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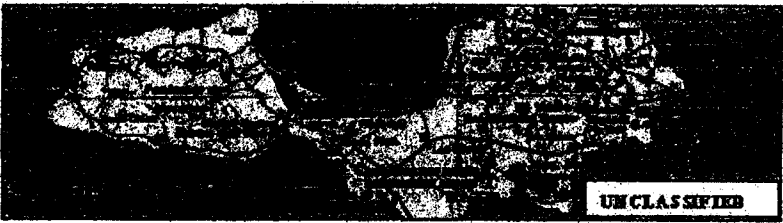


Islamic Radical Groups on Margarita Island, Venezuela

09 December 2003



~~(S//NF)~~ Margarita Island (MI), Venezuela (VEN) is home to a well-established Muslim community. Most are reportedly



legitimate Shi'a businessmen; however, a significant Hizballah presence exists. Several Sunni Islamic Radical Groups (IRGs) are there as well but more reporting is needed to ascertain the extent of their presence. Hizballah activities on MI appear to be part of a larger logistics network that links MI, Curaçao, Maicao, Colombia, Panama's Colon Free Trade Zone (CFTZ), the Triborder Area (TBA), and Lebanon. This network generates revenue on behalf of known Middle-Eastern terrorist groups, such as Hizballah in Lebanon. To date, none of the individuals discussed herein have been credibly linked to terrorist planning.

~~(S//NF)~~ (b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC §403(g) Section 6
(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC §403(g) Section 6

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• (U) False Venezuelan identity documents (cédulas) issued by Venezuelan government officials to IRG supporters from Syria, Pakistan, Egypt, and Lebanon help facilitate IRG travel to MI as well as other areas in the AOR.

- (U) Cédulas have been used to obtain Venezuelan passports and US visas and are equal to Social Security cards.

~~(S//NF)~~ IRG Presence:

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- (U) The Venezuelan-Arab Friendship Association located on MI is reportedly complete with armed guards and is a known center for IRG-linked illicit activities.

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By (b)(6)
(b)(6)

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US News & World Report - 06 Oct 03 article "Terror Closet"

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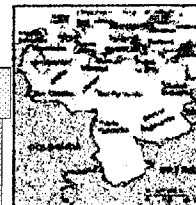
Enduring Freedom Intelligence Assessment

16 January 2002



Margarita Island: Islamic Radical Groups' (IRGs) Organization and Activities ~~(S//NF)~~

~~(S//NF)~~ Margarita Island is a major nexus for Islamic terrorist activities in (b)(1). It is located roughly 180 miles east-northeast of Caracas, Venezuela. (b)(1)



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~~(S//NF)~~ While the TBA serves as the focus for IRG activities in Latin America, Margarita Island is an important nexus for Islamic extremists in South America and the Caribbean. (b)(1)



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- Margarita Island is the largest of a group of islands off of Venezuela.
- It consists of two rocky mountainous sections joined together by a low sandy isthmus about 2.5 miles wide.
- Over 10,000 fishing vessels are registered there.
- There are approximately 71 piers, an international airport and large barren sections capable of use as clandestine airstrips.

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~~(S)~~ Over 500,000 Arabs live in Venezuela. Margarita Island has a total population (including non-Arabs) of approximately 300,000.

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• There are still some 10-15,000 Arabs living on Margarita Island, who fall

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~~(S/NF)~~ Margarita Island's international airport has nearly two dozen daily flights to and from Caracas, daily flights to other Venezuelan locations, and weekly flights to several South American, European, and Canadian cities. Since travelers from Venezuela do not require a visitor's visa to enter Canada.

~~(S)~~ Organizations: Several Islamic extremist organizations reportedly are present on Margarita Island.

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International Ties

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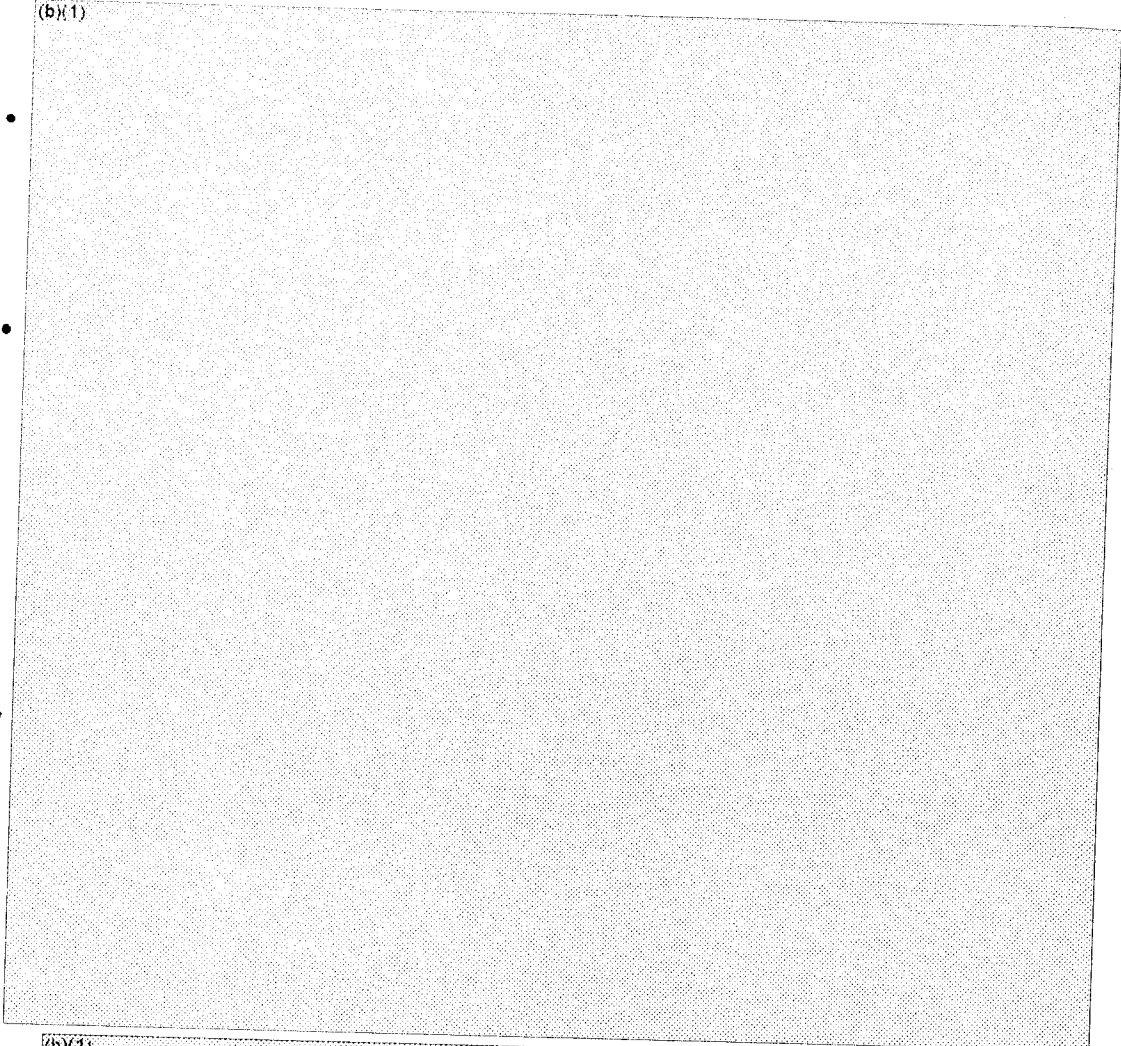
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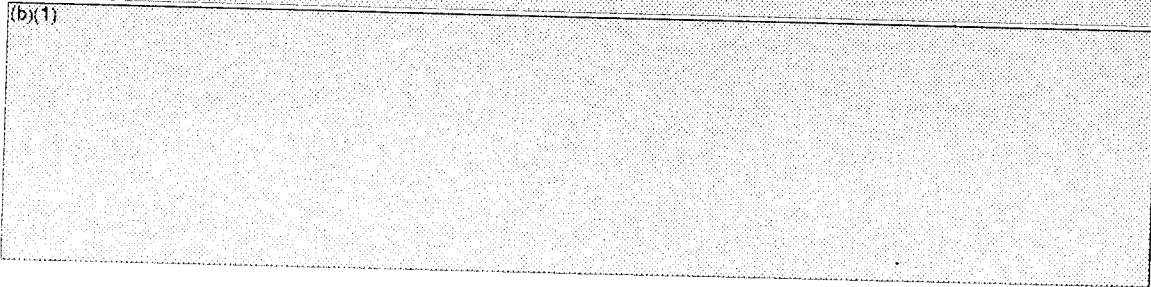
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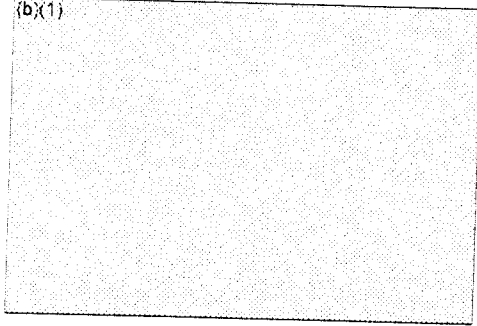
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DOI: 16 January 2002
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Coordinated with: (b)
Derived From: Multiple Sources
Sources:

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