Chapter 1
Outlining the Issues

In this chapter we define our terms and outline the foreign policy and business case for taking corporate involvement in risky states seriously as a public policy issue.

Definitions

'Risky State'

For the purposes of this study, a 'risky state' is defined as one in which a significant portion of the population faces unacceptably high levels of personal threat from government actors, from nominally-independent but government-sanctioned actors, or because a government persistently fails to maintain even minimal public order.

On the basis of this definition, fourteen 'risky states' have been identified:

> Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Burma (Myanmar), Burundi, Columbia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Iraq, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Libya, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Syria.[1]

Although admittedly subjective, this definition aims to highlight those countries in which even a minimal level of human security is absent. The intention here is to throw the policy issues involved into sharp relief by looking at the most egregious violators of basic humanitarian norms, not to offer a clean 'bill of health' to other states.

'Commercial activities'

For the purposes of this paper, the term 'commercial activities' in a given state is to be construed broadly. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Direct ownership of factories, refineries, or other commercial enterprises;
- Exchanges of goods and/or services with local private, or state-owned firms;
- The provision of goods and/or services to Canadian or foreign firms for use in a 'risky state';
- Joint ventures with local partners or share-ownership in such ventures;
- Operation of mineral or petrochemical concessions;

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[1] This list was compiled on the basis of authoritative, country-by-country human rights surveys issued by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the US State Department.