that the capacity of democratic governance to eliminate terrorism is far from proven.

The articulated hypothesis could, of course, be designed for public and international consumption and may not constitute the genuine rationale for pursuing the war on terror. Many will doubtlessly view the epithet 'failed state' as a pejorative term designed to delegitimize an enemy and the articulated hypothesis as a cover for a more nefarious foreign policy agenda. Rationalizing the widespread proliferation of, and adherence to, the failed state hypothesis, despite its manifest inaccuracies, is not the aim of this article but there are some potential explanations worthy of note. The focus on states potentially belies an inability to adapt to the new international environment where threats are no longer territorially-bounded. This is endorsed by those such as Cronin who suggest that within the Bush administration 'the tendency has been to fall back on established bureaucratic mindsets and prevailing theoretical paradigms that have little relevance' (2002: 30). A more conspiratorial outlook would suggest that linking failed states to terrorism increases the appeal of interventionism and Western leadership. Building on democratization's moral appeal by suggesting that this strategy comprises strategic *and* moral imperatives bolsters the pro-interventionist case, making it a uniquely appealing confluence of altruism and self-interest. This proposition is supported by Logan and Preble who speculate: 'At times the claims that failed states are inherently threatening seem so dubious that one wonders whether the arguments may not simply be a vehicle for generating support for foreign interventions.' (2006: 6)

This article, however, has interrogated the articulated hypothesis on its own terms, operating from an assumption that the purveyors of this perspective believe their own assertions. The findings, however, clearly complement, though do not necessarily confirm, those who view the hypothesis regarding failed states

as a façade, erected not because of its accuracy but because of its rhetorical impact.

Notes

1 The term is used cautiously; establishing exactly what constitutes a failed state is itself contentious as will be explored later in the article.

2 Table 1 lists the worst 20 states (for a fuller explanation of the methodology see *Foreign Policy* 2006b).

3 The criteria, as outlined in the most recent Office of Counterterrorism Fact Sheet, are: '1: It must be a *foreign organization*, 2: The organization must *engage in terrorist activity*... *or retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism*, 3: The organization's terrorist activity or terrorism must threaten the security of U.S. nationals *or* the national security (national defense, foreign relations, *or* the economic interests) of the United States.' (Office of Counterterrorism 2005)

4 Information regarding the presence of terrorist groups is taken from the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) Knowledge Base country reports which can be accessed at: http://www.tkb.org/.

5 The current list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, as designated by the US Secretary of State, is available at http://www.tkb.org/FTO.jsp.

6 Information regarding the location of these groups is taken from the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. Countries highlighted in bold are considered by Freedom House to be representative democracies (see Freedom House 2007).

7 It is acknowledged that 'terrorism' and 'terrorist groups' are contentious terms and that there are many competing definitions of both. The purpose of this article is not to revisit the debate regarding what constitutes terrorism. The findings for terrorist incidents and fatalities is derived from the RAND-MIPT Terrorism Incident database whose definition of these terms is outlined at: http://www.tkb.org/RandSummary.jsp?page=method.

8 Information regarding incidents and fatalities is taken from the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. The starting point 1998 was chosen as this is when the MIPT records for international and domestic terrorism begins. The figures are correct as of 7 December 2006.

9 They are: Australia; Austria; Bangladesh; Belgium; France; Germany; India; Ireland; Italy; Netherlands; Philippines; South Africa; Switzerland; Turkey; UK; and the US (the list of democratic states is taken from Freedom House 2006b).

10 For an explanation of Freedom House's methodology, see Freedom House 2006c.

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