

# Spy catcher



Your government has lost track of a high profile foreign spy and they have requested your help to track him down. As part of his attempts to evade capture, the spy has employed a simple strategy. Each day the spy moves from the country that he is currently in to a neighboring country.

The spy cannot skip over a country (for example, he cannot go from Chile to Ecuador in one day). The movement probabilities are equally distributed among the neighboring countries. For example, if the spy is currently in Ecuador, there is a 50 percent chance he will move to Colombia and a 50 percent chance he will move to Peru. The spy was last seen in Chile and will only move about countries that are in South America. He has been moving about the countries for several weeks.

BY JOHN TOCZEK

*John Toczek is the senior director of Decision Support and Analytics for ARAMARK Corporation in the Global Operational Excellence group. He earned a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering at Drexel University (1996) and a master's degree in operations research from Virginia Commonwealth University (2005). He is a member of INFORMS.*

**Question:** Which country is the spy most likely hiding in and how likely is it that he is there?

Send your answer to [puzzlor@gmail.com](mailto:puzzlor@gmail.com) by June 15. The winner, chosen randomly from correct answers, will receive a \$25 Amazon Gift Card. Past questions can be found at [puzzlor.com](http://puzzlor.com).