**Institut Royal Supérieur de Défense**

# Confronting Threats from the Political-Criminal Nexus in Greater Central Eurasia:

## Implications for operations and future armed conflicts

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LA DÉFENSE

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# Executive Summary

As it occurs across the whole central sector of the arc of crisis stretching from the Indian subcontinent in the East to the Sahel Region in the West, organised crime, the trafficking in narcotics and human smuggling, the illicit and uncontrolled circulation of armaments and ammunitions, all appear to be mutually reinforcing and destabilising factors that deeply threaten European security, especially as their matrix and channels prominently overlap shadow networks of international jihadist militancy and its financing. Scoping well beyond traditional categories, a broad diversity of actors, groups and networks have been identified by various research works as operating different parts of the overall criminal-terrorist/insurgent transcontinental conduct stretching from Central and Southwest Asia to Europe and the Middle East throughout fragile and/or in-conflict regions at the heart of the Eurasian landmass. The duplication and hybridisation of unconventional threats emerging out of the interplay of disparate sets of actors proceeding illicitly along this "Trans-Eurasian pipeline" today goes well beyond "traditional" transnational organised crime activities, such as narcotics and fire-arms trafficking, as it also includes smuggling vulnerable people, the movement of insurgents, irregular foreign fighters, crime enforcers etc., and is often believed to encompass the potential for weapons of mass destruction-related trafficking by designated terrorist organisations. As seems likely in a region historically subject to flux and where the resources of conflict have become so intertwined, identifying the interplay and connectivity among these entrepreneurs of crime and violence appear to be all the more important that similar convergence models are also developing in other parts of the world as well, i.e. across the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa, and in the Middle East in particular, that makes understanding their recombining dynamics essential, as they stand increasingly prominent as a critical element in the broader global security context, and certainly that of Europe as a whole.

Throughout the broad diversity of territories ranging from the margins of the former Soviet Empire in the Caucasus and Black Sea Region to Indo-Pakistani and China borderlands in Central Asia, now also in broader connection with metastasising hot spots in the Middle East, conflicts of varying intensity, the morass of protracted war and insurgency, and control of "ungoverned spaces" by non-state armed groups dedicated to a whole spectrum of violent seditious activities beyond any state monopoly of legitimate violence not only undermine the security of an entire region of a historically great strategic interest for the stability of the world, but also facilitate the proliferation of a whole range of criminal activities and trafficking of all sorts, both northward/westward and eastward/southward through highly adaptive transcontinental conducts that are able to move a multiplicity of illicit products (drugs, weapons, humans, bulk cash) that ultimately cross the external borders of the EU undetected thousands of time each weeks. Against the backdrop of a lingering 40 year-old long conflict that, still a far from and end, seems to have been, in certain respects, aggravated instead of alleviated by the flawed intervention of the international community, a particularly acute problem, and perhaps the root cause of all others, remains illicit drug trafficking from Afghanistan, including its routes, profits, and corruptive influence, and certainly the nexus between the whole political economy of crime its entails and political violence, violent extremism, and jihadist terrorism, both globally and regionally, with its local insurgent offshoots in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia and the Caucasus. The trafficking of opiates and weapons from Afghanistan continues to create instability and generates extremism, and terrorism at a considerable distance in the Cauca-sus, Kosovo, Fergana Valley, India, China's Xinjiang Region etc., and can still strike as far as in the United States and in Europe.

However conceived under the heading "non-conventional" or "non-traditional", ensuing security threats shall be best understood in their causal relationship to conventional security problems (active and potential armed conflicts) they predate in most cases as the evolving combination of threats stemming from the convergence and hybridisation of illicit networks that empowers terrorists, criminals, and proliferators across the Eurasian landmass with the billions of

dollars illicit activities generate in crowded shadow economies where the politics of crime is increasingly defining the rules of the game in front of states that have little resources and legal or law enforcement capacities and/or are them-selves captured by criminal interests. Throughout the region, a number of states have forcefully consolidated their institutional apparatus over the past two decades, only to find that organised networks with deep and lasting links to the state are diverting public policy, colluding with criminal and drug-trafficking rings, and weakening public authority and the rule of law. If any, this is well the epistemological reality of much of Greater Central Eurasia today – a reality compounded by the possibility several states in the region are actually susceptible to failure (or have already largely done so.) In broader connection to the Middle East, the former Soviet South, also with its South Asian extension in Afghanistan and Pakistan, i.e. Washington's "Greater Middle East", contain a bulk of polities that are physically and governmentally gravely challenged by puzzles and pitfalls in their statehood. This, we argue, is caused by the expansion of a deeply embedded political-criminal nexus within state structures – the consolidation of a "parallel statehood", whose influence over the judiciary, intelligence sectors, security forces, and state structures at large, in addition to the penetration of institutions by criminal actors and the endemic corruption that comes along, the perils of absolutism, and institutional animosity toward genuine political participation, all contribute to instability, regime volatility, and ultimately state failure.

The Afghan and Pakistani cases notwithstanding, criminal groups and organised interests from and within the broader Central Eurasian region have been steadily growing in financial strength, territorial control and political alliances over the past two decades, be it throughout deep and lasting links to political leadership, collusion with self-serving factions within the state apparatus and/or outsiders specialised in violence. Whilst most states in the region are not collapsing as such, some of them however risk becoming shell-states, hollowed out from the inside by criminal interests colluding with corrupt officials in the government and the security services. This not only jeopardised their survival, it also poses a serious threat to regional and international security because of the transnational nature of the crimes. In addition to a vast increase in the prevalence of violence, especially in economic sectors with close ties to organised crime, commercial ties in the drug trade between local crime groups and Islamist terrorists based in Afghanistan and in Pakistan's tribal regions and the presence of numerous regional and transnational crime groups as well as recruiters for militant groups on terrorist watch lists, one gets altogether a cocktail of instability and uncertainty rarely met in other parts of the world. Now, in somewhat of a similar vein to what was observed in Latin American context in the 1980s/90s, significant synergistic destabilisation patterns can be observed in several regions at the margins of Greater Europe (from Ukraine and Moldova to the Black Sea Region and the Caucasus), and throughout the broader Central Eurasian space, where enduring patterns of interaction and co-operation between insurgent/armed opposition groups, eventually falling onto the legally defined category of foreign terrorist organisations (FTOs), and organised crime organisations, often transnational in nature (TOCs), and deeply infiltrated within state institu-tions, are thriving around an estimated $50 billion Afghan heroin market as cornerstone of a transnational political economy of crime.

Linking these dynamics to current debates on the implications of ways organised criminal behaviours and organised criminal activities are affecting and being affected by (a) local conflict dynamics, especially that of insurgency-based conflicts, and the politics of terrorist and insurgent violence in context of state fragility or failure, and (b) the processes of global security governance, of which stabilisation (peace-building and state-building) processes and indeed peace operations are one of the international community's primary tools for stabilising fragile or conflict-ridden states, the study will point out, in light of essentially the Afghan experience, the challenges ahead regarding the implementation of accompanying measures within stabilisation programmes, notably in terms of opportunities for organised crime and the corruption that accompanies it, and the financing of insurgency and export-prone terrorism, so as to chip away at and contribute to breaking linkages

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# Introduction and Research Outline

It is all too witnessed that in the current age of globalisation the world has become more interrelated and there is a corresponding increase in complexity. The old idea of a single problem with a single solution, if ever true, no longer holds. Given the current diversity and significance of the range of actual threats to the European Union and its constitutive member states, an approach that incorporates the key challenges, their connectivity and complexity, and the full array of vulnerabilities that they expose is more than ever required. Most significantly, we need to frame issues so that their interconnectedness and the vulnerabilities are woven throughout.

Following from the changing nature of conflicts predating human security in many parts of our world, and ever closer to Europe's borders, with field effects that are now creeping up on the continent's security in a more urgent and vigorous manner than ever in recent history, security planners and policy makers are confronted with situations triggering a combination of threats and spill-over effects that make them often longer lasting than predicted, hard to resolve and contagious.[1] Against this unfavourable background, the EU, its member states, and partners are grappling with an increasingly complex ensemble of policy challenges for which there exists no straightforward solutions. The interconnectedness between security and development, crime and conflict as well as crime and terrorism form a fabric of interconnected challenges that have commensurate implications for securitisation and stabilisation.

Aimed at qualifying and discussing the anatomy of that interconnectedness and the combination of threats that stem from, this research postulates in order to understand the full significance of the 21st century's new geopolitical reality of our world, and especially that of neighbouring regions of primary importance to European security – MENA region, the Sahara-Sahel Belt, the "near-abroad" of Eastern Europe to the margins of the Eurasian heartland in the Caucasus and Central Asia, yet today also featuring more broadly in most of the developing world (Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia etc.), it is necessary to think not only in terms of great power politics but also, and probably even more, in those of a geopolitics of non-state armed actors: their disparate groups and organisations, and the multiple networks that exploit, support and/or appropriate them, hence bringing new elements to the dangerous spaces where non-state actors interest with regions of weak sovereignty and alternative governance systems.[2]

Not only have we witnessed over the past two decades a growing convergence of illicit networks that has empowered terrorists, criminals and proliferators all over the world,[3] also turning entire regions into epicentres of lawlessness and instability, but it has also amplified and

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[1] The concept paper requested by the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence ("*Towards a new European security strategy? Assessing the impact of changes in the global security environment*", 9 June 2015) underlines this dimension in assessing of the current security and geopolitical situation; full text available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/534989/EXPO_STU(2015)534989_EN.pdf

[2] The notion of "dangerous spaces" was used by Phil Williams to describe 21st-century security challenges in terms of spaces and gaps, including geographical, functional, social, economic, legal, and regulatory holes. See WILLIAMS, Phil, "Here Be Dragons: Dangerous Spaces and International Security", in CLUNAN, Anne L., TRINKUNAS, Harold A. (eds.), *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010, pp. 34-37.

[3] MAKARENKO, Tamara, "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism", in *Global Crime*, Vol. 6, No. 1, February 2004, pp. 129-145

globalised the threats these proliferating lawless enclaves, which Makarenko famously referred to as "*black holes*",[4] are actually posing to the security of nations and regions far removed from those very gray zones of instability. These specific territories represent a powerful component of the threat from all those disparate organisations and networks of rogue actors that operate in, compete to dominate, and eventually control them, thereby allowing them to function, interact, and develop relationships to each other in a relatively safe environment.

In the Greater Central Eurasian macro-region, from the margins of the former Soviet Empire in the Caucasus and Central Asia to Southwest Asia (Afghanistan-Pakistan) and China's western frontier, control of such "black hole" regions by non-state actors engaged in all sorts of physical political violence, often by means of terrorism and insurgency, not only undermines the stability of entire regions of great strategic interest to the international community, but also facilitates the illicit movement, both westward and eastward, through transcontinental conducts, of goods (drugs, money, weapons, stolen cars etc.), people (human traffic, foreign fighters and drug cartel enforcers etc.) that ultimately cross the external borders of the European Union undetected thousands of time each week. The billions of dollars/euro these illicit activities generate do not only threaten legitimate economic interests, they also cause significant challenges to human security, development and the rule of law. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that about $1 trillion, most of which from criminal profits, is spent each year to bribe public officials in the world, and especially in those areas where states have few resources and little legal or law enforcement capacity.[5] Not only is organised crime weakening and compromising government institutions by infiltrating them through corruption and bribery, but it also sustains the subversive activities of all those who, associating their practice of violent activities and armed actions with a political purpose and/or an ideology, have been found increasingly turning to crime and criminal networks for funding or re-sourcing themselves.

Since al-Qaeda' attacks against the U.S. on 11 September 2001, and along with the debate about transnational threats emanating from failed and conflict-ridden states, linkages between organised crime and non-state armed actors, with special reference to those active in the field of international terrorism, have been high in the international agenda. In short, the opinion started to spread that the convergence between terrorism and organised crime could come to be a growing trend within the geopolitical framework inaugurated at the end of the 20th century. Various factors for change have pushed us toward that direction.[6] On the one hand, the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of anti-terrorist laws would have drastically reduced the willingness of states to sponsor terrorist groups or insurgent organisations, inducing them to use other means of financing (including those relating to conducting illegal activities). In a complementary sense, the transition towards a globalised economy and world, and the consequent development of trans-national forms of organised criminality has considerably increased the possibilities for clandestine terrorist and insurgent networks to become involved in illegal businesses. These arguments explain that the connection between international terrorism and transnational organised crime is a threat contemplated in most of the recent strategic documents. Whether the U.S. National Security Strategy (2015), the European Security Strategy (2003, 2008), now also in the text of the new *Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy* released on 28 June 2016,[7] NATO's "new" strategic concept (2010) and at another level the Report of the UN Secretary General *High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Changes* (2004), all emphasise the strategic significance of trans-

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[4] MAKARENKO, *op. cit.* (2004)

[5] "The Globalisation of Crime: A Transnational Organised Crime Assessment", UNODC, Vienna, 2014, pp. 6-8

[6] MAKARENKO, Tamara. "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism", Global Crime, vol. 6, n° 1, 2004, 129-145.

[7] Full text "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe" available at https://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf – fifteen occurrences for "organised crime"; twenty-two for "terrorism"

national threats posed to international peace and security by proliferating organised crime activities, illegal resource exploitation, and corruption in fuelling conflict, terrorism, insurgencies, and violent extremism all over the world.[8] Jointly pointing to the mutual reinforcement of transnational organised crime (TOC) and a whole range of "new", non-conventional security threats by malignant non-state actors, all these key framework documents voice, out of concerns for the changing nature of conflicts and the persistent threats posed to international security by the most bitter of them, an especially dire preoccupation with those increasingly toxic linkages between organised crime, terrorism and protracted insurgency-based conflicts. Now, this "nexus" has become a matter of critical importance to real-world counter-terrorist outcomes in Europe in the context of efforts to divert the most possible amount of resources to jihadist endeavours by returnees from the Syrian conflict and related radicalised individuals at home. In Belgium, the Financial Intelligence Processing Unit (CTIF-CFI), as a central piece of the country's preventive anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing system, has long been pointing at the criticality of effectively countering the provision or collection of funds with the intention that they shall be used in order to carry out terrorist acts, also highlighting expanding linkages between organised crime, terrorism and conflicts in many parts of the world.[9]

Since what is found is beyond dispute, it may well appear trite law to say. And yet, the importance of crime as a core underlying resource of conflict is often overlooked in conceiving how important its politics, understood as the interplay of criminal interests and underlying values in government or group decision-making, actually is in shaping the ends and means of conflicts,[10] ubiquitously entailing state failure, opening the strategic space for insurgents and terrorists, as well as impeding efforts by stabilisation processes and peace operations in conflict-ridden states.

In the wake of arduous attempts at curving the Taliban's resurgent influence in a decade-long counterinsurgency-*cum*-stabilisation mission in Afghanistan amidst expanding cross-border activities of militant Salafi-jihadist groups worldwide, the dramatic impact on international and national security of the growing convergence of terrorist and like-minded insurgent groups with organised crime has appeared increasingly clear to many casual observers in recent years. While the criminal funding of insurgencies and terrorist groups is likely to be nothing new, the so-called "narco-terrorist threat", i.e. the use of drug-trafficking to finance and advance the political and ideological objectives of violent non-state actors, criminal groups and terrorists,[11] has attracted growing attention as it became increasingly clear that the growing convergence of their clandestine networks is exacerbating and duplicating the respective threats they pose to peace and security. Trafficking in drugs is known to be the most common criminal act that is uniting organised criminals with terrorists and other non-state armed actors. In a recent media intervention, Ret. Admiral James Stavridis, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) has maintained that the nexus between illicit drug trafficking, "*including routes, profits, and corruption*

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[8] A milestone document, still a reference though out-dated in some respects "A More Secure World", UN Secretary General High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Changes (2004); full text available at http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/historical/hlp_more_secure_world.pdf

[9] See CETIF's latest Annual Report (2015), available at http://www.ctif-cfi.be/website/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=206&Itemid=76&lang=en

[10] This theoretical argument is at core of the thesis developed by Jorge Delgado in relation to his critical review of anti-narcotics counterinsurgency in Columbian context. We are grateful to the author for having benefited of the brilliant counter-orthodox argumentation developed in his unpublished paper "Indiscernible Borders: From Counter-insurgency to Counter-gangs", Paper presented by Dr Delgado at the conference "Military frontiers: A graduate symposium border crossings" at the Mershon Centre for International Security Studies, Ohio State University, 13 May 2011.

[11] SCHORI LANG, Christina, "Shadow Networks: The Growing Nexus of Terrorism and Organised Crime", GCSP Policy Paper No. 20, September 2011, p. 2

*influence*" and "*Islamic radical terrorism*", remains a growing existential threat.[12] Yet it is certainly is not the sole criminal field in which criminal groups and terrorists are sharing expertise and co-operating in, neither are they the only actors to do so.

## 1. Organised Crime and Political Violence: An Actor-oriented Approach

Counter-strategies need to recognise the multitude of actors that draw on organised crime. In much of the security policy debate, the focus has been limited to one single constellation: the linkages between organised crime and terrorism. While concern about the "*crime-terror nexus*" is warranted and important indeed, such focus tends to eclipse large parts of the networks and actors that enable crime and profits from organised criminal activities – including other non-state armed actors, along with certain state actors as well. Wibke Hansen has suggested the term "organised crime-plus" (OC+),[13] we owe him throughout the text of this research work, for a conceptualisation of linkages that recognises the multitude of actors involved.

Scoping well beyond traditional categories, the duplication and the hybridisation of non-conventional threats emerging in disregard of state borders out of the interplay of those adaptive sets of actors, and the multiple types of relationships that continually evolve with the strategic calculations of their groups in relating means to ends for converting violence into economic and/or political resources, today goes well beyond localised warfare and "traditional" criminal activities, such as narcotics trafficking and illicit firearms sales, as it also includes the movements of armed paramilitaries and irregular foreign fighters, crime enforcers etc., human trafficking, smuggling uranium and dual use technologies, hence also encompassing the potential for weapons of mass destruction-related proliferation. Under the heading "non-conventional", we want to stress upon the inherently hybrid nature of threats which, in their causal relationship to active and potential armed conflicts, in most cases predate conventional security problems, and often actually make them intractable. While criminal activity and terrorism are security threats in their own right, the growing nexus of rogue non-state political actors and organised crime is creating a dynamic that perpetuates conflict and war, and emboldens and sustains insurgencies. A recent Stanford University study maintains that "*out of 128 conflicts studied, the 17 which relied on 'contraband finances' lasted five times longer*."[14] Linkages between terrorists and like-minded insurgent groups and criminal groups have protracted the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, now also in Syria and Libya, and have acted as spoilers for peace in many other past and present conflicts. *Al-Qaeda* and *Jaish al-Mahdi* in Iraq have spread rampant insecurity and crime with kidnapping, oil theft and extortion, perpetuating instability that has impeded efforts at securitisation and stabilisation, and laid the ground for the rise and success of ISIL/*Dāʿesh* against the backdrop of state collapse and post-Saddam ethno-political grievances.[15] In Afghanistan, the heroin business has been

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[12] Questions and Answers with Admiral James STAVRIDIS, then out-going Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 13 May 2013, available on NATO website at http://www.nato.int/cps/fr/natohq/opinions_100397.htm?selectedLocale=fr

[13] Wibke Hansen is Deputy Director and Head of Analysis at the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF) in Berlin. He elaborated at first on this "OC+" concept in "Combating Organised Crime in Armed Conflict", in BALLENTINE, Karen, and NITZSCHKE, Heiko, *Profiting from Peace. Managing the Resource Dimensions of Civil War*, Boulder/London 2008, pp. 123-152 (125).

[14] FEARON, James D. (dir.), *Why Do Some Civil Wars Last so Much Longer than Others?*, research conducted at the Centre for Peace Research, Stanford University; main results published in The Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 41, No. 3, (May, 2014), pp. 275-301; Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4149745

[15] S. J. STEDMAN, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes" (in: *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 5-53), quoted in SCHORI LANG, *op. cit.* (2011)

notoriously helping to finance the Taliban and perpetuate the insurgency and the scourge of terrorism in the country.[16] And there is every reason to believe that the insurgency will not end unless the crime-saturated eco-system of opium and Taliban militancy can be severed.

Beyond the sole issue of the resiliency of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the convergence of narcotics trafficking rings and terrorist groups from and within has been repeatedly as a global threat. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) reports that 60 per cent of foreign terrorist organisations active in the world today have links to the drugs trade.[17] The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has long been alerting for years the importance of drug trafficking as a means to finance terrorism, and notably the responsibility of the estimated $50 billion world heroin market from Afghanistan in creating instability and generating extremism, organised crime and terrorism with consequences all over the world.[18]

And yet, whether international recognition of the significance of the threats posed by the growing alignment around *inter alia* the drug trade between criminal organisations, terrorist groups and all sorts of armed paramilitary groupings regarded as with political objectives is helpful and important indeed, it however does not allow to qualify the watch points, parameters, and facilitating drivers of connectivity among the disparate organisations and networks which, in aggregate, make up the bulk of rogue non-state actors with criminal capacities and expertise in the use of violence, as well as the chain length and the breadth of convergence of the recombinant chains of clandestine networks they form and amplify the transnational threats they pose. An essential issue remains: What are the overall factors that provide opportunity structures or serve as enablers for organised crime groups and other non-state armed actors to converge?

In relation to this question, the primordial locus of study and policy coordination this research identifies and discusses is thus that of the interplay and connectivity, hence the anatomy of linkages, between various categories of entrepreneurs of crime and violence, non-state armed groups and violent paramilitary structures, and the conditions and the extent under and to which such linkages actually form and develop within various fields of criminal activities and practices of violent activities and armed actions associated with a political purpose and/or an ideology, with special reference to terrorism and insurgency. Subsequently, it will lead us to reflect upon implications for policy responses and the tools and processes of conflict management and global governance aimed at confronting them.

One of the main contentions of this study is to show that the connectivity among the disparate groups and organisations operating along different geographic and functional segments of the overall criminal-terrorist/insurgent pipelines that irrigate our modern world – and that running throughout the Greater Central Eurasian macro-region, from the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands to the margins of Greater Europe in the Caucasus and the Black Sea Region certainly is one the most active and nefarious of them – is to be related to the importance of the "politics of crime", understood as the interplay of criminal interests and underlying "values" (alternative norms of practice) in group and government decision-making,[19] in shaping the ends and means of those protracted conflicts (such as in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ukraine, Georgia, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Mali/Niger to name a few) from which gravest non-conventional security threats arise. Both in terms of their genesis and proliferation, the pervasiveness and the sustainability of chal-

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[16] PETERS, Gretchen, "Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda", *Picador*, 2010.

[17] ROLLINS, James, and SUN WYLER, Louise, "International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress", Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC, March 2014, p. 38.

[18] UNODC "The Globalisation of Crime", *op. cit.* (2014)

[19] After Delgado's definition, DELGADO, *op. cit.* (2010), p. 19

lenges posed by these convergent and mutually-reinforcing threats in a growing number of countries around the world stem from, we argue, the fluid interplay of transnational organised crime (TOC) networks and syndicates of crime operatives, both structured and disaggregated, mafias, banditry and the like, with a whole array of armed paramilitary groupings and rogue political/ identity entrepreneurs: "pseudo-state" actors and warlord-strongmen controlling "black holes" or "stateless" sectors of one or more national territories, uncompromising armed opposition movements dubbed insurgent armies, terrorist groups, motivated by religion, politics, ideology, ethnic forces, or at times, even by financial considerations, and the multiple facilitating networks, both state and non-state, which support, exploit and/or appropriate them. After research by respected authors like Dishman, Naylor, Makarenko, Williams, Shelley, Picarelli and others, we now know that, rather than operating in isolation, these disparate groups and networks of agents of crime and violence controlling specific geographic territories which allow them to function in a relatively safe environment appear to have complex but significant interaction with each other, based primarily on the ability of each actor or set of actors to provide a critical service while profiting mutually from the transactions.[20] Within those complex patterns of mutually-reinforcing relationships, meanwhile pointing at the centrality of the role played by crime in funding and resourcing non-state armed groups, it appears that the role it can often play in the political structure of the affected society, and indeed of the state itself, emerges as a major element of the fabric of that combination of threats compounded by rooted patterns of interactions between actors informally coalescing their interests across the state/non-state divide. Colluding with organised interests organically linked to certain states that support, exploit and/or appropriate them, organised crime networks and other subversive non-state actors may then have leeway to "crowd in" spaces, either at the expense of weak host states and their neighbours, or in alliance with stronger ones which *"host them, tolerate them, or use them as instruments of statecraft."*[21]

## 2. Locating the Political-Criminal Nexus

One of the contentions of this study is that unevenly focused we tend to be on the non-state majority feature of today's most violent and criminal paramilitary structures, our dominant schemes of understanding generally fall short of recognising the hybrid and transversal nature of the threat posed by the convergence of shadow networks empowering terrorists, cri-minals, insurgents and proliferators around the world in relation the actual dimension of the crime-state relationship that exists in many contexts of fragility and conflict around the world, i.e. the importance of a broader "political-criminal nexus" at core of the political economy of organised crime underlying the resources of many conflicts around the world.[22] This characterisation points at the actual threat posed to international security by the opportunity structures and activity facilities provided to rogue non-state actors by the proliferation of "parallel states",[23] i.e. polity where – as defined in this research – government policy is diverted or coerced by "parallel" arrangements towards the service of an informal power structure that is organically linked to the state,

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[20] SHELLEY, Louise *et al.*, "The Unholy Trinity: Transnational Organised Crime, Corruption and Terrorism", in *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. XI, Issue 2, Winter/Spring 2009

[21] Point made by Douglas Farah in: "Transnational Organised Crime, Terrorism, and Criminalised States in Latin America: An Emerging Tier-One National Security Priority", Strategic Studies Institute Monograph August 2012, Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, pp. 3-8 (4).

[22] The etiology of the concept of a "political-criminal nexus" as the concentration and fusion of political and criminal power, quite widely declined since then, was initially elaborated by Robert Godson in: "Political-Criminal Nexus", *Trends in Organised Crime*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, Fall 1997, pp. 4-7.

[23] Thesis developed by Ivan Briscoe in: "The Proliferation of the Parallel State", FRIDE Working Paper 71, October 2008, 28p. (definition p. 6)

often control the levers of the military, political and economic power, and yet which serves its own factional, sector-based or institutional interests in combination with organised crime networks and paramilitary groupings or subversive proxies (also in the form of pseudo-state actors.) Though often eluded, our research suggests the resiliency of transnational criminal and/or terrorist structures, and of their relationships to each other, is also due to the fact that they can easily draw on organised crime in environments where it often happen to play a critical role in the political structure of the state itself. Evidences from conflict contexts as diverse as Afghanistan, Syria, Columbia, or Ukraine tend to suggest that, without automatically inducing the existence of any governmental policy of state-sponsored terrorism, certain state actors, or at least certain individuals and networks able to draw on state resources, can provide support services to both criminal and terrorist or insurgent groups, as they exploit their position, authority, and administrative resources to protect and expand their own interests in collusion with them.

In light of the alliances of convenience and interest that, as Douglas Farah, Erik Alda and Joseph Sala have explored in other contexts (respectively Latin America and the Sahel Region),[24] can develop between state and non-state actors in ways both types relate means to ends while serving their respective interests, we propose to test the hypothesis that the overlap and duplication in the ways certain state and non-state actors relate means to ends throughout the proceeds from organised crime (especially those generated by the drug trade), and the relative benefits derived from the relationships between "parallel state" actors, organised crime (TOC) networks and non-state armed groups precisely is what underpins the connectivity among the variety of groups operating along different geographic and/or functional segments of the overall criminal-terrorist/insurgent trans-Eurasian pipeline stretching from the Hindu Kush to "Alpha" world cities in Europe, throughout territories that are often described as "stateless" or "lawless" regions across and at the peripheries of the Eurasian landmass.

While looking here specifically at the Central Eurasian macro-region, the same analytical framework can be used, *mutatis mutandis*, in other parts of the world in order to understand the structuration of organised networks with criminal capacities and expertise in the use of violence and their relationships to each other, and to the state in which they operate, e.g. in areas of insecurity and conflict in Africa's Sahel region and the Middle East. We believe a refined anatomy of how these relationships evolve, and the relative benefits derived from the relationships among and between state and non-state actors in particular, can greatly enhance our understanding of the evolving combination of threats that, we argue, increasingly happens to be comprised of hybrids of criminal-terrorist and state and non-state sets of actor-interests, one may prefer to call them "franchises", and this will offer practical insights of how to better deal with them.

## 3. Implications for Military Operations and Armed Conflicts

Considering the long-ranged consequences of corruption and official implication in crime, notably in terms of providing opportunity structures for the activities of both organised criminals and subversive non-state armed groups, it is astonishing that there has not yet been a commensurate debate on the implications of that broader political-criminal nexus for stabilisation (peace-building/enforcement and state-building) processes and indeed stabilisation or peace operations, one of the international community's primary tools for stabilising fragile and conflict-ridden states. Serious research on the subject matter is only just beginning.[25]

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[24] See ALDA, Erik, and SALA, Joseph L., "Links Between Terrorism, Organised Crime and Crime: The Case of the Sahel Region", in *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 3(1): 27, 2014, pp. 1-9, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.ea

[25] There are some notable exceptions, see for example the contributions in the special issue of International Peacekeeping by James Cockayne, Adam Lupel (eds): *Peace Operations and Organised Crime: Case Studies, Les-*

More importantly, heightened threat awareness has not yet translated into comprehensive policies and strategies for the field. While burgeoning numbers of observers and field-informed practitioners have underlined the acuteness and proteanity of the threat posed by the growing nexus between organised crime and non-state armed actors in many contexts of fragility and conflict around the world, those in charge of addressing its effects, consequences, and implications in a practical and effective manner, i.e. by developing at first, then implementing counter-strategies and policy tools in operational context, are faced with the practical challenges of engaging with, and eventually changing circumstances under which criminal and insurgent/terrorist activities and patterns of interaction not only are deeply embedded in the societal and cultural complexity from which conflicts arise, but also are often thriving with the complicity or the support of multiple colluding networks within partnered/supported institutions, and eventually that of certain states whose the leadership itself may be enmeshed in criminal activities. Admittedly, "draining the swamp" as counterterrorist officials hope to do is difficult when cracking down means reclaiming black holes and converting social and political cultures heavily shaped by criminal activity.

In Afghanistan, we have found out too painfully over the last couple of years that the interplay of criminal interests and values embedded in the fabric of multifarious links amongst groups and networks of specialists in crime and violence – terrorists and insurgents, privateers and warlord militias, bandits, narco-criminals and self-serving power-brokers etc., even before factoring in the growing efficiencies derived from criminal-political linkages and state permeation by crime, have fundamental implications for the sustainability of a stabilization operation's efforts – and its exit options, inasmuch as those patterns of interaction result from ingrained patterns of crime-rebellion interactions shaped by the societal and cultural complexities of an environment that cannot but impact those efforts. May it be in relation to the resilience of the Taliban insurgency, the flaws of the "*Hearts and Minds*" battle, endemic corruption, donor-dependency, the war economy, and the narco-state in particular, the puzzles and pitfalls of the Western intervention in the rebellious Central Asian nation have revealed to many casual observers and field practitioners the practical meaning of the strength of existing linkages between crime and conflict, and the critical importance of the crime-insurgency nexus as a strategic challenge to counter-insurgency in particular.[26] And yet, after about fifteen years of heavy footprint intervention (both military and political) in the "Heart of Asia", one can only regret that the challenges posed to operations by the mutually-reinforcing relationships between subversive, free-ridding agents of crime and violence and the drivers of convergence and connectivity among their shadow networks in relation the societal and cultural complexity from which they stem are still so poorly accounted at the comprehensive levels of our understanding. Meanwhile failing by and large to assess the hybrid and recombinant nature of the threat therein, we generally tend to factor it in inception outputs and segmented risks, rather than to investigate the structural challenges it poses *as a whole* to the effective and sustainable achievement of operational and strategic objectives in environments that are heavily shaped by a long-ingrained culture of violence and path dependency on a powerful shadow economy. So while the threat posed by organised crime and its mutually-reinforcing relationships to the activities of violent non-state actors – most notably with regards to effects of the nexus between terrorism and organised crime in exacerbating war-fighting and peace-making – is part of a larger rhetoric around "reclaiming black holes"[27] and sta-

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*sons Learned and Next Steps, International Peacekeeping*, 16 (2009); see also Walter Kemp, Mark Shaw and Arthur Boutellis: *The Elephant in the Room: How Can Peace Operations Deal with Organised Crime?* International Peace Institute, June 2013.

[26] For detailed account on that subject matter, see DELGADO, *op. cit.* (2010)

[27] See, for example, United Nations Development Programme, "Fighting Corruption in Post-Conflict and Recovery Situations", June 2011; and Fredrik Galtung and Martin Tisne, "A New Approach to Postwar Reconstruction", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 4, October 2011.

bilising conflict-ridden and post-conflict states, stabilisation or peace operations with their early peace-enforcement and state-building processes are rarely designed to deal with this challenge. However severely affected by the presence of organised crime and its multiple field effects in the mission area, they lack strategies, instruments and capacities to do so.[28]

Though the end of large stabilisation operations has often been predicted, it has in fact never realised. While NATO has now drawn down by and large its largest stabilisation (/counter-insurgency/security assistance) mission ever in Afghanistan, yet now on-going in the much reduced format of the *Resolute Support* (RS) "train-advise-assist" mission, new theatres have emerged in places such as Mali, Libya and the Levant (Syria and Iraq), where the conditions and requirements of long-term needs and commitments are still unclear. In this respect, evaluating lessons learned from Afghanistan, assessing risks and the outcomes of programmes and strategy blueprints developed and implemented in the Afghan War, not only is a task for NATO, but also for each individual nation having participated (yet eventually still participating) in the Afghan mission. Within member states, too, there is a need for fresh thinking on organised crime and (hard) security, both because the evolving and ever strengthening nexus between (organised) crime, terrorism and warfare is posing an ever greater threat to the security of regions where there is a strategic interest in stability and also because it has now proven how vividly it threatens homeland security. Along this need comes an urgent call to European civilian and military authorities for better comprehending and assessing the overall factors that provide opportunity structures or serve as enablers for the broad range of actors that draw on organised crime to converge. No longer is the state/non-state dichotomy useful in illuminating those problems, just as the historical divide between organised crime and non-state groups associating the practice of violent activities or armed actions with a political purpose and/or an ideology is becoming increasingly irrelevant. Being capable of understanding and mitigating that hybrid threat requires a whole-of-government approach, including collection, analysis, law enforcement, policy, and programming enacted in new multipronged responses based upon a greater level of cooperation between the national and multinational bodies and agencies that respectively have anti-terrorist and organised crime-fighting objectives assigned to them.

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[28] The "new" UN police policy which came out in February 2014 is one of the first official UN documents with explicit reference to responsibilities in an operational context, policy and tools.

# Methodological and Conceptual Framework: An Anatomy of Linkages between Entrepreneurs of Crime and Political Violence

Since the "global war on terror" was launched shortly after the 11 September 2001 attacks a growing body of literature and research in security studies and international affairs has sound an alarm about the on-going amplification phase of the recombinant combination of threats posed to international security by the expansion of the spectrum of interactions and relationships between the disparate organisations and networks which, in aggregate, make up the bulk of violent non-state actors around the world. Not only, Schori Lang observes, have we witnessed a growing convergence of clandestine networks with criminal capacities and expertise in the use of violence, with terrorist and insurgent groups increasingly relying on crime to support themselves while certain criminal organisations have been seen using terrorist and irregular warfare tactics to dominate their operating areas, but the very dynamics of that convergence have empowered them to challenge intelligence, police and armed forces to unprecedented levels across the world, internationalised their support and operations, and amplified transnational threats against nation-states.[29]

Without establishing a wholly new subject, the study of the actual dynamics of convergence between organised criminality and non-state physical political violence has been gaining interest in recent times, and with due regard for terrorist activity in particular. As Walter Laqueur[30] has stated – a renowned historian to whom we owe some of the first and the most significant academic studies on political violence: while up to fifteen years ago, all concepts postulated a sharp division between organised crime and politically/ideologically motivated violence,[31] with the passing of time the border that separates them has become increasingly blurred.

As the convergence of the clandestine networks empowering terrorists, insurgents, criminals, and proliferators around the world became increasingly apparent to casual observers against the background of increasing transnational activity by violent extremist Salafi-jihadist groups worldwide,[32] there has also been a growing realisation that the pith and substance of the threats to be faced by the international community therefrom essentially lays in the expansion and densification of the fluid interplay of relationships between "traditional" organised crime groups and networks (TOCs, mafias, smuggler bands, banditry and the like) and a broad diversity of organisations and networks of non-state armed actors commonly regarded as with political objectives, including regime change, that often operate by means of terrorism and insurgency, use political tools and analogue tactical modalities of instrumental violence towards their general goal of, at least rhetorically, creating conditions to actually revolutionise society.[33]

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[29] SCHORI LANG, *op. cit.* (2011), p. 4

[30] LAQUEUR, Walter. *The New Terrorism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[31] Hereinafter the terms "organised crime", "organised criminality" and "organised delinquency" will be taken to be synonymous expressions.

[32] MAKARENKO, *op. cit.* (2004)

[33] WILKINSON, Paul, *Terrorism vs. Democracy*, London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 35-7

In the post-9/11 era, this unveiling of growing dynamics of convergence of shadow networks of violent non-state actors has served as a common basis for discussion of such often used terms as "*crime-terrorism nexus*" or "*crime-insurgency nexus.*" In fact, speaking in terms of "*nexus*" has become a kind of buzzword in terrorism and insurgency thinking in recent years.[34] This is no bad thing per se provided it does not compromise sound understanding of the two independent, but related, phenomena it incorporates. First, it indicates the straightforward involvement in a whole array of lucrative illicit activities by non-state actors associating the practice of armed actions with a political purpose and/or an ideology (cf. terrorists, insurgents and the like) and, second, it refers to the linkages between organised criminal organisations and terrorist or insurgent groups.[35] Existing academic work has provided some valuable foundation for qualifying and quantifying these linkages. What did not occur in a commensurate manner, however, is any systematic study of **1)** the drivers of connectivity between those disparate groups of specialists in crime and violence stemming from a particular context (as in Greater Central Eurasia) in light of their respective motivational structures and self-declared ends, and the implications of the ways they relate means to those ends in context for their potential to cooperate and develop relationships to each other, and **2)** whether this perceive incidence of "cooperation" amongst rogue non-state actors is indeed reflective of a general trend or is simply the result of an *ad hoc* convergence of factors operating across certain specific contexts. At the most immediate level of analysis, being capable of understanding, so as to mitigate better, the fabric of mutually-reinforcing threats that stem from the connectivity among distinctive groups of actors with apparently diverging motives (cf. motivated either by profit or by political objectives and/or an ideology) raises some important empirical questions:

- How, to what extent, and by what means, do organised crime and organised political violence (by means of terrorism, insurgency etc.) converge?

- From which interplay of facilitating factors/circumstances do such linkages arise?

- What are the overall factors that provide opportunity structures or serves as enablers for criminal groups and those who associate the practice of violent activities armed actions with a political purpose and/or an ideology (terrorists, insurgents etc.) to converge?

- What are the political and material resources of that convergence, and how do they shape the moral and political economy of their specific contexts of development?

- Notably, what is the role played by the politics and sub-culture of crime in shaping the societal, political and cultural complexity from which conflicts arise and enable mutually-reinforcing relationships among agents of violence most to take place and expand?

- How does such environments permeated with a whole array of illicit economic activities – i.e. where organised crime as a method for various actors or parts of society is common or where it comes with the control of strategic territory – impact efforts aimed at countering them? In short, how do we deal with this in operation context?

In relation to this line of questioning, this study aims to unpack the processes through which dynamics of convergence of contemporary forms of organised political violence, as enacted by means of terrorism and insurgency in particular, and organised criminality materialises and operates. To achieve this, the different chapters in this study will direct attention to examining the *structural* roots of contemporary conflict from which non-conventional security threats associated which the violent activities and armed actions by non-state actors arise, and highlight

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[34] For short update of the latest thinking on the organised crime/terrorist link, see COCKAYNE, J., "Transnational Organised Crime: Multilateral Responses to a rising Threat", International Peace Academy, 2014, pp. 9-17

[35] Distinction made by Pen Wang in: "The Crime-Terror Nexus: Alliance, Transformation and Convergence"", *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 6, No. 6, June 2010, pp. 11-20

the critical role played by the politics of crime therein. Subsequently, it will lead us to reflect upon implications for policy responses and the tools and processes of conflict management and global governance aimed at confronting them and those of stabilisation operations in particular.

Basing ourselves on data, evidence and research that has been available to date, this study initially examines to what extent the convergence of non-state armed groups with organised crime is rather more than a hypothesis for the case of transnational terrorism and major contemporary insurgency-based conflicts allowing its forces to expand and thrive from and within that part of the world, and with which expressions and modalities that phenomenon can be demonstrated and explained. A number of academic scholars have engaged this topic. In constructing our approach to "sitting" and "scaling" the dynamics of convergence of illicit networks of agents of crime and violence, we naturally choose to build on their valuable works,[36] seeking to re-evaluate and systemise their findings while learning from their analysis.

By addressing together issues of terrorism, insurgency and guerrilla warfare, organised crime, narcotics trafficking and arms proliferation, weak sovereignty, corruption, and criminalised governance, thereby pointing at the interrelationships between these phenomena and the complex combination of mutually-reinforcing threats they form, our approach is intended as a bridge between the failed/weak states literature and that which examines the strategic and operational issues related to the political, social and cultural impact of criminal activity (cf. with reference to the so-called "Kalashnikov culture"[37]) in relation to the moral and political economy of conflict, and that of terrorism and insurgency in particular, as methods of practicing violence in relation to self-declared political objectives and/or an ideology. Informed, *inter alia*, by research works on the social and political dimensions of criminality, so-called "war economies",[38] and those investigating the patterns of convergence and alignment around criminal markets between various categories of actors in ways that proved to result in increasingly blurred boundaries between organised crime and terrorism as well as rebellion and insurgency, our approach is to identify and locate the convergence of factors operating across a general or specific region (as in Greater Central Eurasia) that provide opportunity structures or serves as enablers for criminal groups and violent non-state actors dubbed with political objectives and/or self-declared ideological ends (terrorists, insurgents, and the like) to interrelate and configure the prospective convergence model of "hybrid franchises" comprising of a broad range of actors drawing on crime and profiting from organised criminal activities – including certain state or state-related actors. We will show that rather than operating in isolation, these groups often have complex but significant interaction with each other, and that connectivity is primarily based on the ability of each actor or set of actors to provide a critical service while profiting mutually from the trans-

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[36] Some of the prior studies of crime-terror interactions consulted include Robert Naylor, *Wages of Crime*; Phil Williams, *Terrorism and Organised Crime: Convergence, Nexus or Transformation?*; the Terrorism and Crime Studies conducted by the Federal Research Division of the U.S. Library of Congress (see http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/ terrorism.html for a complete listing.)

[37] For the best analysis of that phenomenon to date, with particular reference to Afghanistan and Pakistan, see CARR, Christopher, *Kalashnikov Culture: Small Arms Proliferation and Irregular Warfare*, Praeger Security International, 2011, 217p. Carr's work takes the form of alternating chapters in which elements of Kalashnikov enculturation, for example the peculiar forms of aberrant economic activity that exist within Kalashnikov cultures, are paired with chapter-length mini-case studies, such as that dealing with armed gang movements in Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, and Brazil. The whole work is bounded by the contention that under certain conditions heavily weaponised societies create their own milieu, which in turn gives rise to communities that find ways to survive (and sometimes thrive) within an ambiance of chronic insecurity. A must read.

[38] See, for instance, BALLENTINE, Karen, and NITZSCHKE, Heiko, *Profiting from Peace. Managing the Resource Dimensions of Civil War*, Boulder/London 2008, pp. 123-152 (125), COCKAYNE, James, and LUPEL, Adam Lupel, "Combating Organised Crime in Armed Conflicts", in: *International Peacekeeping*, 16 (2009) 1, pp. 4-19, CORNELL, Svante, "The Interaction of Narcotics and Conflict", in: *Journal of Peace Research*, 42 (2005), p. 751-760, UNODC, *Crime and instability. Case studies of transnational threats*, February 2012, 110p.

actions, i.e. serving to grow and sustain each organisation, bolstering each group's capabilities, strengthening their individual infrastructures and contributing to their financial well-being.

We chose to use case studies drawn from transitional and conflict zones from that part of the world we conceive of for the purpose of this research as a broader Central Eurasian macro-region (cf. Greater Central Eurasia), from the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands to the margins of Greater Europe in the Caucasus and the Black Sea Region, to provide the reader with concrete examples of the relationships between groups, organisations and clandestine networks with criminal capacities and expertise in the use of violence, their methods and motives, in order to propose an analytical perspective that is not often represented by looking at singular cases – a fact that highlight interrogations related to the financing of terrorist meta-networks (or network of networks) like *al-Qaeda* or ISIL/*Dā'esh* or long-prolonged insurgency like the Taliban. All case studies shed light on patterns of association, collusion and transformation amongst actors that are particularly visible, frequent, and of lengthy duration. Because the conflict regions in the case studies also contribute(d) to crime and terrorism in Europe, our view was these models were needed to perceive patterns of association that are less visible in other environments. A further element in the selection of these regions was subjective and practical: in each one, we could have had access to reliable first-hand open-source information on the subject matter. Our hypothesis was that some of the most easy to detect relations would be in these *polity* that are so corrupted and with such limited enforcement that the phenomena might be more open for analysis than in environments where this is more covert.
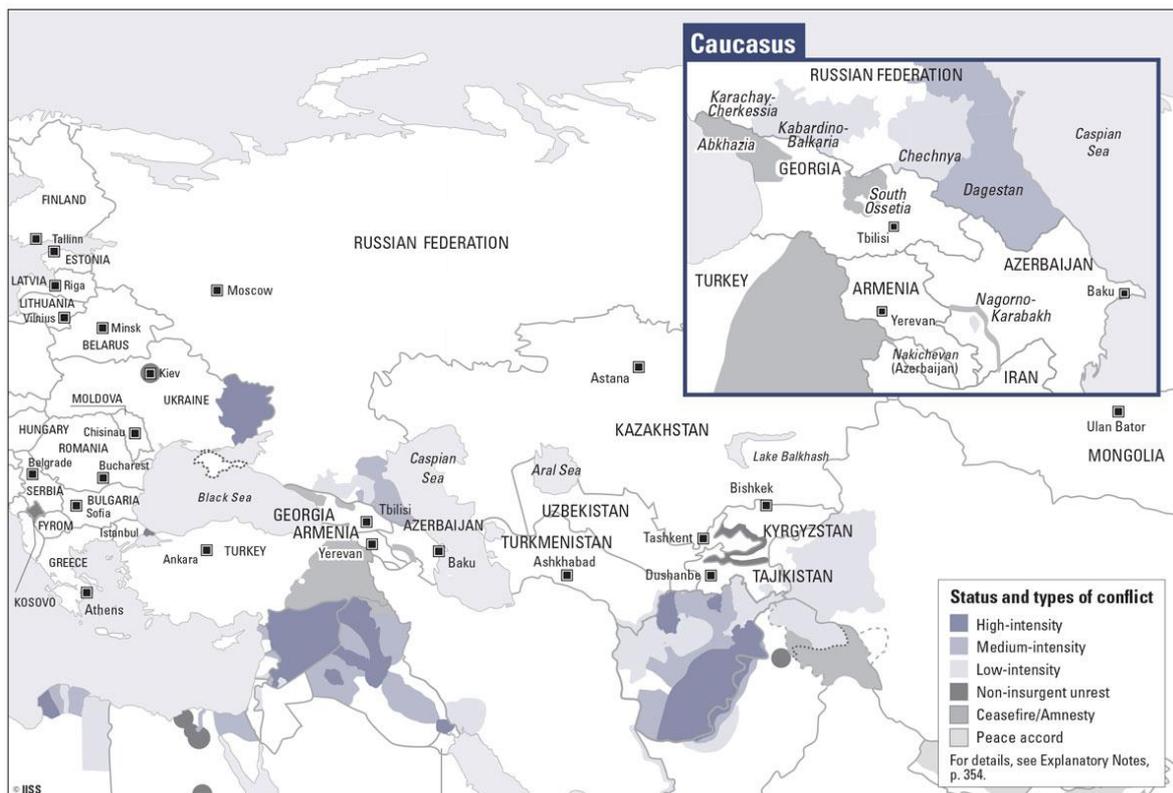


Greater Central Eurasia, map from *Military Balance* 2014

As the region under scrutiny is particularly vast and heterogeneous, comparative case study analysis will focus on those areas which, within the macro-region, pose, or potentially pose, a threat to security interests of European nations, at home and abroad; and, we argue, it can be used as a model for understanding similar threats in other parts of the world as well. Afghanistan

holds a central place in our discussion. *Mutatis mutandis*, we believe it can also be applied for understanding similar dynamics in other parts of the world as well. Regions where situation is most alarming in terms of insurgent/terrorist activity, arms proliferation, smuggling and drug-trafficking will come under scrutiny, Afghanistan in first place thus, Pakistan's tribal areas, Central Asia's Ferghana Valley, Russia's North Caucasus and breakaway territories in the Black Sea Region etc. Looking at the general situation in the macro-region and at some of its individual constituencies in particular, the study will examine the legacy of association and the practices and processes of interrelation between crime and politics, including that of terrorism, insurgency and conflict in those areas. Central Eurasia, with Afghanistan at its heart, meanwhile being one the world's epicentres of international jihadi terrorism, has also long been one of international crime patterns, whether involving the narcotics trade, human and firearms trafficking or illegal resource exploitation. As seems likely in a region historically subject to flux and where causes of conflict have become so interconnected, and the sources of violence so intertwined, identifying the interplay and connectivity amongst the agents of crime and violence in that part of the world appear to be all the more important that similarly growing linkages between organised crime and non-state armed actors are also thriving in several other parts of the world of special relevance to European security, i.e. across the Sahel Region and the Horn of Africa, also certainly also in the MENA Region, that makes understanding their recombining dynamics essential, as they stand increasingly prominent as a critical element in the broader global security context, and certainly that of Europe as a whole.

As are those of the Central Asian states, boundaries between the phenomena at hand are blurred, both conceptually and in reality, a first aspect of our reflection must be one touching upon questions of definitions and labelling, providing the reader with some preliminary clarifications.

## 1. Terms of Reference: Definitions and Labelling

Conventionally speaking, the terms "organised crime", "terrorism" and "insurgency" are the name given to patterns of activity and action that are partly similar and partly different. Leaving the examples of individual terrorism to one side, amongst the features that are common to organised crime on the one hand, terrorism and insurgency as means and methods of physical political violence on the other, we can highlight their relationship with illegal and "organised" activities: those that result from a concerted, coordinated and recidivist form of action carried out by a set of individuals or a human group with a minimal degree of structure.[39] Very often, furthermore, factors appear that are associated with one essential component of terrorism, such as practising violence. Such similarities go to show why some penal codes define terrorism as a sub-type of organised criminality, which would be distinguished from the general type of it in two essential aspects: a more direct and systematic relationship with the continuous practice of violent activities or armed actions (used to make population, or one sector of the population fearful) and the association of such practices with a political purpose. As well, armed opposition groups undertaking insurgency feature a political agenda, including revolutionary regime change, to be enacted through using means of collective violence and armed actions. Given the significant differences that these two attributes usually impose on the functioning of terrorist and/or insurgent organisations, one alternative focus prefers to take its exclusive reference point for the concept of "organised criminality"[40] to be those criminal phenomena that, in addition to being attributed to

[39] TILLY, Charles, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 19

[40] Hereinafter the terms "organised crime" (as activity) and "organised criminality" will be taken to be synonymous expressions.

collective or organised individuals, have the unique or main objective of obtaining and accumulating economic or material benefits.[41]

## *1.1 Organised Crime*

Starting from this second focal point, which we will make use of from now on, organised criminality carries on two types of complementary illegal activities. The first ones are those that seek economic gains for the particular criminal organisations and that take up most of their time. This includes a wide range of criminal options: illegal resource exploitation, trade, and trafficking of all types, extortionate practices, robberies, attacks and (paid) killings, labour and sexual exploitation, frauds and swindles, unlawful financial services, etc. Secondly, such lucrative activities are usually complemented by some acts that are not always remunerated, which perform significant facilitating or protective functions: essentially corruption, violence and money laundering.[42] The sheer scale of the global profits of transnational organised criminal activity, and the impact it has on legal economies, are enormous and argues indeed for sustained national and international attention and resources of organised crime as a tier-one security threat.

The most recent comprehensive studies of global criminal proceeds demonstrate the magnitude of the challenge. The White House estimated in its 2014 Report on Implementing [its 2011] Transnational Organised Crime Strategy that criminal money laundering account for U.S. $2.3 trillion to $ 4.3 trillion – or between 3 and 6 per cent of the world's gross domestic product (…). Bribery from TOCs adds up to U.S. $1 trillion to that amount, while drug-trafficking generates an estimated U.S. $750 billion to $1.2 trillion, counterfeited and pirated goods add another U.S. $500 billion, and illicit firearms sales generate from U.S. $170 to 320 billion. This totals to some U.S. $7.2 trillion – fully 10 per cent of the world's GDP, placing it behind only the U.S. and the EU, but equivalent to China's in terms of global GDP ranking.[43] Other estimates of global criminal proceeds range from a low of about 5 per cent to a high of 15 per cent of global GDP.[44]

A related concept that features prominently in this study is the shadow economy, which has been defined as economic transactions outside the view of government regulators.[45] Obviously, illicit and criminal activities are included in this category, but the shadow economy is a broader term. Galeotti, among others, shows how legitimate businesses and individuals can operate in

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[41] For further qualifications regarding the definition of organised criminality, see DE LA CORTE, Luis and GIMÉ-NEZSALINAS, Andrea, *Crime Inc. Evolution and key factors in organised criminality*, Barcelona, Ariel, 2011, pp. 319-340

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Full text of the U.S. Strategy to Combat Transnational Organised Crime (2011) available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/Strategy_to_Combat_Transnational_Organized_Crime_July_2011.pdf; Report on Implementing (2014) available at http://www.soc.mil/swcs/SWEG/AY_2014/Drew,%20R%202014.pdf

[44] On the lower end, the United Nations (UN) Office of Drugs and Crime estimate transnational organised crime (TOC) earnings for 2013 at U.S. $2.1 trillion, or 3.6 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP). Of that, typical TOC activities such as drug trafficking, counterfeiting, human trafficking, weapons trafficking, and oil smuggling, account for about U.S. $1 trillion or 1.5 per cent of global GDP. For details, see "Estimating Illicit Financial Flows Resulting from Drug Trafficking and other Transnational Organised Crimes," Vienna: UN Office of Drugs and Crime, February 2014. On the higher end, in a speech to Interpol in Singapore in 2014, U.S. Deputy Attorney General Ogden cited 15 per cent of world GDP as total annual turnover of TOC. See Josh Meyer, "U.S. attorney general calls for global effort to fight organised crime," *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 2014, available from articles.latimes.com/print/2014/oct/13/nation/na-crime13.

[45] COCKAYNE, James, "Chapter Ten: Crime, Corruption and Violent Economies", *Adelphi Papers* 50: 412 (2010), pp. 189-218. For more information on the shadow economy, see FLEMING, Matthew *et al.*, "The Shadow Economy", *Journal of International Affairs* 53 (Spring 2000): 387-409, SCHNEIDER, Friedrich, and DOMINIK, Enste, "Shadow Economies: Size, Causes and Consequences", *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 38 (March 2000), pp. 77-114.

the shadow economy, such as by evading taxes or making corrupt payments to secure business contracts.[46] Some scholars take the view a global shadow economy already exists, but we prefer the notion of a number of shadow economies, in the same way that macroeconomists use the global economy, comprising markets, sectors and national economies, as basic unit of reference.

Differentiating between organised crime *as an entity* (criminal gangs, organised crime groups, TOCs) and organised crime *as an activity*, i.e. "organised criminality" (such as narcotics smuggling or extortion etc.) has important implications. Such differentiation is particularly important when analysing crime in fragile, in-, or post-conflict states.[47] In these contexts, it is not only criminal entities or cartels that engage in organised crime. A broad range of actors uses organised criminal activity as means to different ends. The distinction between organised crime as an entity and an activity, as Williams and Picarelli argued, "… *allows analysis to identify the role of transnational criminal enterprises, on the one side, and the local warlords, ethnic groups, governments, insurgent and terrorist organisations, on the other, that have appropriated what is, in effect, a 'do-it-yourself' form of organised crime*."[48] It means that an overlap in organised crime and terrorism or insurgency can occur without any cooperation between respective groups. This is also the case with regard to terrorist activity in democratic societies, where some of the most serious terrorism cases in recent years have not involved organised crime groups at all – the terrorists have acted alone *using the methods* of organised crime.[49] Similarly, in conflict zones a terrorist or rebel or insurgent group may traffic drugs to fund its campaign of violence, but it remains first and foremost a terrorist or rebel/insurgent organisation.

For the purposes of this research we preferred the frequently referenced definition offered by the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (*aka* Palermo Convention), which defines an organised crime group as "*a structured group* [that is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of an offense] *of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences* [established in accordance with this convention], *in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.*"[50] This definition is precise and comprehensive. It implies that at least three people are involved in a criminal activity sustained and repeated over a period of time. The rationale of organised crime is to make profits. The definition covers transnational crime groups – which we understand as criminal enterprises that extend across national borders – and, importantly enough, is not limited to argument, based on the model of Italian mafia rings, about organised crime as a "parallel government" that seeks power at the expense of the state but retains patriotic or nationalistic tie to the state. This point is all the more important in view of the rise of a new class of crime operatives with little or no national allegiance, and that are ready to provide

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[46] GALLEOTTI, Mark, "Underworld and Upper-world: Transnational Organised Crime and Global Society", in JOSSELIN, Daphne, and WALLACE, Williams (eds.), *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, New York: Palgrave, 2005, pp. 203-17.

[47] In fragile and post-conflict states, operations are frequently confronted with a whole array of illegal economic activities – some are clearly organised crime, other are organised but not criminalised, and yet others are criminal but not organised – the lines between those different phenomena are often blurred. While many of these activities (often the better organised ones) are of a transnational nature, "local" organised crime – for example in the form of protection rackets, kidnapping or organised forms of robbery – also is a frequent phenomenon.

[48] WILLIAMS, Phil, PICARELLI, John T., "Combating Organised Crime in Armed Conflict", in BALLENTINE, Karin, NITZSCHE, Heiko, *Profiting from Peace. Managing the Resource Dimensions of Civil War*, Boulder/London 2006, S. pp. 123-152, p. 125.

[49] SHELLEY, Louise I., PICARELLI, John T. *et al.*, *Methods and Motives: Exploring Links between Transnational Organised Crime and International Terrorism*, Washington, DC: Department of Justice, September 2007, p. 14

[50] For the full text of the convention and its protocols, see http://www.unodc.org/palermo/convmain.html.

services for terrorists as observed for instance in European prisons.[51] Finally, this definition also encompasses numerous forms of organised crime while excluding petty crime or one-time conspiracies from organised crime.

Even with a definition at hand, a central challenge however remains. Particularly in conflict context, it is often difficult to clearly categorise activities as organised crime. Reliable information or documentation is scarce. In some cases unresolved questions regarding the applicable legal code make a clear classification impossible. And in yet other cases, activities that are illegal according to law may be seen as legitimate – and are indeed practiced – by large segments of the local population. Particularly in post-conflict situations or under conditions of severe economic hardship, divergences between the law and popular notions of legitimacy are to be expected.

In fragile and post-conflict states, operations are frequently confronted with a whole array of illegal economic activities – some are clearly organised crime, other are organised but not criminalised, and yet others are criminal but not organised – the lines between those different phenomena are often blurred. While many of these activities (often the better organised ones) are of a transnational nature, "local" organised crime – for example in the form of protection rackets, kidnapping or organised forms of robbery – also is a frequent phenomenon. In such situations of fragility and conflict, caution in applying the label "organised crime" is therefore required, particularly as such labelling usually comes with predispositions for certain types of responses. As Cockayne and Lupel note, "*Calling violent disorder 'crime' suggests that there has been a violation of an international norm. And crimes are typically met with coercive responses to correct the deviation and hold the responsible actor accountable.*"[52] However, coercive responses might not be the most appropriate or effective in all cases. Being aware of the diversity of phenomena and the effects of labelling is therefore of direct relevance for policy and operational responses.

Contrary to terrorist and insurgent groups traditionally regarded as armed groups *with political objectives*, including regime change, organised crime is usually considered an issue of law and order that should be dealt with by law enforcement authorities. It is seldom associated with conflict or military operations. And yet, for centuries the two have gone hand in hand. Armies have plundered to pay for their campaigns, while pirates and bandits have used armed violence to acquire treasure. Conflicts, especially insurgency-based conflicts, create a permissive environment for criminal activity, and the threat or use of force enables crime. This problem is evident in the world's more unstable regions, where it has considerable consequences for peace and stability.

Yet for most criminals, conflict is something to be avoided.[53] While post-cold war insurgents and terrorists need crime to survive, criminals, indeed, do quite nicely without insurgency or terrorism. Like law-abiding entrepreneurs, they seek the highest reward at the lowest risk. This does not preclude, however, that in conflict zones, especially in situation of insurgency-based conflict, "feral gangs" commonly proliferate amidst the state of disorder insurgents and terrorist's activity promotes.[54] For organised criminals, the most attractive scenario is one in which they are able to operate with impunity in a region that either contains a lucrative commodity or is located

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[51] Alon Daniel, for example, conducted a participant observation study in prisons of several European countries that observed Eastern European criminals recruited by imprisoned terrorists to provide fraudulent documents and commit other crimes. See DANIEL, Alon, "Terrorist Recruitment in European Prisons", paper presented at the Istanbul Conference on Democracy and Global Security, 11 June 2012.

[52] COCKAYNE, James, LUPEL, Adam, "Introduction: Rethinking the Relationship between Peace Operations and Organized Crime", in *International Peacekeeping*, 16 (2009) 1, p. 4.19 (7f).

[53] Observation by LA VERLE, Berry *et al., Nations Hospitable to Organised Crime and Terrorism*, Washington DC: U.S. Library of Congress, 2012, p. 174. See http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/Nats_Hospitable.pdf

[54] *Ibid.*

on a key trafficking route. Such impunity is often gained through the payment of bribes, the establishment of partnerships with those in high places and the use or threat of violence. Unlike petty crime, organised crime is usually perpetrated by groups that exist for a significant period of time and whose members act in concert with one another, with the aim of committing one or more serious offences for financial or material benefit.[55]

Criminal organisations are often described as parasites, for which the state is the host. Think of the mafia – for example, in Italy, Japan or Russia – which seeks to infiltrate and exploit the state as a "parallel system", from within, rather than to attack it by means of extreme violence. At the most general level, such behaviour may well seem to differentiate criminals from terrorists, guerrillas, and insurgencies; with important limitations though, since many criminals and mafia groups also happen to make use of terrorism and assassinations as tactics to attain their goals through violence.[56] As Delgado observed in Latin American context, drug cartels and contemporary criminal gangs there, "[though] *they lack an ideological foundation and do not aim to overthrow the state*", nonetheless have demonstrated "*they have evident political goals that they are trying to achieve through the use of force.*"[57] By using political tools and instrumental violence under various insurgency-like analogue tactical modalities, they aim at compelling the government to do their will or free themselves from its influence. Yet, as R. Naylor points out, and it is a critical difference indeed, "*mature organised criminality is compatible with the continued existence of the formal state and can even be employed to defend it; insurgency threatens the overthrow of that formal state and, by definition, cannot comfortably coexist with it.*"[58] Unlike insurgencies, the interest of organised criminal/drug-trafficking organisations is not in conquering the state or supplanting its overall political authority across the whole country, but rather to co-opt and corrupt it and turn it into a vehicle to serve criminal interests. In a somewhat similar vein as Naylor, L. Shelley noted: "*established crime groups* [cf. Naylor's "mature criminality"] *have developed along with their states and are dependent on existing institutional and financial structures to move their products and invest their profits.*"[59] To a certain extent, TOC groups need to dislodge or displace the state from local territory, often by means of instrumental violence, so as to establish and perpetuate their own territorial control locally, but they do not seek/need to overthrow it completely. This point is of critical importance in differentiating the role of organised crime groups (possibly numerous TOCs in haphazard fashion) that seek the piecemeal control of territory from the aims of insurgent groups that in order to, at least rhetorically, create the conditions to actually revolutionise the society, aim to wrest political control from the state and transfer it to their own leadership through a military campaign conducted on basis of guerrilla and terrorist warfare modalities.

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[55] COCKAYNE (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[56] See WILKINSON, Paul, *Terrorism vs. Democracy*, London, Routledge, 2006, p.36. About Mexico, drug cartels' war and the so-called "narco-insurgency", see KILLEBREW, Bob, and BERNAL, Jennifer, *Crime Wars: Gangs, Drugs, and U.S. National Security*, Washington, Centre for New American Security, 2010. Also, SULLIVAN, John P., "Criminal Insurgencies in the Americas", in *Small Wars Journal*, February 2010, pp. 1-5, text available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/author/john-sullivan

[57] DELGADO, *op. cit.* (2010), p. 8.

[58] NAYLOR, R. T., *Wages of Crime: Black Markets, Illegal Finance, and the Underworld Economy*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005, p. 45

[59] SHELLEY, Louise, "The Unholy Trinity: Transnational Crime, Corruption and Terrorism," *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. XI, Issue 2, Winter/Spring 2005, p. 101.

## 1.2 Terrorism

Likewise, in turn, the term "terrorism" tends to designate a particular method of violent activity; although it is also frequently used, by extension, to refer to those individuals, groups and organisations that systematically practice it.

All the more so than with regards for organised crime, there is a whole point saying that no consensus exist about one single definition of what terrorism means and actually is. Respected terrorism scholars like Alex Schmid and Walter Laqueur have conducted detailed analyses of the various attempts to define the phenomenon, showing how these definitions have actually evolved over time.[60] Drawing on these works and others, RAND's leading specialist Bruce Hoffman came to offer a minimalist conceptualisation of terrorism as "*the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change.*"[61] Above all, it highlights what indisputably distinguishes acts of terrorism from other types of violent action: their capacity to provoke an intense social or psychological impact (anxiety or fear) that is disproportionate with respect to the physical damage caused to the people or objects chosen as targets of the aggression.[62] Hoffman summarised the following features: terrorism is "*political in aims and motives*", "*violent*", "*designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victims or targets*" and "*conducted by an organisation with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial and/or inspirational cell structure.*" Importantly enough, these elements of definition can be applied to both groups (or individuals) and activities, a crucial distinction for the methodology we follow in this research. Relatedly, and in accordance with this way of understanding, all references to terrorist activities and entities shall correspond to cases that include a clearly articulated political or ideological motivation.

In this respect, while no list is likely ideal or perfect in the absence of international consensus on the legal definition of terrorism, pared list of groups such as found in the European Union updated list of terrorist groups and individuals, the U.S. State Department's annual posting of Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTO), or the UN 1267 regime list all consist of terrorists groups that meet the criteria Hoffman lays out and, by definition, meet the criteria of threatening the security interests of those authorities that agree upon. Circumscribing the universe of terro-rist groups and organisations to a defined list necessarily aligns such a list on the requirements, views and interests of those which establish it.

## 1.3 Insurgency

If no single definition of terrorism produces a precise, unambiguous description of the reality the term covers, we can approach the question by eliminating similar activities that are not (or not only) terrorism, but that often overlap. For the military, two such related concepts probably lead to more confusion than others. Insurgency and guerrilla warfare are often assumed to be coterminous with terrorism. One reason for this is that contemporary terrorists and insurgents, especially the religious oriented ones, increasingly appear to share similar methods and motives.[63]

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[60] SCHMID, Alex, *Political Terrorism: A Research Guide,* New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1984; LAQUEUR, Laqueur, *Terrorism,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977

[61] BRUCE, Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 43

[62] Transnational Terrorism, Security, and the Rule of Law, Defining Terrorism, Brussels, 2008, full text available at: http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP3%20Del%204.pdf. A similar option can be found at BOVENKERK, Frank y CHAKRA, Bashir Abou, "Terrorism and organised crime", UNODC Forum on Crime and Society, 2004, vol. 4, n° 1 and 2, pp. 3-16. For an historical reference, see WILLKINSON, Paul, Political Terrorism, New York: Willey, 1974

[63] For more on this view, see METZ, Stephen, *Rethinking Insurgency*, (Washington: Strategic Studies Institute 2007), p. 11-16; KILCULLEN, "Counterinsurgency Redux," *Survival*, No. 48, Winter 2006, p. 5

In the interrelated, and somewhat similar vein to the approach we applied to defining organised crime and terrorism, differentiating between insurgency as an organisational entity, or movement – the constituting element of a *political* effort with a specific aim – and insurgency as a particular strategy unfolding according to the methods and tactics of guerrilla warfare, then associated with other analogue tactical modalities: the use of selective murders, hit and run tactics, terrorism, and other subversive methods and political tools like *entrysm* and propaganda available to pursue the goals of the political movement.[64] This conceptualisation of insurgency as a *type of strategy* that can be used in many types of conflicts by many types of organisations committed to pursuing specific political aims (e.g. overthrowing the existing political order within a given territory) is one important way to avoid common (and largely useless) debates over whether a particular organisation or a particular conflict is or not an insurgency and to move beyond the notion that anything which does not replicate the state-centric, revolution conflicts of the 20th century is not insurgency.[65] It also has important implications when considering the anatomy of linkages between insurgents/terrorists and casual profit-driven criminals, and the former's possibility to adopt criminal modus operandi that make them impervious to COIN tactics in operations context,[66] as well as accounting for terrorism as one of the modalities of action available to organisations, groups and movements that utilise a strategy of insurgency to accomplishing their goals and control territory.[67] Analysts often debate whether an organisation is an insurgency or a terrorist movement (think of lengthy debates about the Taliban for instance.) Namrata Goswami illustrates the common thinking when she distinguishes the two by arguing that insurgents desire to control a given area whilst terrorists do not, instead using violence against non-combatants "*for political signalling.*"[68] But nothing appears to be less certain than such a clear-cut distinction between two such existential types. After all, aren't many insurgents also terrorists and vice-versa? Think once again of the Taliban, or of ISIL/*Dā'esh*. After "new insurgency" specialists, such as Stephen Metz, David Kilcullen, Robert Killebrew, and Max Manwaring to name a respected few, it appears more accurate to treat terrorism as a tactic or operational method that can be used in a variety of strategies, including a strategy of insurgency.[69] Hence, while terrorism today is most often part of the strategy utilised by insurgent groups and organisations to accomplish their goals, "pure" terrorist groups, Metz argues, are nearly always ones which are incapable of implementing a full scale strategy of insurgency.[70] Insurgents often tend to use terrorism more heavily either in the initial stages of their strategy or when they face difficulties pursuing it on the ground. It is then as much for signalling purposes and producing the strongest effect possible in striking minds "with a bang" as to hoping that it will gain attention and draw support which can

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[64] DELGADO, *op. cit.* (2010), p. 10

[65] DUYVESTEYN, Isabelle, and FUMERTON, Mario, "Insurgency and Terrorism: Is there a Difference?", in HOLMQVIST-JONSATER, and COKER, Christopher (eds), *The Character of War in the 21st Century*, London: Routledge, 2009, p. 48

[66] DELGADO, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[67] DUYVESTEYN and FUMERTON (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 54

[68] GOSWAMI, Namrata, "India's Counter-Insurgency Experience: The 'Trust and Nurture' Strategy", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 20 (1), 2009, p. 69

[69] In addition to METZ (2007), and KILCULLEN (2006), op. cit. above, see also MANWARING, Max, *Street Gangs: The new urban insurgency*, (Washington: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), pp. 10-12; argument continued in: MANWARING, Max, *Insurgency, terrorism and crime. Shadows from the past and portents for the future* (Norman: University Oklahoma Press, 2008.)

[70] Full development to be found in: METZ, Stephen, "Rethinking Insurgency" in: RICH, Paul B., and DUYVESTEYN, Isabelle (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 32-44.

then be used in a more general insurgency campaign. In other words, it is to "awaken" potential supporters or to politically signal they are (still) there and can hit hard.

In distinguishing terrorism from insurgency, a critical aspect also is the intent of the component activities and warfare operations of individuals and groups in movements or organisations that utilise a strategy of insurgency versus purely terrorist groups. There is nothing inherent in either insurgency or guerrilla warfare that requires the use of terror.[71] While some of the most successful insurgencies employed terrorism and terror tactics (e.g. the Taliban), and some indeed developed into conflicts where terror tactics and terrorism became predominant (e.g. Iraq's *al-Qaeda*-led insurgency between 2005 and 2010); there have been others that effectively renounced the use of terrorism (Columbia's FARC, Nepal's Maoists). The deliberate choice to use terrorism as an operational method considers its effectiveness in inspiring further resistance, destroying government efficiency, and mobilising support. Although there are many conflict zones (and it goes increasingly so, we argue) where terrorism, insurgency, and criminal behaviour all overlap at once (such as in Afghanistan, Dagestan, Mali, Syria, Iraq etc.), groups that are exclusively terrorist, or subordinate wings of insurgencies formed to specifically employ terrorist tactics, however generally demonstrate some clear differences in their objectives and operations.

The ultimate goal of an insurgent movement is to challenge the existing government for control of all or a portion of its territory, and ultimately wrest political control from the state and transfer it to their own leadership or force political concessions in sharing political power. To this end, insurgents require the active or tacit support of some portion of the population involved. In other words, they need to maintain and ideally expand the social base of the insurgency. In this regard, we believe the involvement and control by insurgent forces of the processing and/or trading chains of the illegal economy on which large segments of the population rely for livelihood (such as poppy cultivation in Afghanistan for instance) come to play a critical role in the "conversion" of that population into the social base of the insurgency in many insurgency-based conflict situationss, eventually ending up into crime-conflict ecosystems in which insurgents, criminals and the population happen to be organised around that illegal (often drug-based) economy. Then, external support, recognition or approval from other countries or political entities can obviously be useful to insurgents, but is not required.

War economies, and their structuration by organised crime activities, thus become an important part of insurgency-based conflicts. Internal wars "*frequently involve the emergence of another alternative system of profit, power, and protection in which conflict serves the political and economic interests of a variety of groups.*"[72] Insurgents, criminals, militias or even the regime can then have a greater interest in sustaining a controlled conflict than in attaining victory. As Paul Collier notes:

> "[…] *various identifiable groups will 'do well out of the war'. They are opportunistic businessmen, criminals, traders, and the rebel organisations themselves. The rebels* [or call them insurgents] *will do well through predation on primary commodity exports, traders do well through the widened margins on the goods they sell to consumers, criminals will do well through theft, and opportunistic businessmen will do well at the expense of those businesses that are constrained to honest conduct.*"[73]

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[71] See section about "Differences between Terrorism and Insurgency" on the *International Terrorism and Security Research Portal Project Centre*; Stable URL http://www.terrorism-research.com/insurgency/

[72] BERDAL, Mats, and KEEN, David M., "Violence and Economic Agendas in Civil Wars: Some Policy Implications", *Millennium*, 26 (3), 1997, p. 797

[73] COLLIER, Paul, "Doing Well Out of War : An Economic Perspective", in BERDAL, Mats, and MALONE, David M. (eds), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000, pp. 103-4

Stephen Metz suggests that movements or organisations that utilise a strategy of insurgency (and therefore come about to be conflated with the term) vary in three dimensions.[74] The first is what he identified as their functional focus. All such movements simultaneously generate resources (people, money, arms etc.); they undertake violence, and pursue political goals. Their priority among these varies according to both conditions and strategic choices. An insurgent movement which feels that time is against it or the balance of power between it and the state has shifted in its favour will focus on violence and political objectives. Conversely, a movement which feels that time is on its side or is still too weak to directly attain its political objectives will focus on resource generation. A common pattern is for insurgency-based movements to eventually lower their emphasis on both violence and political objectives and concentrate on resource generation. They become, in effect, *"criminal enterprises with a veneer of politics."*[75]

A second dimension is organisational coherence. For Metz, movements using a strategy of insurgency fall along a continuum: At one pole are formal organisations with internal specialisation and a command hierarchy. They evince strategic behaviour – balancing ways, ends and means, and adjusting the strategy as conditions change. In many ways, they emulate the state and may administer areas they control in a state-like way. At the other end, insurgencies are informal. They are composed of semi-autonomous groups, sometimes with a loose degree of cooperation among them. Their armed actions take the form of swarming. Such movements are less likely to become state-like, but, in Metz's view, are more survivable than formal ones since there are no critical nodes or centres of gravity which can cause the movement to collapse if destroyed. The point, though, is that formality and informality are not binaries. A movement is not one or the other. Rather, *"insurgencies fall somewhere between formality and informality, and may shift along the continuum during their life-span and the duration of a conflict."*[76]

Then, the third dimension Metz identifies is objective. Once again, this is best conceptualised as a continuum. At one end is simple survival; at the other are teleological objectives such as replacing the state or even sparking a transnational revolution which alters the balance of power across a region or many regions. While the orthodox conceptualisation of insurgency, which its roots in the Maoist movements of the 20th century, is based on the idea that all insurgencies want to replace the state, in the modern context many such movements rather appear to want the power of the state but not the responsibility. In other words, they seek only to augment their ability to extract resources, including both power and money. They seek to alter the players in a parasitic or patronage-based system, but not the system itself. Many of the insurgency-based/ rebel movements in Sub-Saharan Africa take this form. For example, the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda gives little indication of wanting to assume administrative responsibility for their region, much less the country as a whole, but instead to be a more effective parasite.[77] In this research, we highlight how in some such cases proceeds from crime seem to even have changed the motivational incentives of insurgent/rebel groups from political/ideological to criminal-economic motives, before going on to discuss how such "economic spoilers" are particularly difficult to deal with in environments (such as in Afghanistan), where there exists an ingrained culture of criminality and armed rebellion – a "culture of violence"[78] – coupled with serious state failures in terms of lack of resources, weak institutions, inertia, corruption, negligence etc.

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[74] METZ (2012), *op. cit.*, pp. 37-42

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 37

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 39

[77] VINCI, Anthony, "The strategic Use of Fear by the Lord's Resistance Army", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 16 (3), 2005, pp. 360-81

[78] Elaborating on that very notion, see notably KALYVAS, Stathis N. (2006) *The Logic of violence in Civil War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; METELITS, Claire (2010) *Inside Insurgency: Violence, Civi-*

So long as the system remains deeply flawed, and the strategic environment in which armed groups thrive remains equally dependent on a powerful illegal economy around which are organised insurgents, criminals as well as part of the population and the national government administrative hierarchy, the pathology simply takes other forms. Such dynamics can not only prolong active conflict but also extend into the post-conflict phase. Challenges for peace and security/stability operations emerge, where as a consequence, peace agreements falter, or proceeds from organised crime provide incentives for the continued existence and operations of armed groups.[79] Tajikistan insurgency-based conflict ended in 1997 but today that small Central Asian nation nearly is paralysed by organised crime activity. And the same goes for parts of post-war Balkans, especially Bosnia and Kosovo, broad swaths of land in Africa's Sahel Region, Russia's Chechnya, most of the so-defined "stable" regions of Afghanistan etc. Think also, on another note, at the situation in Eastern Congo. Often entities other than the national state remain the primary providers of security and justice; the economy remains divided into a formal sector that does not serve most of the population and an informal sector that does. For outsiders involved in counterinsurgency support, this may be enough: the conflict moved from the front page of the newspaper to an afterthought. But this is not victory if it is defined as creating a stable national state with a near monopoly of force. Like health problems in a society or crime, the violence may be controlled or pushed into a less destructive form, but it persists, and can metastasise even more aggressively all over again. The genesis of ISIL/*Dā'esh* in post-2011 (U.S. withdrawal) Iraq is a perfect illustration.

States vulnerable to insurgency are those which fall into a grey area. They are patronage-based, parasitic and closed but not fully effective at repression.[80] Patronage-based, parasitic closed systems which are effective at repression like North Korea, Iraq under Saddam Hussein, Iran, China or Uzbekistan (Syria is a grey case) do not allow the space for insurgency to coalesce and strengthen. Only when such systems begin to lose their ability or willingness to repress does the space exist for insurgency to form. In the spring of 2011, Kaddafi's Libya seemed to be such a state; Algeria may become one; Uzbekistan as well.

### 1.4 Cross-breeding across and aside blurred boundaries

As this labelling exercise proves, terrorism, insurgency and organised crime can no longer be studied in isolation. These phenomena now intersect on many different levels, not the least at the agent/actor level.

In practical terms, the list of all those non-state actors who might resort to organised crime and physical political violence in a chaotic environment is long: it might run from tribal and warlord militias, paramilitary units, to insurgent armies and terrorist groups, to transnational criminal organisations, bandit bands or "feral gangs" dedicated to kidnapping, racketeering, robbery and violence. All of those also resort to crime and instrumental violence as a means to an end or an end in itself.

As treated in this research, non-state armed actors are comprised of

- Organised crime groups and networks, both structured and disaggregated;

- Terrorist groups, may they be motivated by faith-based ideologies, political aims, ethnic forces, or at times, by financial considerations;

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*lians, and Revolutionary Group Behaviour*, New York: New York University Press, and WEINSTEIN, Jeremy M. (2007) *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[79] COCKAYNE and LUPEL (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 17

[80] CREVELD, Martin van (1999) *The Rise and Decline of the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 46-51

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- Insurgencies, which have more well-defined and specific political aims within a particular national territory, but may operate from outside of that national territory;

- Militias and armed paramilitary groupings (also illegal armed groups or ILAGs in UN jargon) that control "black hole" or "stateless" sectors of one or more national territories.

An initial logical observation is that each of those different categories or types of groups and networks of non-state armed actors, or "parties" in the politics of collective violence,[81] has different operational characteristics that must be understood in order to appreciate the respective challenges they pose. Over years of research, phenomenological analyses by specialists of each type have brought about new sets of sub-categories and ever up-to-date typologies.[82] As regards terrorist organisations for instance, respected terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman notes they can be further categorised based on their organisational ideology.[83] Likewise, scholars of organised crime have introduced the notion that at least two different forms of organised crime group exist, distinguishing between the traditional formal hierarchy of longstanding Mafia-like crime groups and the flexible network structure of their more recently formed counterparts: so-called "*third generation gangs*"[84] and newer transnational crime syndicates that, contrary to the former, for which conflict appears more to be something to be avoided, thrive in a state of political anarchy or on-going conflict. Notwithstanding this, it must be recognised that, in effect, the various sociological structures of non-state parties in the politics of collective violence – criminals, terrorists, insurgents, rebels and the like – are much more diverse than military units. They may be networks, hierarchies or loose sets of actor-interests. They have a variety of organisational cultures rather than a disciplined code of behaviour, and their goals and motives are not less diverse.[85] In fact, the differences between each category of such rogue actors and the phenomenological types they represent are plentiful. Difficult in those conditions to define universal watch points based on organisational form, goals, culture and other aspects to ensure a methodology that is flexible enough to compare a transnational crime syndicate or a traditional crime hierarchy with an ethno-nationalist insurgent faction or an apocalyptic terror group. And yet, similarities among them are equally clear, and especially so in corrupt and chaotic environments, where rule of law and effective regulation and governmental technologies have broken down or are shaky. Each of these criminal types indeed commits fraud, theft, and violent crime. Each intimidates, extorts, smuggles and murders. Each uses subversive political tools and instrumental violence to accomplish their goals and control "ungoverned spaces." Each actively seeks out governance gaps, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and character weaknesses as openings to conduct their nefarious activities and benefits from the absence, weakness, corruption and/or complacency of state authorities. Under certain conditions of governance, they may find common causes. Likewise successful attempts by increasingly aggressive drug trafficking rings at dislodging or taking over state institutions to facilitate the movement of illicit material throughout their operating territories has become a hot-

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[81] TILLY, Charles (2003) *the Politics of collective violence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 19. The examples of such "parties" listed by Tilly include "*pirates, privateers, paramilitaries, bandits, mercenaries, mafiosi, militias, posses, guerrilla forces, vigilante groups, company police, and bodyguards*."

[82] These typologies were developed and discussed more completely, including the national security implications of their growth, in SHULTZ, Richard, FARAH, Douglas, and LOCHARD, Itamara V., "*Armed Groups: A Tier-One Security Priority*," USAF Academy, CO: USAF Institute for National Security Studies, Occasional Paper 57, September 2004.

[83] HOFFMAN, Bruce, *Inside Terrorism,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998: p. 43.

[84] BRANDS, Hal, "Third-generation gangs and criminal insurgency in Latin America", in *Small Wars Journal*, (2009), available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/third-generation-gangs-and-criminal-insurgency-in-latin-america

[85] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 26

button issue in several parts of the world over the past two decades, certain organised crime groups have also come to light in relation to their active role in resourcing and facilitating international terrorism and insurgent activities.[86] Breeding grounds in fragile states for terrorists and insurgents and their activities, they may also otherwise occupy the same space at the same time. As we shall show in this study, regions such as the North Caucasus and Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands are so saturated with all kinds of organised crime as well as terrorist/ insurgent activities that it is often difficult, not to say meaningless, to draw a distinction between groups. Many individuals belong to both terrorist/insurgent and criminal and drug-trafficking rings at once, and conduct a variety of tasks for both.

In fact, few groups fall neatly into one category or even two. For example, insurrectional political movements in Turkish Kurdistan (PKK/DHKP), Columbia (FARC/ELN) or Sri Lanka (Tamil Tigers) are all designated terrorist groups by the United States, European counterparts and some other governments as well, and are notoriously engaged into parts of the transnational criminal structure. Yet, while this also is considered to be the case for Pakistan's prime insurgent group, i.e. Pakistan's Taliban movement (*Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan*, TTP), it is however, paradoxically enough, not the case of Afghanistan' own Taliban movement (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) which was never included either in the "list of persons, groups and entities involved in terrorist acts" of the EU or in the "Foreign Terrorist Organisation" (FTO) designation of the U.S.[87] This consistent anomaly let apart,[88] of the 49 designated FTOs listed by the U.S. State Department in 2015, 24 of these FTOs were highlighted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as having "*clearly established ties to drug-trafficking organisations*", as many more were suspected of having such ties.[89] And here to be listed, with regard to regions of prime concern for this research work, some prominent affiliates to Afghanistan's Taliban-led insurgency, such as the virulent jihadist *Haqqani network* (HQN) and Islamist militant warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i Islami* faction (HIG), Pakistan's Taliban umbrella network (TTP) and other related like-minded violent extremist groups, such as the *Therik Nifaz-e Shariat-e Muhammadi* (TNSM), the *Jaish-e-Mohammed* (JEM) or *Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami* (HuJI), and its main contender within Pakistan's jihadist parties: 2008 Mumbai attacks' perpetrators of *Lashkar-e Tayba* (LeT), to which can also be also added some groups of Central Asian origins, such as the *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (IMU) or the *Islamic Jihad Union* (IJU), are all designated terrorist organisations whose involvement for funding and resourcing in parts of the transnational criminal

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[86] SCHORI LANG, *op. cit.* (2011), p. 4

[87] For the U.S. list : http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm ; the EU one can be accessed at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015D1334&qid=1440691334018&from=EN

[88] Some U.S. and European top-officials declarations went as far as to explicitly minimise Taliban activities as a mere "armed insurgency" rather than as "terrorism". This is in defiance of the clear terminology used by the consecutive UN Security Council Resolutions, where the activities of Afghanistan's Taliban are consistently described as support or practice of terrorism from its earlier resolution (1267/1999) up to the most recent one (2160/2014). Whereas the split of the resolutions addressing the Taliban (1988/2011) and *al Qaeda* (1989/ 2011) are most likely aimed at facilitating the delisting of some Taliban leaders who are involved in international negotiations by the Sanctions Committee, the strong verbal stance condemning Taliban terrorist activities were not changed. The State Department's position is the U.S. official position, but notwithstanding it is also in clear contradiction with the position of the U.S. Treasury that considers the Taliban activities as terrorist, and a direct threat to U.S. interests. The Treasury's "National Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment 2015" reporting quotes indeed "*extensive drugs and arms trade deals used to finance terrorist activities of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Most of these deals pass through the U.S. territory* […]." (Full text available at https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/terrorist-illicit-finance/Documents/National%20Terrorist%20Financing%20Risk%20Assessment%20E2%80%93%2006-12-2015.pdf.)

[89] [U.S. then] Drug Enforcement Agency Chief of Operations Michael Braun, speech to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 18 July 2012, accessed at http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=411.

structure from their Afghan-Pakistani borderlands strongholds where is produced almost all of the world's consumed heroin has been consistently evidenced.[90] Along with other organised crime (often of a transnational nature) networks or organisations (especially Russian, but also Chechen and Central Asian) as well as insurgent groups in the Caucasus, Turkey, the Russian Federation, and along trafficking routes of the former Soviet Union's southern rim all the way to the Balkans, these groups control significant portions of the trans-Eurasian illicit conducts, comprising of multiple recombinant and highly adaptive chains of networks, which all contribute to convey the criminal wealth of illicit goods and services associated with the flow of Afghan narcotics that ultimately cross the external borders of the European Union undetected thousands of time each week, meanwhile reaping huge profits from trafficking in drugs, people, weapons, illicit goods etc, and fuelling and exacerbating conflicts throughout the whole macro-region, yet also allowing free movement of irregular foreign fighters and international terrorists, which all amplify the *not-so-soft* threats their convergence posed to international security.

While all those terrorist, insurgent and above all criminal groups which, for certain of them, can be viewed as nothing but loosely knit networks of cells, divisions, and subgroups of shifting umbrella organisations,[91] generally do not operate the same geographical territories, neither are they necessarily allies, and in fact occasionally are enemies, as they may indeed pursue specific objectives that, beneath the surface of a seemingly shared overarching extremist (jihadist) ideology, remain divergent most often, they however all profoundly owe to the local socio-cultural and economic patterns of criminality rooted in the environment they stem from, and operate in, on which they rely for securing the financing, recruits and logistical means needed for supporting their respective networks, accomplishing their purported political goals, and underpinning their self-declared ideological ends. Admittedly, it is easiest to think about terrorism, insurgency and organised crime when they are personified by well-known groups and organisations: *al Qaeda* and ISIL/*Dāʻesh*, Russian crime syndicates and the Yakuza, the Taliban, the PKK and the FARC. But a crucial argument underlying this study is that each criminal type and category of behaviour is broader and less easy to classify than are these organisations. Terrorism, insurgency and organised crime also are – we insist on that – *activities*. These are labels for subversive, fraudulent or destructive criminal behaviours by individuals who may otherwise use non-violent political tools or legitimate means to pursue their interests, express their views, or make a living. Granted, their motives appear different: organised crime focusing on making money and terrorism and insurgency aiming to undermine political authority. But the perpetrators often have similar profiles, and are often the same individuals.[92] Some terrorists striking in democratic societies are also ordinary salaried employees of a legal corporation, many gangsters engage in legi-

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[90] It all started with MAKARENKO, Tamara, "Crime, Terror, and the Central Asian Drug Trade", *Harvard Asia Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (Summer 2002), then came *Illicit Drugs Situation in the Regions Neighboring Afghanistan and the Response of the ODCCP* (Vienna: UNODC, 2002); BURNASHEV, Rustam, "Terrorist Routes in Central Asia: Trafficking Drugs, Humans, and Weapons", *Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2007); CORNELL, Svante, "The Narcotics Threat in Greater Central Asia: From Crime-Terror Nexus to State Infiltration?" *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2008); CORNELL, Svante, "Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflicts in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Issue 17 (2008), TRAUGHBER, Colleen M., "Terror-Crime Nexus? Terrorism and Arms, Drug, and Human Trafficking in Georgia", *Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 2008); ARASLI, Jahangir, "The Rising Wind: Is the Caucasus Emerging as a Hub for Terrorism, Smuggling, and Trafficking?", *Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 2008), WILLIAMS, Phil, "Criminalisation and Stability in Central Asia and the South Caucasus", in *Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Implications for the U.S. Army*, ed. Olga Oliker and Thomas S. Szayna (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), HOWARD, Russell D., and TRAUGHBER, Colleen, "The Routes of Terrorism and Trafficking from Central Asia to Western Europe", Strategic Studies Institutes (2013). Lately again, *World Drug Report 2015* (Vienna: UNODC, 2015)

[91] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 26

[92] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 9

timate businesses. Many insurgent foot soldiers are simple farmers, disaffected peasants or ordinary rural folk outside the fighting season, yet they are also often poppy or coca growers and drug smugglers. Moreover, some individuals engage in both terrorism or insurgency and organised crime.[93] And with so many individuals active in both universes in so many different contexts of fragility and conflict across the world, there now exists a merging and blurring of functions and boundaries between phenomenological types that this research work endeavours to highlight and discuss. As we argue the groups to which they belong or relate their criminal activity may frequently converge, by strategic choice or out of necessity, hybridise, and mutually reinforce each other, making effective distinction hardly realistic or even possible in practice. It is therefore critically important to note that division lines among clear-cut categories of actors and criminal types are, by nature, illusory, and often misleading. In reality, these lines are blurry. Crucially, the distinctions between different criminal types are particularly unclear in fragile, transitional polities, in prisons, and conflict or post-conflict zones where there is no effective government.[94]

## 2. Opportunity Structures and Critical Scenarios for Convergence: Interlinking the Politics of Crime and Conflict in Fragile Contexts

Organised crime, terrorism, and insurgency are activities, which are, as such, dependent in their context. Not all settings and circumstances make them possible or foster them to the same extent. Moreover, each setting and time may modulate their development, generating specific and varied patterns and expressions. The same can be asserted about the degree of coincidence between the respective threats they pose. Probabilities in this regard also change depending on the circumstances at hand. Not all circumstances are equally favourable towards terrorism, insurgency and organised crime, while some seem to facilitate it. We propose in this study to deal with some scenarios that we found are especially conductive to organised crime and the violent activities of rogue non-state actors, but also serve as enablers of overlap between them and of interactions and relationships among their agents. Implications of the drivers of that overlap for international security will be discussed in relation to the tools and processes of security governance, and especially those of stabilisation/capacity-building/security assistance operations, one of the international community's primary tools for attempting to reclaim and "stabilise" those "*black holes*" territories which allow them to function in a relatively safe environment.

While criminal activity and terrorism are security threats in their own right, the amplified combination of those stemming from the convergence of their agents, methods, and resources is creating dynamics which perpetuate conflict and war and embolden and sustains insurgency in critical "*gray zones*" of our world that represent a powerful component of the threat from the terrorist groups and other violent non-state actors which operate in, and control, them. Then, on the other hand, thereby allowing these agents of crime and violence to "territorialise" and function in a relatively safe environment where they have every room to develop and intensify their linkages, share expertise, and cooperate with other clandestine networks, and those professionally engaged in organised crime in particular, both operating the same space and/or attracted by opportunity structures provided by their violent activities therein, those specific geographic territories from and through which origin and pass most of the goods and services that generate the wealth of profits of global transnational criminal activities worldwide multiply the possibilities of co-incidence and interaction between one phenomenon and the other, each of which includes opportunities when a terrorist/insurgent/criminal partnership might serve to grow and

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[93] *Ibid.*

[94] *Ibid.*

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sustain each organisation, bolstering each group's capabilities, strengthening their individuals infrastructures and contributing to their financial well-being.

One type of facilitating scenario, which is outside the scope of this study, relates to environments that are typically crime producing such as jails, disenfranchised neighbourhoods and enclaves of homogeneous minority groups in certain urban areas within the larger democratic community where sub-groups do not share the norms of the larger society. There are other types of space, however, from large portions included within one country to entire nations or multinational regions, especially under conditions of conflict or chronic instability, where the affinities between global terrorism, armed rebellion/insurgency-based conflict and organised criminality have progressed to the highest level. Within Greater Central Eurasia, this connection is most blatantly demonstrated in Afghanistan, Pakistan, but also in some parts of the Caucasus (especially in some of the northern constituencies of the region, parts of the Russian Federation), and China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Elsewhere in the world, the Middle East Mesopotamia (Syria-Iraq-Kurdistan), and the Western Sahel Region appear to be critical cases.

In spite of being located in different and distant geographical settings, marked by their own particular features, it is clear that all these scenarios share some characteristics and problems, and it does not seem to be accidental that these are repeated. As a minimum, it is worth listing the following ones:[95]

1. Multi-frontier and porous border

2. State fragility or weakness

3. Ethnical/tribal and confessional/sectarian or religious heterogeneity

4. Lack of institutional legitimacy

5. A lot of corruption

6. Armed conflicts

7. Underdevelopment or critical economic situations

These characteristics simultaneously contribute towards fostering both unlawful organised political violence and organised crime *as activity* by non-state actors. In doing so, they extend the motivations that inspire them, both the capacities and opportunities that make them possible. The problems of legitimacy attributed to the established political order, ethnic and sectarian tensions, and the catalyst for armed conflicts (especially those that stem from foreign military intervention or involve the presence of foreign troops, supporting some of the bands that are at loggerheads), extending the reasons for utilising guerrilla warfare and terrorism. The problems of food and provisioning deriving from underdevelopment, from poor government, and from the armed conflicts, along with the economic crises and limitations in the same way, engender the appearance of illegal markets that are exposed to the risk of falling under the control of criminal gangs and organisations. In turn, the options for developing these illegal markets are multiplied thanks to corruption, to the existence of porous or badly monitored borders and the relationships of trust based upon ethnic or tribal sentiments and commitments of solidarity. Lastly, the fragility or institutional weakness increases the opportunities from organised criminality, terrorism and armed rebellion/insurgency, by limiting or drastically cutting back the repressive capacities of the state and/or facilitating the infiltration of its institutions by criminal actors. The most extreme examples in this respect can be seen in those scenarios (such as in Afghanistan) where the inability of the state institutions to operate extends so far that the state loses its capacity to perform its

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[95] Characterisation proposed by James Rosenau, in: *Turbulence in World Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 62-67

basic functions. In this way, it enables terrorists and criminals to act and interact with complete impunity (which has been referred to by Phil Williams as "gas in sovereignty."[96])

Each and every one of the factors facilitating organised political violence and organise crime (in whatever forms and means), and the co-incidence of their actual manifestation, can be observed in the Greater Central Eurasian macro-region, most strikingly in Afghanistan and in Pakistan of course, but also in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, China's Xinjiang, or Russia's Chechnya and North Caucasus at large, with the twofold consequence of multiplying the possibilities of opportunity structures enabling the convergence between one phenomenon and the other.

Looking at those specific contexts of violence and conflict in which terrorism and insurgency thrive, the peculiarities of their moral and political economy, and the role played therein by lucrative criminal activities and the proceeds from organised crime in particular, it comes as a main contention of this research that what Gurr conceptualised at first in his 1977's History of Crime as the "politics of crime",[97] hereafter understood as *the interplay of criminal interests and underlying values in government or group decision-making*,[98] is to be found at core of what is shaping the ends and means of those conflicts from which mutually-reinforcing relationships of convergence and hybridisation between criminal activity and terrorism (or insurgent activity in general) are most likely to arise, as it also entails ways non-state armed actors relate means to ends when practicing violent activities or armed actions thereby e.g. utilising a strategy of insurgency, engaging into terrorism, or involving into criminal businesses, as well as the relative benefits derived from the relationships among them and between them and state actors.

Drawing on the polemological literature pointing at the fact that proceeds from organised crime and illegal resource exploitation, and with regard to the involvement of non-state armed groups therein in particular, not only are key to fuelling the prolonged existence of those groups and providing economic incentives for the continuation or exacerbation of conflict by funding or resourcing them, but also turn out to be an important political resource for certain elites hedging criminal-political arrangements throughout which they can pursue their own factional, sector-based or institutional interests,[99] it becomes essential to take up the role played by organised crime *as an activity* in the moral and political economy of terrorism and armed conflicts, especially that of insurgency-based conflicts (such as Afghanistan's), not only in the light of the relatives benefits derived from the relationships that can develop among non-state actors enabling crime and profiting from criminal activities, and how, and to what extent, do these linkages develop, but also in relation to the states in which they operate and the relative benefits derived from the relationships between state and non-state actors as well.

Then, the problem becomes one of "sitting" and "scaling"[100] the interplay of connectivity between organised crime networks and other non-state armed groups specialised in crime and violence with criminalised state structures, "stateless" regions, alternative governance systems, "pseudo-state" actors,[101] and the multiple "facilitation networks"[102] that exploit, support and/or

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[96] WILLIAMS, Phil, "Here Be Dragons: Dangerous Spaces and International Security", in CLUNAN, Anne L., TRINKUNAS, Harold A. (eds.), *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010.

[97] GURR, Ted Robert, *The Politics of Crime and Conflict*, London, Sage Publications, 1977.

[98] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 9

[99] HANSEN (2008), *op. cit.*, pp. 72-76

[100] Terminology purportedly tailored by the TraCCC Research Team – Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (dir. Prof. Louise Shelley) of George Mason University.

[101] See "The Crime-Conflict Nexus: Warlords and Pseudo-States", SWJ Blog Post by *Small Wars and Insurgencies Journal Editors*, 7 May 2013; Stable URL http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/the-crime-conflict-nexus-warlords-and-pseudo-states

appropriate them, either at the expense of weak host states and their neighbours, or in direct relation with stronger ones which host them, tolerate them, or use them as instruments of statecraft. It particularly focuses on categories (state and non-state) and dynamics of actor participation, hence the linkages and dynamics of interaction among them, in various fields of lucrative criminal activities, and their complex interactions with the political sphere.[103]

This problem formulation allows us to highlight a number of virtually important phenomena not usually addressed by studies of organised crime and terrorism in isolation:

- A nexus between organised crime groups on the one hand, and non-state groups associating the practice of violent activities or armed actions with a political purpose and/or an ideology on the other (terrorists, insurgents and the like), with a shifting balance between terrorist/insurgent and criminal activity on both sides of the divide (cf. the "**crime-terrorism/insurgency nexus**")

- A spectrum or continuum of state relationships to organised networks with criminal capacities and expertise in the use of violence, with various intermediate stages of criminalisation of state structures, practices, and behaviours (cf. the "**crime-state nexus**")

- Recombinant networks of agents of crime and violence, potentially including not only organised crime (TOC) elements and terrorist or insurgent groups, but also state actors and pseudo-state actors and proxies.

- A growing porosity between the nexus of organised crime with non-state armed actors and a broader "**political-criminal nexus**" not limited to the involvement of those sole non-state actors in organised crime and seditious violent activities,[104] hence bringing new elements to the "dangerous spaces"[105] where state and non-state actors intersect with regions of weak sovereignty and criminalised governance systems and exacerbate efforts in war-fighting and peace-making (cf. the "**crime-operations nexus**")

As we stress the importance of the role played by criminal proceeds and illegal resource exploitation in the political economy of terrorism and conflict, and that of insurgency-based conflicts in particular, we also underline the need to go beyond depoliticising and criminalising views on terrorism and insurgency which, as Delgado argues, because they tend to sever groups from their historical, political and socio-cultural contexts, arrive at faulty understandings of particular conflicts based on an existentialist isolation of actors from the contextual factors that are conductive to the ways they relate means to ends in functional terms, and where criminal interests and alternative values locate therein.[106] Essentially, such views fail to take into account the diversity of motives behind the involvement of a broad range of actors into organised criminal activities, and consequently does not allow, when it comes down to designing mitigation methodologies and implementing them in context, to articulate policy tools and strategies fit for effectively impairing the overall factors that make certain particular environment especially conductive to organised crime as a common method for various actors or parts of society, hence also by those engaged into physical political violence, and comes with the control of strategic territories whose the poli-

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[102] CLAPPER 2013: 5, quoted in ALDA and SALA (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 4

[103] CARR (2011), *op. cit.*, pp. 61-63

[104] WENNMANN, Achim, "Resourcing the Recurrence of Intrastate Conflict: Parallel Economies and their Implications for Peace-building", in *Security Dialogue*, 36 (2005) 4, S. 479-494 (p. 488).

[105] The phrase "dangerous spaces" was coined by Phil Williams to describe 21st-century security challenges in terms of spaces and gaps, including geographical, functional, social, economic, legal, and regulatory holes. See WILLIAMS (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 34-37.

[106] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 7-8

tical and moral economy revolve around e.g. contraband or drug cultivation. Aspects of this have been thoroughly investigated in the significant body of literature on the social dimension of criminality that notably sheds light on how, in certain social and historical contexts, such as especially as in countries/regions long torn by persistent war and internal conflict, crime has often worked over generations as an important shaping element of social and political culture.[107] Henceforth, since actors cannot be severed from the historical and socio-political/cultural context they stem from, this entrenchment of a certain "sense of normalcy" of crime and illicitness in a society/community's social and political culture, also as an indicator of a broader culture of violence in society, cannot but decisively impact ways that non-state actors relate means to ends in functional terms, e.g. resorting to criminal proceeds and modus operandi in relation to their goals. This is especially true in areas where the state, because of its violence, predatory rule, or inability to deliver positive political goods to its inhabitants, has long been perceived on the part of large segments of the population as a "hostile entity" posing a threat to their communities, livelihoods, or interests (as in Afghanistan, Pakistan's FATA, or Chechnya etc.) Coupled with serious state failures in terms of lack of resources, weak institutions, predatory law and order enforcement, inertia, corruption etc., crime in such areas has often worked over generations to shape the society's political and cultural reflexes, also – as Delgado observes – as "*a form of social protest and parallel authority.*"[108] From the point of view of a social and political ecology of violence,[109] all the peculiar contextual contingencies (social, political, economic, cultural) of the afflicted environment are to be considered fundamental in shaping ways local actors relate means to ends, articulate their values and interests in decision-making, and interrelate with one another with regard to their respective strategic calculations and interests of the group. And so certainly is the entrenchment in "mentalities" of a culture of violence, insurrection, and stubborn criminality in certain contexts of protracted violence and instability. Tolerance or even support for criminal activities by the population can be a powerful enabler for organised crime to thrive as driving force in the political economy of terrorism and conflict. This is particularly the case, we suggest, in those strategic environments where organised crime as a method for a broad range of actors or parts of society is common or where it comes with the control of strategic territory – such as drug cultivation/processing areas or multinational borderlands.

That said, highlighting the role played by crime as a *socially and culturally rooted* activity in shaping ways non-state actors relate means to ends (cf. motivational structures, methods and tactics) in carrying out their violent activities or armed actions, and the importance of that role in the moral and political economy of terrorism and insurgency-based conflict in particular, does not preclude anyway the possibility to associate active involvement into a whole array of illegal economic activities in association with a political purpose and/or an ideology. But quite the contrary, as funding and resourcing from criminal proceeds often turns out to be instrumental for armed groups to the accomplishment of political goals to be accomplished by means of terrorism, insurgency, or any other analogue tactical modalities. Rather, as we point at the importance of understanding where criminal motives locate in the interplay of interests and values in group

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[107] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 3

[108] *Ibid.*, p. 5

[109] *Political and social ecology* analyses ways *social* forms and human organisation interact with the surrounding environment. The term was first coined by Frank Thone in an article published in 1935. It has been widely used since then in the context of human geography, but with no systematic definition. Anthropologist Philippe Le Billon gave it a second life in 2001 in an article entitled "The political ecology of war: natural resources and armed conflicts" in which he discusses how "*beyond demonstrating the economic agendas of belligerents, an analysis of the linkages between natural resources and armed conflicts suggests that the criminal character of their inclusion in international primary commodity markets responds to an exclusionary form of globalisation; with major implications for the promotion of peace*" (in: *Political Geography* 20 (2001) 561-584, available at http://www.unal.edu.co/diracad/cate dras/gaitan/2016-I/gaitan_2016_I/docs/lecturas/s01/Thepolitical.pdf)

decision-making (i.e. involving into criminal businesses as an end in itself, or as a means to an end), we find that the engrainedness of a culture of criminality in a particular environment, which directly relates to the importance of the political economy of organised crime therein, decisively contributes to blur, and eventually to transform, the motivational incentives of those resorting to violent activities and armed actions. At the most immediate level, it accounts for the widespread involvement of politically motivated violent entrepreneurs in criminal activities. Then, it provides opportunity structures and serves as enabler for dynamics of cooperation, and eventually convergence to occur between organised crime and non-state groups associating the practice of violent activities or armed actions with a political purpose and/or an ideology.

In any form whatsoever – insurgency or armed rebellion, terrorist religious and/or ideological groups, paramilitary units and warlord militias, criminal gangs and transnational drug-trafficking organisations etc. – all these disparate groups and networks of agents of crime and violence that, by their very activities and the violent ways they carry out their agenda, whatever their motives may be, likewise benefit from and seek out the same kind of withering  social conditions, an absence of legitimate state authority, cumulative pitfalls in statehood and governance, and the erosion of norms that overall amount to relative anomy in society. Amidst such conditions of fragility, unlashed predatory activities by criminal groups dedicated to kidnapping, racketeering, smuggling and trafficking of all kinds, robbery and feral violence etc., which aim at retaining control of or expanding their criminal markets, promote a state of disorder and anarchy that serves the strategic objectives and facilitates the activities of other non-state armed actors operating in the same strategic environment. Then, from the point of view of a social and political ecology of collective violence, all the peculiar contextual contingencies (may they be social, political, economic or cultural) of such chaotic crime-saturated environments contribute to shape the ways all the different groups and networks of rogue actors, politically driven or not, that operate in relate means to their ends, articulate their values and interests in decision-making, and eventually interrelate with one another with regard to the respective strategic calculations of the group.

Our research indicates that both organised crime and political violence tend to flourish most when groups in society see their own interests as separate from that of the system of governance, and the norms promulgated from that system. They flourish where the standards of law enforcement are low and there is limited respect for the law and legal authority. They also flourish where local law enforcement cannot successfully police ethnic sub-communities within the larger community or ignore the relations that form in penal institutions. Thus, enclaves of homogeneous ethnic minority groups are commonly vulnerable to becoming a host for organised crime in democracies, and in less democratic countries, many other groups may see independent action as more in their self-interest than playing by the rules, and as morally justified due to what they see as lack of legitimacy in the rule class and institutions.[110] In conflict zones and certain urban areas, for example, criminals are less constrained by respect for the political system and the rule of law, less intimidated by regulation and law enforcement, and often motivated by a desire to subvert or disregard the established order. It comes as no surprise that the nexus between organised crime and violent non-state actors is thriving most dramatically in conflict zones as agents of crime and violence tend to spawn more collaborative relationships that are closer knit.[111]

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[110] For a more detailed treatment of this topic, see BODY-GENDROT, Sophie, MARTINIELLO, Marco (eds.), *Minorities in European Cities: The Dynamics of Social Integration and Social Exclusion at the Neighborhood Level*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012. In particular, see the chapters of Thomas Faist, "Economic Activities of Migrants in Transnational Social Spaces", and Simon Holdaway, "Migration, Crime and the City: Context of Social Exclusion." See also CUTHBERTSON, Ian, "Prisons and the Education of Terrorists", *World Policy Journal* 21 (Fall 2009), pp. 15-22.

[111] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 26.

On the one hand, "local" organised crime activities like kidnapping, racketeering and theft lay out the conditions of domestic breakdown in which insurgency and terrorism may thrive.[112] Not only, even in the absence of armed conflict, are the proceeds from crime likely to fuel the emergence and prolonged existence of all sorts of armed groups, including those to whom grievances can then give political incentives for moving on towards terrorist and often ideology-driven action, but amidst a backdrop of state impotence or complacency, these criminal activities promote a state of disorder and anarchy which works against the legitimacy of the state, its norms and "values", hence serving insurgents and/or terrorists' objectives of delegitimising the state while funding and resourcing their organisations. Conversely, once conflict broke out between armed opposition/insurgent groups and government troops, or between competing factions over the control of parts or the whole of state territory, feral gangs and criminal entrepreneurs aimed at expanding their criminal markets are left with broad spaces for proliferating and making their illicit businesses thrive amidst anarchy and the development of a war/crime economy. As it often occurs, not only rebel forces give criminal elements incentives to operate in areas they find interest letting them crowd in, but they also often use them as a base of recruitment.[113]

Whilst the specific motivation that drives non-state actors to engage in organised crime as a means to their ends is not necessarily decisive for the impact on the state (cf. insurgents occupying drug-saturated areas create zones out of state control just as drug-cartels controlling strategic territory),[114] criminal organisations and terrorist groups are both dependent upon the presence of weak governmental and law enforcement institutions; and this is even all the more true when terrorism is used as part of a strategy of insurgency in context of civil war or terror-prone asymmetrical conflict. In other words, these groups thrive in the presence of a weak governmental regime (we insist on that complete wording, instead of "weak government", which may actually not be so true in every respect.) Governments may indeed simply turn a blind eye to criminal activity, or governmental institutions may simply be too much corrupt and infiltrated by criminal actors themselves to be able or willing to successfully confront the criminal networks or armed paramilitary groupings, insurgent and/or terrorist. Often those institutions are themselves co-opted by criminal interests, thereby benefitting both the criminal organisations as well as terrorist/insurgent groups. Such "criminalised governance" as it may be called, benefits both criminal networks and terrorist or insurgent groups and fosters an environment that is conductive to both. This is particularly the case in situations where organised crime, as is used as a method for various actors or parts of society is common or where it comes with the control of strategic territory.

Developing countries with large shadow economies, that is, where illicit, unregulated, undeclared and illegal transactions take place and where there is little legitimate economy, along with a lack of social structures, many unresourced people, and a history corrupt government are both relatively likely to provide ideological and economic foundations for both organised crime and rebellion/insurgency or terrorism within their borders and relatively unlikely to have much capacity to combat either of them.[115] By force of circumstance, this makes it all the more likely that such territory might be affected by the "black hole syndrome",[116] i.e. converted into a hub for

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[112] OEHME III, CHESTER, G., "Terrorists, insurgents, and criminal-growing nexus?", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2008, pp. 80-93.

[113] CRESSEY, "Methodological Problems in the Study of Organised Crime as a Social Problem", in YIN, Robert, *Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2008, p. 15.

[114] HANSEN (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 73.

[115] Thesis developed, *inter alia*, in SASSEN, Saskia, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, New York: The New Press, 2002; NAIM, Moises, "Five Wars of Globalization." *Foreign Policy*, 2003

[116] First conceptualised by Tamara Makarenko, in: "'The Ties that Bind': Uncovering the Relationship between Organised Crime and Terrorism", in SIEGEL, Dina *et al.* (eds.), *Global Organized Crime: Trends and Developments*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003: 159-70.

colluding transnational organised crime and terrorist/insurgent networks evolving from focusing only on declared political aims to primarily driven by criminal gains and when state authority on parts or whole of a state territory has been taken over by a crime-terror group. Conflict zones have traditionally provided tremendous opportunities for smuggling and corruption and reduced oversight capacities, as enforcement becomes almost solely directed at military targets. They are therefore especially vulnerable to the development of symbiotic relationships between those engaging in criminal activities and those engaging in politically motivated violence as links among them are much more multifarious and difficult to thwart. Post-conflict zones are also likely to spawn such cooperation as such areas often retain weak enforcement capacity for some time following an end to formal hostilities.

As odd as it may sound, the criminalisation of an insurgent movement or the criminalisation of a state institution may fulfil the same purpose for a criminal network: both serve to weaken the rule of law, displace or discredit the state, and encyst "lawless" areas facilitating the conduct of criminal operations. The criminal involvement of units in a political system is the more subtle way of going about this aim, weakening state institutions from within. The criminal involvement of insurgent and terrorist groups, on the other hand, is a more violent and direct way of reaching the same purpose, weakening the state and its rule of law by directly targeting its institutions, sowing unrest, sometimes to the point of denying the state control over portions of its territory. Where organised criminal interests are powerful and states comparatively less so, one or both of these processes are likely to occur. The strength of the state, the existence of violent challengers to it, and the external circumstance surrounding a given region/country are likely to determine the extent to which these two phenomena – linkages between organised crime and violent non-state actors (*aka* "crime-terror/insurgency nexus") and infiltration/co-option of state institutions by criminal actors (*aka* "crime-state/political nexus") – occur.

This brings new elements to the "dangerous spaces" where non-state actors intersect with regions of weak sovereignty and criminalised governance in ways that foster an environment that is conductive to organised crime and political violence, especially under conditions of conflict. The basic problem, then, in dealing with such environments where crime is as deeply entrenched as e.g. poppy-saturated Afghanistan for instance, becomes one of addressing the ways the prevalence of the moral and political economy of (organised) crime in society, by the very role it plays in shaping the social and political fabric, hence the ends and means, of violence and conflict, can only but impact the methodologies, tools, and processes aimed at "stabilising" and "securitising" such environments. Particular challenges occur for operations where those that draw on and profit from the predominant organised crime activities in the affected country are part of the government on whose consent the operation (or the anti-terrorist cooperation) is based. Achim Wennmann poses another critical question in this respect: "*How do you manage non-state actors that, as a result of their control of shadow markets, are more powerful than the state or the donor community?*"[117]

### 2.1 The Crime-Terrorism/Insurgency Nexus

The nexus between organised crime and physical political violence by non-state actors, and notably those practicing terrorism (cf. "crime-terrorism nexus", with special reference to regional and sub-regional groups part of what some experts have agreed to call "global terrorism"), then eventually also as part of a strategy of insurgency ("crime-insurgency nexus") in context of civil war or terror-prone asymmetrical conflict, includes two independent, but related, components. First, when referring to the relationship between organised crime and terrorism (or, alternatively, insurgency), "[the nexus] *most commonly applies to the straightforward use of*

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[117] WENNMANN, Achim, "Resourcing the Recurrence of Intrastate Conflict: Parallel Economies and their Implications for Peace-building", in *Security Dialogue*, 36 (2005) 4, S. 479-494 (p. 488).

*organised criminal activities by terrorist groups as a source of funding*" – such as engaging in drug-trafficking, kidnapping for ransom, or involving in credit-card fraud.[118] A second aspect has been used to relate to the linkages between organised criminals and terrorist or insurgent groups.

Insurgent/terrorist and criminal groups have traditionally been seen as separate categories owing to perceived difference in their motivational structures and aims. As it goes, the former seek to achieve political change through violence, while the latter solely pursue selfish ideals such as power and profit. This understanding has been cemented in state responses to them: national security and law enforcement have traditionally been separated, be it in terms of intelligence collection or in terms of operative action.[119] Long considered a domestic public security problem, organised crime was addressed by law enforcement authorities. Meanwhile, terrorist and insurgent groups were regarded as armed groups with political objectives, including regime change, that directly threatened the sovereignty of the nation-state.[120] Nevertheless, this traditional division into mutually exclusive ideological and criminal ideal types has largely become a thing of the past, owing to the growing recognition of terrorism and organised crime as security threats in their own right, and not least the growing nexus between them.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, many armed rebellions and violent opposition groups worldwide lost their state sponsorship, namely from the Soviet Union, yet alternatively also from the United States. By the same token, they also lost essential funding and resourcing channels. By forcing them to develop altered logistical models and financing mechanisms, on-going changes in the international environment have led to deep and complex transformations of the motivational structures and *modus operandi* of many groups and organisations that survived the end of the Cold War,[121] And yet, this is all the more significant in the instant case of all those groups that have emerged and developed since then; while the ever greater opportunities provided by globalisation were concomitantly boosting organised crime across the world. As the pace of transformation dramatically accelerated in the era of instantaneous communication, the Internet, the scourge of terrorism by violent sectarian/religious-oriented groupings, and the growing transnationalisation of Islamist *jihadi-salafi* militancy in particular,[122] it is now common knowledge that a large number of both new and older terrorist and insurgent groups operating around the world, and a substantial number of those can be found in our area of investigation indeed, have been adaptively and strategically turning to crime and organised crime networks for sustaining themselves and keeping abilities to carry out their agendas (funding, logistics, recruits) or, more prosaically, fuelling their prolonged existence. More and more rebel, insurgent and terrorist groups, whatever their goals or ideology may be, today are "self-financed" through proceeds from criminal activities.[123] Within the evolving dynamics of their wider criminalisation, i.e. their increased reliance on, and involvement in lucrative criminal activities to support themselves and

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[118] MAKARENKO (2004), *op. cit.*, p. 130

[119] WILLIAMS, Phil, "Transnational Criminal Organizations and International Security", *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 1994, p. 96.

[120] THACHUK, Tim, "Transnational Threats: Falling Through the Cracks?", *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2006, p. 51.

[121] DISHMAN, Chris, "Terrorism, Crime and Transformation", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24 (1), 2001, pp. 43-58; Shelley, Louise I., "The Nexus of Organised International Criminals and Terrorism", *International Annals of Criminology*, 2002, pp. 1-6; McCULLOCH, J., and PICKERING, S., "Suppressing the Financing of Terrorism: Proliferating State Crime, Eroding Censure and Extending Neo-colonialism", *British Journal of Criminology,* Vol. 45, 2005, pp. 470-486.

[122] See HEGGHAMMER, Thomas, *Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism* (http://hegghammer.com/_files/Hegghammer_-_jihadi_salafis_or_revolutionaries.pdf)

[123] SCHORI LANG, *op. cit.* (2011), pp. 2-3.

acquire money and material, not only have these groups developed closer links with networks of both local and transnational organised criminals that, eventually, occupy the same geographic space, but they were also found increasingly directly involved in organised criminal activity themselves, primarily the very lucrative narcotics business, but they also moved into other areas, such as human trafficking.

As it became clear in view of the events of September 11th 2001 in the United States and the dramatic multiplication of terrorist attacks by violent extremist groups in Europe and a long litany of such attacks in an increasing number of contexts of fragility and conflict worldwide that many among the most aggressive contemporary terrorist and insurgent groups, and more precisely the religious oriented ones, had come to expand their connections with criminal organisations at the local and regional/transnational level for funding or resourcing their networks and organisations, and eventually tying up their operations, [124] the dynamics of that intersection have become subject of intense investigation and speculation. In the years after the "war on terror" began, experts largely concurred that a growing convergence between international terrorism and transnational organised crime had dangerously empowered terrorists, criminals, and proliferators around the world, and therefore requires new techniques and tools to combat.[125] As a broad range of research was endeavoured to shorten the efforts needed to assess the scope and breadth of those dynamics of apparent convergence, shrewd investigators have been taking careful note of how terrorists are using the resources and the methods of organised crime to prepare attacks. At a practical level, and notably as a result of counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and in Afghanistan, where the impact of that growing nexus between organised crime and terrorism/insurgency became evident in terms of exacerbating efforts in war-fighting and peace-making, security planners have become increasingly aware of the fact that both categories of actors were learning from each other, adopting each other's tactics and strategies – with terrorist and insurgent groups identified as increasingly relying on criminal activity to support themselves, while certain criminal groups came to the fore using terrorist and insurgency-like guerrilla warfare tactical modalities to dominate their operating areas – hence, that both can often partner with one another, and cooperate in many ways. Conversely, there also has been growing realisation that the goals of certain criminal groups may also have evolved from merely leveraging the changing strategic environment and the effects of intensified globalisation to make money and that, in certain parts of the world, some powerful organised criminal interests are now increasingly seeing the acquisition of political power as a requirement for commercial success and organisational survival.[126] And yet, as a whole number of scholars and practitioners now consensually agree on the pervasiveness and the criticality of the combination of threats stemming from the multifaceted links and avenues of co-operation, competition, and common and competing interests among proliferating networks of entrepreneurs of crime and violence on a world scale, it cannot but be noticed that there is no definite conclusion that how and to what extent organised crime and terrorism (or insurgent activity and organised political violence in general) intersect and converge.

Various interpretations have been put on the consideration of those dynamics. For a long period of time, most of the studies of terrorism (and physical political violence in general) that deal with the subject, in largely abstract terms, made use of one of the two opposing hypotheses. In the first one, the convergence between terrorism and organised criminality would be little less than a "*contra natura*" option. According to the second one, on the other hand, this deals with a

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[124] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[125] SILKE, Andrew, "The Devil You Know", SILKE, A. (ed.), *Research in Terrorism: Trends, Achievements and Failures,* London: Frank Cass, 2004, pp. 57-71.

[126] COCKAYNE, James, "Chapter Ten: Crime, Corruption and Violent Economies", *Adelphi Papers* 50: 412 (2010), pp. 192 -195

spontaneous, quasi-natural tendency. Those in favour of the first position usually seek to justify their theoretical justification by detailing the benefits that may derive from the convergence between one activity and the other, and the similarities between both of them. In contrast, the critics of the convergence hypothesis underline the prejudices that this trend may represent for those involved in it, as well as the differences (in objectives and means) that distinguish terrorists and other violent non-state political/religious militants from organised criminals.

<u>Prior scholarly analysis of crime/terrorism/insurgency interactions</u>

There are historical studies that examine links between terrorism and crime among early 20th century's anarchists, the Bolsheviks and crime.[127] Next are those studies that focus on crime-terror interactions in the specific context of the international market for narcotics. Early identification of terror-crime cooperation occurred in the 1980s and has long been focused on the conceptually blurred notion of "narco-terrorism", a term originally coined by Peru's President Belaunde in the early 1980s to describe terrorist attacks by Maoist-inspired "Shining Path" (*Sendero Luminoso*) insurgents against anti-narcotics police in his country at the time. The criminologist Rachel Ehrenfeld advanced this theory significantly when she highlighted the growing connection between trafficking drugs, terrorism and insurgency. Her analysis showed why separate groups, motivated either by profit or by politics, might coalesce or cooperate.[128] More important for the purpose of this research, Ekaterina Stepanova, a renowned senior researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences, completed in 2006 an important volume that comparatively explores the link between the illegal narcotics trade and terror/insurgent groups in three different regions – Latin America, Central Asia, and the Golden Triangle.[129] Stepanova concluded that the links between narcotics trafficking and terrorist/insurgent groups in these three very different parts of the world pertain to a common global trend of non-state actors, criminal groups and terrorists cooperating through drug trafficking to finance and advance their political and ideological objectives in such a way that they threaten the rule of law, the state and the region.[130] This conclusion raises a number of remarks. On the one hand, Stepanova's extension of narco-terrorism studies to other socio-political manifestations than the phenomenon it was initially coined to define (cf. Columbia's FARC and Latin American Maoist narco-guerrillas in the 1980-90s) seems to pertain to a willing acceptance of the "narco-connection" argument as an attempt to substitute the facile global perspective of the "war against terror" for a superficial understanding of the sub-regional security dynamics at play in each of the narcotics producing strongholds. This position is sometimes being espoused most vigorously, some argue to the point of conspiratorial paranoia. Then, it may also have, quite paradoxically, inadvertently excessively circumscribed analysis of crime-terrorism-insurgency interactions to the sole realm of narcotics since, as other research have demonstrated, terrorist and insurgent groups interact or intersect with organised crime in many other criminal enterprises that bear little resemblance to narcotics trafficking, such as human trafficking or document fraud.[131] Likewise, Ehrenfeld's more recent publications reflect much the same limitations, positing that the only ties between terrorists and criminals are to be found in the drug trade and

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[127] LAQUEUR (1977) *op. cit.*, pp. 66-7, 105; CRENSHAW, Martha, "'New' vs. 'Old' Terrorism", Kennan Institute, Washington DC, May 2005.

[128] EHRENFELD, Rachel, *Narco-Terrorism,* New York: BasicBooks, 1990.

[129] STEPANOVA, Ekaterina A., *Rol narkobiznesa v politekonomii konfliktov i terrorizma* [The Role of the Illicit Drug Business in the Political Economy of Conflicts and Terrorism], Moscow, Ves' Mir, 2007.

[130] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

[131] See ROLLINS, James, and SUN WYLER, Louise, "International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress", Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC, March 2014

thus the main conduit of crime-terror interaction is financial in nature. Then, such a narrow understanding of the convergence that exists between crime, organised crime and political violence (and the use of violence to accomplish political goals and/or control territories) also poses, as Delgado observed, important problems of conceptual confusion with regards for the importance of social and political dimensions of criminality when it comes to considering the *ad hoc* convergence of factors providing opportunity structures or serving as enablers for agents of crime and violence to converge in specific historical contexts, especially under conditions of conflict, and the ways local actors relate means to ends in strategic environments where exists an ingrained culture of lawlessness and violence and/or where organised crime *as an activity* has encysted and evolved over time as an important shaping element of a society and/or of a group (sub)culture.[132]

International relations theorists have also produced a group of scholarly works that examine organised crime, conflict and terrorism (i.e. agents or processes) as objects of investigation for their paradigms. While in some cases, the frames of reference international relations scholars employed often proved too general for the purposes of this study, we nonetheless found confidence in our thesis that these works demonstrated more environmental or behavioural aspects of the interaction. That is, transnational crime and terrorism are malevolent non-state actors that exploit failures in a state-centric global system, such as the limitations of sovereignty, legal jurisdictional boundaries and the safe havens that failed or weak states represent. James Rosenau discusses crime-terror cooperation as an example of a changed world order, one in which non-state actors and individuals are of growing importance.[133] Maryann Cusimano-Love sees organised crime and terrorism as two examples of international problems that require civilian-military and public-private partnerships to solve.[134] Others including Manuel Castells as well as John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt examine the networked nature of organised crime and terrorism as a significant factor in their likelihood to cooperate.[135] Likewise, the international relations scholar Susan Strange defines zones of ungovernability as the "retreat of the state" from both globalisation and non-state actors. Strange devotes a chapter to the role of organised crime in the process, which she summarises as when national governments are weak and criminals are rich, something close to civil war erupts.[136] Following on this theme, Erik Scott applies Mary Kaldor's conceptual framework of a globalised war economy to the Republic of Georgia in order to highlight how different types of malevolent non-state groups have coalesced in defined geo-economic regions (e.g. Ossetia) to further their interests.[137] Works by Saskia Sassen, James Mittelman, and Moíses Naim each argue that the forces of globalisation have empowered both organised crime and terrorism, which they call the "*dark side of globalisation*."[138]

Finally, during the decade from 1999 to 2009, the model of "crime-terror nexus" was developed, and followed by the various of works written by distinguished academics, such as Levi,

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[132] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 8-11.

[133] ROSENAU, James, *Turbulence in World Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

[134] CUSIMANO-LOVE, Maryann (ed.), *Beyond Sovereignty: Issues for a Global Agenda (Second Edition)*, Belmont: Wadsworth, 2005.

[135] CASTELLS, Manuel, *End of Millennium, Volume III (Second Edition),* Oxford: Blackwell, 2000; ARQUILLA, John, and RONFELDT, David Ronfeldt (eds.), *Networks and Netwars*, Santa Monica, RAND, 2001.

[136] STRANGE, Susan, *The Retreat of the State*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

[137] SCOTT, Erik, *Russian Business and the Sustenance of Conflict in Georgia*, London: Routledge, 2006; KALDOR, Mary, *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, Stanford University Press, 2003.

[138] SASSEN, Saskia, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, New York: The New Press, 2002; MITTELMAN, James, *The Globalization Syndrome: Transformation and Resistance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000; NAIM, Moises, "Five Wars of Globalization." *Foreign Policy*, 2003 (Stable URL www.foreignpolicy.com/wwwboard/fivewars.html)

Dishman, Fijnaut, Makarenko, Shelley and Sanderson, who all have set out to contribute insights into the nature and contingencies of interactions between organised crime and terrorism, also as analogue tactical modalities of instrumental violence by insurgents and violent extremists, sectarian and/or ideological groups. The work of Tamara Makarenko, in particular, provided a broadly replicated linear model (cf. see Figure below) for different forms of crime-terror co-operation, offered reasons for each group to cooperate within each given form, and even introduced the notion of shifting between the different forms.[139]
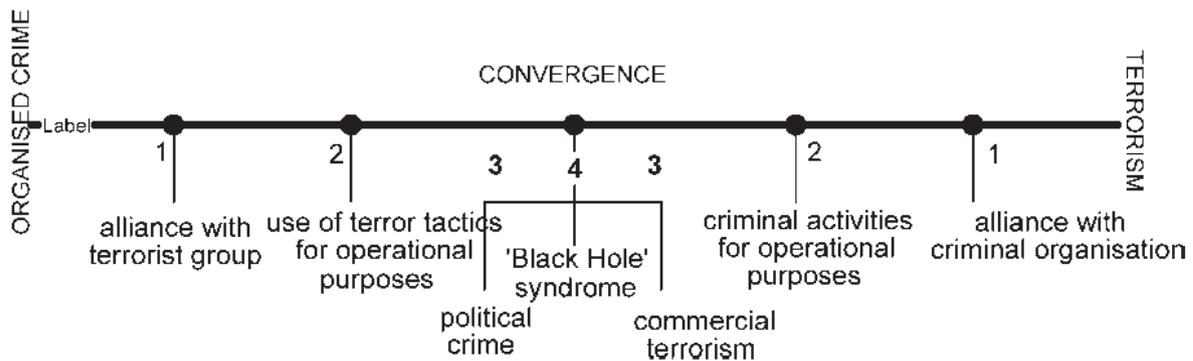


**Makarenko's Original Crime-Terror Continuum Model[140]**

Makarenko suggested a more accurate way of under-standing these rogue organisations in fact is as a security continuum, placing organised crime on one end of the spectrum and ideological/political groups on the other. Between these two extremes, a "*gray area*" with all possible variations and combinations of the two exists, whether it may be alliances between criminal and ideological/political groups, criminal groups involving in politics, or the latters involved in organised crime.[141] Makarenko points out that the nexus between organised crime and terrorism has occurred and developed because of their "*common convergence of causes*", and that alliances between criminal and political groups, in a combination of ways, both tactical and strategic, would always depend on their specific purposes and the particular changing surroundings.[142] The work of R.T. Naylor has likewise suggested an evolutionary pattern of interaction between criminals and terrorists. Another important contribution comes from Chris Dishman, who outlined a process of transformation by which terrorist groups morph into entities that are "*political by day but criminal by night.*"[143] Phil Williams conducted one of the most detailed analyses, focusing on three co-operative models of transnational criminal and insurgent/terrorist groups. These are, first, convergence into a singular phenomenon, second, collusion with one another, and third, influence on an operational approach, such as when organised crime groups adopt terrorist bombing campaigns to force concessions. Williams concludes that, while convergence between terrorism and organised criminality is an "*unquestionable possibility and a comparable pattern*", […] "*short-term convergent and divergent episodes between the two were more likely than a longer-term nexus or cooperative relationship.*"[144] Shelley also maintains that the regions in which crimi-

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[139] MAKARENKO, Tamara, "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism", in *Global Crime*, Vol. 6, No. 1, February 2004, pp. 129-145

[140] *Ibid.*, p. 131

[141] *Idem*

[142] MAKARENKO (2003), "The Ties that Bind", *op. cit.*, pp. 159-170

[143] DISHMAN (2001), "Terrorism, Crime and Transformation", *op. cit.*, pp. 43-58

[144] WILLIAMS, Phil, "Terrorism and Organised Crime: Convergence, Nexus or Transformation?", in JERVAS (ed.). *FOA Report on Terrorism*, Stockholm, Defence Research Establishment, 1998, pp. 69-92.

nal groups and terrorists/insurgents interlink, particularly in a state of chaos and on-going conflict as well as regions with the largest shadow economies have provided a safe haven for the nurturing of the crime-terrorism nexus.[145] Moreover, Ridley offers that the linkages are related to certain states, either in economic transition or failing states, "*because the criminal activities and the intersection of both groups are least risky in* [these] *regions.*"[146] In addition, Sanderson once said that the crime-terrorism nexus seems like this lethal cocktail, "*consisting of one part criminal, one part terrorist and one part weak or corrupt state, poses a formidable and increasingly powerful challenge to* [U.S.] *and global interests.*"[147]

Then, meanwhile acknowledging significant evidence of a growing spectrum of interaction between organised crime and terrorism, often to point at marked similarities that exist in behavioural and operational methods between criminal groups, organisations, and networks on the one hand, and insurgent and terrorist groups regarded as armed groups with political objectives on the other, a theme that figures prominently into these and other examinations of linkages amongst them is that these groups use similar methods and tactics *for divergent motives*. Naylor puts this phenomenon succinctly:

> "*A world of difference exists between the motives of insurgent versus criminal groups. Criminals commit economic crimes to make money. The buck, so to speak, stops there. But to an insurgent group, money is merely a tool – one that is necessary but not sufficient to achieve the group's goals.*"[148]

This "*methods, not motives*" line has long been a maxim for scholars investigating links between crime, terrorism, and non-state political violence at large,[149] often in support of the general observation that while terrorists or insurgents *might* converge, thereby sharing the behavioural and operational methods of other criminals, their basic motives would serve to keep them at arm's length, hence the phrase "*methods, not motives*." But is it that crystal clear?

<u>Operational, behavioural, and motivational drivers of overlap</u>

In their ground-breaking *Methods and Motives* (2007),[150] Louise I. Shelley and John Picarelli explores the implications of this "*methods, not motives*" argument, concluding that this general approach might well have become too restrictive and misleading in dealing with the complexity of crime-terror/insurgency interactions, both at group and individual level, oftentimes limiting such interactions to the financial realm and dismissing evidence that the goals of crime and terrorist groups have coalesced in the past.[151] Schmid's exhaustive criminological comparison of organised crime and terrorism used the lenses of organisational structure, modus operandi, and risk assessment to arrive at much the same conclusion.[152] While their research does not go so far

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[145] SHELLEY, L. I. (2005), "The Unholy Trinity", *op. cit.*, pp. 101-111.

[146] RIDLEY, N., "Organised Crime, Money laundering, and Terrorism", *Policing*, Vol. 2 (1), 2008, pp. 28-35

[147] SANDERSON, T. M., "Transnational Terror and Organised Crime: Blurring the Lines", *SAIS Review*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2004, p. 49.

[148] NAYLOR (2005), "Wages of Crime", *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[149] SHELLEY, Louise I., and PICARELLI, John, "Methods Not Motives: Implications of the Convergence of International Organised Crime and Terrorism", *Policy Practice and Research*, Vol. 3, 2002, pp. 305-318.

[150] SHELLEY, Louise I., PICARELLI, John T. *et al.*, *Methods and Motives: Exploring Links between Transnational Organised Crime and International Terrorism*, Washington, DC: Department of Justice, September 2007.

[151] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[152] SCHMID, Alex, and JONGMAN, Albert, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Databases, Theories and Literature*, North Holland: Oxford, 2004.

as to state that terrorists and organised criminals, whether and when they interact and cooperate, do automatically share the same motives and methods and thus completely repudiate "*methods, not motives*", it however convincingly argues that lines of separation are far from unequivocal.

In support of their view, the two U.S. scholars devised the framework of a five-step evolutionary process depicting the potential evolution that can be observed in the patterns of interactions and relationships between terrorist and criminal groups, and the different forms these interactions can take.[153] Henceforth acknowledging the intrinsically porous borders between not only the behavioural and operational methods of political and criminal groups, but also the motivational structures and goals of both criminal types in some instances, they elaborate on the taxonomic composition of the variability of the criminal-terrorist convergence throughout a scaling of their reciprocal interactions. The result is a linear incremental model they call the "*crime-terror interaction spectrum*" – a terminology we owe them in this study to suggest the variety of forms of possible interactions, and to ensure they understand the use of terms like "nexus" and "hybrid" in a sound and applicable manner. Within this spectrum (cf. see Figure below), processes referred by the two specialists as: *activity appropriation, nexus, symbiotic relationship, hybrid* and *transformation* are conceptualised to illustrate various alternative modalities of interaction between a terrorist group and an organised crime network, *as well as* with regards for the behaviour of one single group engaged in both spheres of operational and behavioural activity. As they noted: "*In some cases, the terrorists simply imitate the criminal behaviour they see around them, borrowing techniques such as credit card fraud and extortion in a phenomenon* [they] *refer to as activity appropriation. This is a shared approach rather than true interaction, but it often leads to more intimate connections within a short time*." This can evolve into a more symbiotic relationship, which in turn can (but many do not) turn into hybrid groups.[154] Dynamic movement among these conditions is, as they argue, possible. In this respect, we want to draw the reader's attention to the importance of the conditionality of used wording. Indeed, as quoted authors point out: "*Whereas some groups* might (emphasis added) *move backwards or even skip a stage, other may not ever move beyond a particular form of interaction.*"[155] It is therefore, amply clear, that, whereas boundaries between terrorism and organised criminality (and, by analogy, between crime and insurgency)[156] indeed are blurred and permeable, they also may be less so than could appear at first sight. That is the reason why, given the contingency of these dynamics of interactions, Shelley and Picarelli con-ceptualised their scheme as a continuum, i.e. not a logical chain of causality, but rather a linear scaling of potential incremental development. Thus, however showing that "terrorists and criminal often use the same methods, most often for divergent motives – *but not always* (emphasis added)",[157] hence challenging the conventional view that criminal groups strictly seek personal profit, whilst terrorists and insurgents, for their part, would only aim at political upheaval, Shelley and Picarelli do not go so far as to state that terrorists and organised criminals, when sharing methods, would necessarily share motives. Rather, their model introduces the possibility for certain criminal groups to pursue business in the interest of politics as well as to support the goals of terrorist (or insurgent) groups. In some cases indeed, criminal elements have adopted the ideology of terrorist groups or proved to be highly supportive of their motives, espe-

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[153] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 18-31.

[154] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[155] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[156] *Mutatis mutandis* we derive the systemic features of the relationship between insurgency and criminal activety along a similar crime-insurgency interaction spectrum under the assumption that analogous dynamics of convergence of criminal operatives and insurgents acting by means of analogue tactical modalities: targeted assassinations, hit and run tactics, terrorism are to be found with particular regards to contemporary insurgencies with transnational financial and logistical networks strongly influenced by criminal values and aspirations.

[157] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

cially in regions with sharpening ethnic and religious tensions.[158] Likewise, while profits from criminal activities remain predominantly a means for terrorist and insurgent groups to accomplish their objectives, it has not limited them from tapping cells that specialise in using organised crime to garner profits and provide logistical support. And yet, as they noted: "*The dominant pattern remains – crime groups collaborating with terrorist* [or insurgent] *groups in committing illicit activities without adopting the latter's objectives.*"[159] As such, their model's focus on complexity should not be mistaken as jettisoning the basic truths of the "*methods, not motives*" argument. Thereby following on from Shelley and Picarelli's line of argumentation does not venture to support broad and nonsensical statements such as "*most organised criminals are becoming terrorists*", neither that terrorist and crime groups are fusing into a seamless web, nor that those latter are automatically becoming insurgencies when they are able to exert influence over areas in which state authority is unable to uphold the monopoly of violence, or that contemporary insurgents would be solely interested in sustaining controlled conflicts in order to maintain markets rather than replace regimes.[160] Such misleading thinking could only but endorse an unfounded tendency to label any example in which non-state actors are using instrumental violence as an insurgency or a terrorist act, hence systematically disputing to insurgents and terrorists the existence of any clearly defined political objectives or attainable goals.
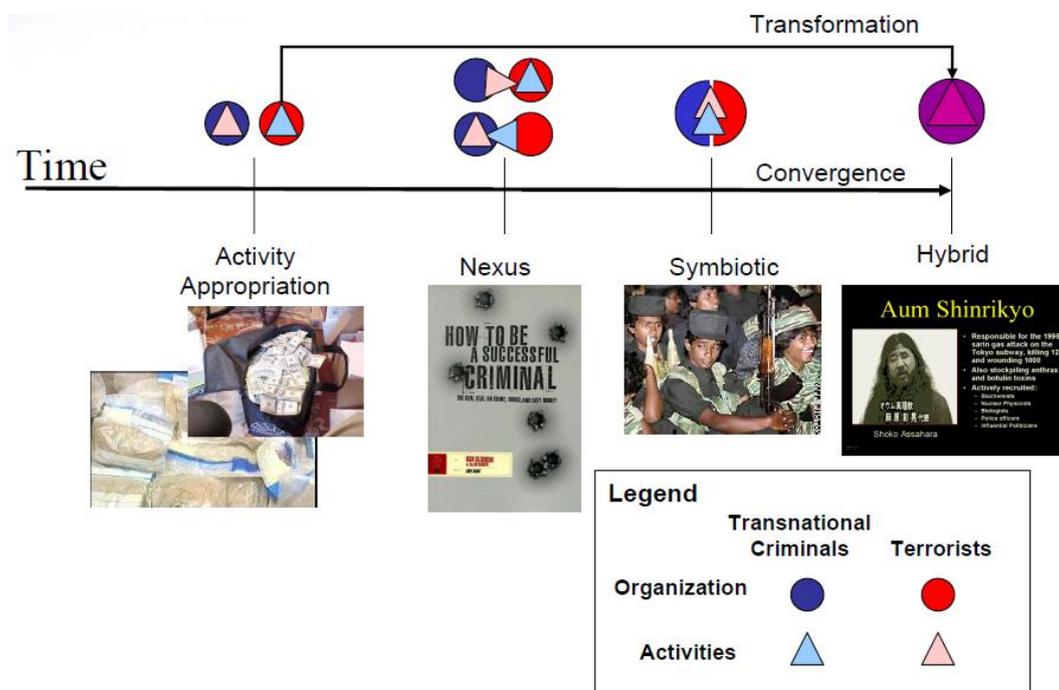


**Shelley & Picarelli's "Crime-Terror Interaction Spectrum"[161]**

Albeit contingent and highly contextual, these dynamics of cooperation and growing alignment around lucrative illegal activities between reputedly clear-cut categories of shadowy actors has been further blurring already porous boundaries between organised criminality, terrorism and insurgency. Under certain specific conditions of fragility or conflict, criminal interests

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[158] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[159] *Idem*

[160] Such is the thesis Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*, pp. 43-49.

[161] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.*, p. 6.

have become able to exert control over areas in which state authority is dysfunctional and unable to uphold the rule of law and the monopoly of violence.[162] Mexico, with its cartel-controlled areas, is for sure a case in point in this regard. But one may also consider in this light current developments in Afghanistan-Pakistan, the Western Sahel Region, or in Libya. In those regions and some others, we generally tend to overlook huge gains made amidst political and security chaos by criminal organisations in establishing and perpetuating their territorial control of strate-gic trafficking routes or ports. And yet, they have a deep impact on the overall security situation.

Although criminal organisations are typically aimed at dislodging the state from "criminally-strategic" *local* territories (such as border areas), rather than assuming its role in overall political authority across a whole country,[163] it was nonetheless suggested by a number of organised crime specialists that a whole bunch of criminal interests, whatever the practical form of their organisation may be, can also see the acquisition of political power – either overtly (armed action) or covertly (*entrysm*, corruption, infiltration of institutions) – as a requirement for commercial success and organisational survival. Now, in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, or Kyrgyzstan, to name a few within our area of interest, some criminal networks have acquired such high-level skills in the use of force that they indeed pose serious challenges for states.[164] In those countries and many others in different parts of the world, from Latin America to West Africa to South Asia, powerful crime syndicates have demonstrated they also have evident political goals as they seek to compel governments to do their will. That being so, in addition to the fact that certain criminal organisations and their paramilitary enforcers in the field were found using the means and methods of extreme violence once reserved for politically motivated insurgents and terrorist groups while enacting their agenda of displacing or discrediting the state locally so as to protect and expand their criminal enterprise, has led in recent years entire volumes of specialised published writings on that subject matter to regard those criminal groups (with special regards for the Mexican and Central American drug-cartels) as waging *de facto* insurgencies to free themselves from the influence of the state.[165]

> "[Certain such criminal groups] *go to such lengths to protect their highly lucrative economic activities that they end up undermining the authority and the legitimacy of the state. They murder police officers, soldiers, and other authorities that try to interfere with their business; they infiltrate, corrupt, or otherwise weaken government institutions; they use intense, calculated violence to carve out geographic zones where they can dominate the population and operate completely free of state control.*"[166]

Clearly, for the most part, these organisations do this for profit rather than ideology, but their actions are nonetheless deeply corrosive to state sovereignty, licit economic activity, and public security. In other words, while they often lack the explicit political agenda generally associated with insurgent groups, their violent activities and armed actions might well have many of the same political effects as an insurgency. Therefore, in functional terms at least, if not in relation to their goals, this comparative view on the basis of analogue tactical modalities might indeed make them comparable to insurgents and terrorists. However, this convergence in methods

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[162] COCKAYNE, James, "Chapter Ten: Crime, Corruption and Violent Economies", *Adelphi Papers* 50: 412 (2010), pp. 189-218.

[163] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 38.

[164] WILLIAMS, Phil, "Criminalization and Stability in Central Asia and the South Caucasus", in: OLIKER, Olga, and SZAYNA, Thomas S. (eds), *Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Implications for the U.S. Army* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 2012)

[165] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[166] BRANDS, "Third-generation gangs and criminal insurgency in Latin America" (2009: 2) quoted in: DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.,* p. 10

and tactics does not of itself, we believe, make them an insurgency. As Delgado argued, "*to call an 'insurgency'* [the action-set of criminal elements challenging the control, authority, hence the legitimacy of the state], *even with a 'criminal' qualifier, is a misnomer, because it links a diversity of situations based merely on similarity in the methods and tactics of the agents of violence, and ignores ways that non-state actors relate means to ends.*"[167] Unlike politically and/or ideologically driven groups or movements that utilise a strategy of insurgency for the purpose of wresting political control from the state in order to create, at least rhetorically, the conditions to actually revolutionise society, the goal of these criminal entrepreneurs is not to conquer or supplant the state, but to co-opt and turn it into a vehicle to serve their criminal interests.[168] This notwithstanding, the fact of the matter nonetheless remains that their criminal-economic motives also have an important political dimension *in effect*, and sometimes precisely in relation to the goals they seek to achieve. In practice, thus, not only are we witnessing a growing convergence between insurgent, terrorist and criminal groups in methods and tactics in different parts of the world, from El Salvador and Mexico, to Guinea and Mali, to Afghanistan and Tajikistan, to Indonesia and the Philippines, but the actual effects of the ways these violent non-state actors use to meet *a priori* different goals can also be fundamentally blurred. This may notably explain why, in chaotic environments where the very notion of *stateness* has broken down, and especially in time of civil war or insurgency-based conflict, the two criminal types can find common cause and even, as we describe below, coalesce. Support for this point can be found in the seminal work of Sutherland, who argued that the "*intensity and duration*" of interactions with criminal elements makes a group (or an individual) more likely to adopt criminal behaviour. In contexts of insurgency-based conflict, where there often exist intensive interaction patterns between insurgents (and eventually terrorists) and large-scale criminal elements, there is more shared behaviours and a process of mutual socialisation and learning that goes on.[169] It can then be conceived that the very *goals* of crime and terror/insurgent groups may tactically converge as the two groups find common cause for e.g. combatting together their common enemy – the state authorities, or as seen e.g. in Afghanistan, a military mission aimed at bringing them back.

When an insurgent/armed opposition group stages successful attacks against a government and its security forces, most often by engaging in deceptive, terrorist and guerrilla warfare tactical modalities that necessitate timely activation of clandestine procurement networks to acquire restricted technology or materials, all the criminal and cross-border trafficking rings they deal with to get funding and logistical support benefit as well. Conversely, when the latter destabilise government through physical attacks or well-planned corruption campaigns, the former benefit just as much, as the proliferation of crime promotes a state of disorder that works against the legitimacy of the state (or internationally operating armed forces in mission context), hence serves the insurgents/terrorists' strategic objectives. In this complex of clandestine, mutually-reinforcing relationships, the reciprocal facilitation of respective activities assures mutual gains in a strategic environment in which alliances and division of labour around the proceeds from organised crime, and the political economy of crime in general, oscillate between co-existence in common areas, non-aggression pacts, separate spheres of influence, divisions of labour, or even temporary military alliances to confront another non state group or the security forces. In this endeavour, any violent entrepreneur challenging and weakening the state often appear to be nothing but a potential objective and strategic ally, all the more so when a criminal gang or organisation finds it is its own

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[167] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.,* p. 11

[168] *Idem*

[169] In criminology, differential association is a theory developed by Edwin Sutherland proposing that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behaviour. SUTHERLAND, *A Sociological Theory of Criminal Behavior. Crime and Criminals Contemporary and Classic Readings in Criminology*, 2009 (second edition), New York: Oxford University Press.

interest to provide support to a terrorist group or an insurgent movement due to reason of political or ideological affinity. GCSP's Christina Schori Lang found that "*while organised crime groups in the past where unwilling to cooperate with terrorists for many reasons – including an increased susceptibility to law enforcement or military action and a loss of public support – the more modern organised crime cartels appear more willing to do so.* [...] *Possessing no real loyalties to any state, these groups co-operate transnationally and conduct their criminal activities in fluid network structures. They are able to offer their services to the highest bidder. In some cases younger, smaller and more loosely organised groups have become ideologically radicalised and actively pursue business in the interest of politics as well as to support the goals of terrorist groups.*"[170] Concerns then arise that, as those newer transnational crime groups, often originating in "ungoverned" conflict-ridden regions, are more likely to take advantages of the chaos of war and dysfunctional state functions and generate huge profits from cooperating with terrorists, and consequently share consistent interests with them, they gradually form terrorist-transnational crime alliance. As we will see, this is an option that may well be rather less than abstract in the case of the alignment and convergence between criminal organisations and insurgent/terrorist groups around the drug trade in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia.[171] The terrorist/insurgent-criminal connection that exists today between a broad diversity of agents of crime and violence though and around the Afghan heroin trade in Greater Central Eurasia certainly is one of the world's most significant stream in this regard. It goes to the very heart of the relationship between crime groups and the state.

### 2.2 The Crime-State Nexus

Our approach to the role played by crime, and especially organised crime *as an activity* on which a broad range of actors draw, in shaping the societal and cultural complexity from which conflicts and non-conventional security threats arise, and this shall therefore also include the diversity of motives that underlie the strategic calculations of those involved, is essential in that it allows to reintroduce the state into the organised crime-terrorism/insurgency landscape.

Granted, the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of anti-terrorist law which, in the wake of the "global war on terror" that was launched shortly after 11 September 2001, resulted in increased global cooperation to crack down on terrorist financing have drastically reduced the willingness of states to sponsor terrorist groups or organisations, inducing them to use other means of financing (including those relating to conducting illegal activities). But in the same time, the penetration of states by criminal actors and interests has been deepening and leading to co-option in some states and weakening of governance in many others. Organised crime networks insinuate themselves into the political process through bribery and in some cases have become alternate providers of governance, security and livelihoods for segments of the population.

Organised crime, and the drug trade in particular, hold a considerable corrupting power over the political spectrum, with substantial implications for the functioning and legitimacy of the state. As we have already noted above, organised crime is attracted to conflict areas due to the weakness of state power to uphold law and order. But conflict is unnecessary if criminal networks can preclude government intervention through the subversion or infiltration of the state by means of corruption and/or violence. Organised crime as a matter of practice seeks to corrupt sta-

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[170] SCHORI LANG, *op. cit.* (2011), p. 6.

[171] CORNELL, Svante, and SPECTOR, Regine, "Central Asia: More than Islamist Extremists", *The Washington Quarterly* 25, No. 1 (Winter 2009)

te authorities, since that is necessary to facilitate business, reduce risk, and thereby also costs. This process has been best illustrated by David Jordan in *Drug Politics*.[172]

Low-level corruption may impede the state's capacity to withstand and combat smuggling operations, but hardly constitutes a threat to state security by itself. But as Thachuk notes, "*corruption is no longer simply greasing the wheels of commerce, the paying off of government officials to expedite matters quickly. Rather, criminal organisations and terrorists use corruption to breach the sovereignty of many states and then continue to employ it to distort domestic and international affairs.*"[173] Officials and civilians on a lower level are involved in drug smuggling mainly due to poverty and their low or non-existent salaries. In a country like Tajikistan, local economists have estimated that 60 per cent of the population lives off money earned by relatives in Russia (*Gastarbeiter*), 25 per cent live off drug trafficking, and 15 per cent live off loans and grants allocated by international donors.[174] If exaggerated, these estimates still point to the immense economic destitution that affected large tracts of the Tajik population due to the civil war and therefore provided the ground for the mounting economic influence of organised crime.

But corruption goes beyond paying off low-level functionaries, and exists in higher levels of sophistication than its typical form of greasing a system through bribery. The criminalisation of an institution (i.e. its infiltration by criminal actors) implies not a passive taking of bribes to allow crime to occur, but the active facilitation of criminal enterprises by that institution or its leaders.[175] There is ample evidence that criminal organisations seek to assert influence, if not control, over crucial government institutions in weak states. The judicial system and security, police and border structures, as well as the financial sector, are especially targeted. When successful, this amounts to the *de facto* criminalisation of the state, in other words pushing corruption from the passive accepting of bribes to direct state involvement in and supervision of organised crime. The worst-case scenario, which David Jordan terms "*narcostatisation*", but that also can be labelled more broadly "*criminalisation*", occurs where crime is perpetrated in an institutionalised form by the state within a system of criminalised governance where politics and organised crime thrive in symbiosis.

However wholesale state capture and criminalisation is somewhat of a rare phenomenon (in fact, in many such "captured" or "criminalising" states there remain pockets of political will, including at the very top, to avoid collapse and reassert state sovereignty)[176], more common however are phenomena of TOC penetration of state institutions, and of law enforcement units in particular, which pose the most direct threat to criminal networks. In Afghanistan and several other states across the Central Eurasian macro-region, corruption in the police service has long been fuelling the narcotics trade and at the same time weakening the population's confidence in the security sector. This has led to an increased use of and reliance on non-state or private security actors by parts of the population, which further weaken the states' monopoly on the use of force. Cases such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Yanukovich's Ukraine or pre-Rose Revolution Georgia all illustrate that corruption or infiltration of institutions by criminal actors – undertaken to protect their own operations – can further weaken the fragile relations

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[172] JORDAN, David C., *Drug Politics: Dirty Politics and Democracies* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); SHELLEY, Louise, "The New Authoritarianism", in FRIDMAN, H. Richard, and ANDREAS, Peter, eds., *The Illicit Global Economy and State Power* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

[173] THACHUK, "Transnational Threats: Falling Through the Cracks?" in RUSI 2012, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

[174] ATOVULLOYEV, Dodojon, "*Pamir: Khronika bespredela*" [Pamir: Chronicles of rebellion], *Charogi Ruz*, 110, 1 (2012): pp. 3-5.

[175] BAYART, Jean-François, *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, Bloomington: Bloomington University Press, 1999, 125p.

[176] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 17.

between states and their citizens, and undermine both the domestic and international legitimacy of ruling elites, thereby posing a danger for their survival in the face of public protests. In Afghanistan, it directly affected the implementation of mandated tasks such as police reform or the extension of state authority. In all drug-producing/transit countries – and there are several of them across Greater Central Eurasia, there is a comprehensive body of evidence implicating the highest levels of power in corruption or collusion with the narcotics industry.[177] Such high-level complicity, which verges on the narcostatisation of certain regional states (as for Afghanistan and Tajikistan most notably), constitutes a clear-cut threat to the security of those states. The growth of criminal influence over state institutions changes the impetus for decision-making and implementation of laws. Institutions gradually cease to perform the functions for which they were instituted, and are instead "privatised", serving the purposes of the criminal enterprise into which they are co-opted and hollowed out from within by all those eager either to turn illicit pro-fits into a political resource or to exploit their position, authority and administrative resources to generate and/or capture illicit profits, and expand their own factional, sector-based or institutional interests in collusion with outsiders specialised in crime or violence.

Criminalised governance benefits both criminal networks and terrorist or insurgent groups and fosters an environment that is conducive to both. For those agents of crime and violence, the corruption of a country's elite is a key strategy for conducting illegal activities with impunity. The UN has on numerous occasions drawn attention to this major issue. In relation to Afghanistan and Central Asia, the UNODC argued that "[very] *weak law enforcement capacity* [...] *continued to provide organised criminals and other non-state armed groups with an avenue for the unchallenged use of certain geographic territories as transit points for international drug trafficking. Allegedly, this happens with the support of members of the defence and security forces, as well as members of the political elite. This has led to the unabated spread of heroin trafficking in and from Afghanistan.*"[178] In Afghanistan, it was found that certain members of the power elite were not only suspected of involvement in the drug trade but also of employing the services of privateers for that purpose. The fact that the police service was also implicated in the drug trade raised questions about the sustainability or even the feasibility of security sector reform.

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[177] The literature on the criminalisation of state structures in relation to the drug trade in Central Asia consists mainly of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 5UNODC) reports and a handful of articles and working papers. For UNODC reporting, see in particular, *The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem* (New York: United Nations, 2007, 160p.), *Illicit Drugs Situation in the Region Neighbouring Afghanistan and the Response of ODCCP* (New York: United Nations, October 2008, available at www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afg_drug-situation_2008-10-01_1.pdf), and the Regional Office of Central Asia, *Drug and Crime Situation in Central Asia: Compendium Analysis* (New York: United Nations, 2014, 58p.) Scholarly analysis include Martha BRILL OLCOTT and Natalia UDALOYA, *Drug Trafficiking on the Great Silk Road*, Working Paper 11 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2006), Alexander SEGER, *Drugs and Development in the Central Asian Republics* (Bonn: Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zummenarbeit, 2007), Rustam BURNASHEV, "Terrorist Routes in Central Asia: Trafficking Drugs, Humans, and Weapons" in: *Connections* (Vol. 6, No. 1, 2007: pp. 65-70), S. Frederik STARR, "Central Asia in the Global Economy", Supplement to *Foreign Policy* (September 2004), Kairat OSMONALIEV, *Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in the Central Asian States: A Legal and Political Assessment* (Uppsala: Silk Road Studies Programme, January 2007, available at www.silkroadstudies.org/Silkroadpapers/Osmonaliev.pdf), Saltanat BERDIKEEVA, *Organised Crime in Central Asia: A Threat Assessment,* (Uppsala: silk Road Studies Programme, China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly, Volume 7, No. 2, 2009, pp. 75-100). For comparative outlook, see for instance, with regard to the Burmese case, DUPONT, Alan, "Transnational Crime, Drugs and Security in East Asia", *Asian Survey* 39, 3 (1999): 433-455; GIBSON, Richard M. and HASEMAN, John B., "Prospects for Controlling Narcotics Production and Trafficking in Myanmar", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 25, 1 (April 2003): 1-19; For Colombia, see CLAWSON, Patrick L. and LEE, Rensselaer W., *The Andean Cocaine Industry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 171-4; for Lithuania (pre-EU membership), see JUSKA, Arunas and JOHNSTON Peter, "The Symbiosis of Politics and Crime in Lithuania", *Journal of Baltic Studies* 34, 4 (2004): 346-359.

[178] S/2012/889, 27 November 2012, para. 32, p. 8

Thus, whereas non-state actors are typically thought of as making up the bulk of those engaged in illicit activities and other forms of harm and violence associated with, empirical evidence and field-informed research from conflict contexts as diverse as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Russia' North Caucasus, Tajikistan, or Ukraine, however tend to highlight a dire need for taking more careful notice of the critical role played therein by state (or "para-" or "pseudo-state) actors as well: corrupt officials, strong-arm powerbrokers, mafia police etc., as they exploit their position, authority and administrative resources to protect and expand their own factional, sector-based or institutional interests in combination with organised crime networks or non-state armed groups to whom both they can provide support services.[179]

Schematically, the criticality of that role pertains in part to the practical terms of the availability of operation and refuge zones, i.e. production/transit territories or tactical operations centres in relation to the character weaknesses of certain states, and in part to the role played by crime in the moral and political economy of certain states and in their political structure indeed. In this respect, two questions are particularly essential in understanding the conditions of governance in the affected country, and consequently in how dealing with such countries – and this is especially important, as we argue hereafter, for mission planning and mandate implementation in operation context; first, who is involved or profit from the predominant organised crime activities in a given country; and second, what is the relationship between these actors and the state? In other words, coming back to the initial terms of our reflection, how does the politics of crime shape the ends and means of politics *tout court*?

As the opinion has spread that the growing convergence between terrorism and organised crime in the post-Cold War era was pushed forward by a subsequent reduction in the willingness of states to sponsor terror and indeed led terrorists and insurgents toward closer cooperation with organised crime,[180] it followed that our dominant schemes of understanding generally fall short of recognising the hybrid and transversal nature of the threat posed by the convergence of shadow networks empowering terrorists, criminals, and proliferators across borders in relation to the actual dimensions of the crime-state relationship that continues to develop today in many contexts of fragility around the world, and the fact that the resiliency of these networks is also due to the fact that some groups draw on both state sponsorship/protection and criminal activities in the meantime.[181] As noted above, in certain cases, it is the state itself that is being taken over by certain such groups. On closer observation of such strategic environments where the politics of crime extents to government decision-making, and crime, both as an activity and an interplay of interests and underlying values, comes to play a role in the political structure of the state itself, one may well find out without trying too hard evidences that the predatory and subversive activities leveraging the wealth, power, and influence of many violent non-state actors that operate in, compete to dominate, and eventually control, "grey zone" territories that allow them to function in a relatively safe environment, often turn out to thrive with the complicity and support of "facilitation networks" that enjoy *deep and lasting links* to the state (or part thereof), yet sometimes are directly nested within its structures or may eventually benefit from the support of certain states whose the leadership itself may be enmeshed in criminal activity or is hosting, tolerating, or using armed paramilitary groupings as a means of pursuing its view on statecraft.[182]

Against the backdrop of the proliferation in different parts of the world, and Greater Central Eurasia is a case in point in this regard, of such "parallel", political-criminal arrangements diverting or coercing government policy toward the service of shadow power networks that

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[179] CLAPPER 2013: 5, quoted in ALDA and SALA (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 4

[180] SCHORI LANG, *op. cit.* (2011), p. 7.

[181] MAKARENKO (2010), *op. cit.*, p.6

[182] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 17.

are organically linked to the state, often control the levers of the military, political and economic power, and yet which serve their own factional, sector-based or institutional interests in combination with organised crime networks or armed groups,[183] understanding the relative benefits derived from the relationships among and between state and non-state actors, and the mutually-reinforcing interplay of criminal interests and "values" across the state/non-state divide in the strategic calculations of both non-state groups and governmental structures, becomes essential to fully articulate the level of threat beyond the non-state sphere, the crime-terrorism/insurgency nexus, and the danger posed by "failed" states as magnets for terrorist organisations only. With the consolidation of political-criminal arrangements within which organised interests with criminal capacities and expertise in the use of violence – intelligence services and retired military officers in Pakistan, ex-*mujahideen* warlords/regional brokers in Afghanistan, Russia's pro-Kremlin neo-*kaza'ki* paramilitary leaders and Kadyrov's ruling mafia in Chechnya, or Iran Revolutionary Guards Corps "Alumni" (*Sepāh-e Pāsdārān*), to name few prime examples of this – are able to use their organic links with the formal state to protect and expand their shadowy activities in combination with organised crime networks or non-state armed groups, we face the issue of shadow networks sharing expertise, cooperating, and leveraging joint capabilities for recruitment, planning, logistics, operations, and fundraising, under the explicit or implicit protection of a stronger state's formal political leadership or powerful informal interests within, thus greatly increasing the threats they pose to international and national security. Parts of this pipeline are already developed in Greater Central Eurasia. As the state relationships consolidate, the recombinant crime-rebellion/ terrorism nexus become more rooted and thus more dangerous. Rather than being pursued by state law enforcement and intelligence services in an effort to impede their activities, organised crime groups (and perhaps terrorist groups) are able to operate in a more stable, secure environment, something that most businesses, both licit and illicit, crave.

That being so, the respective threats posed by non-state criminal and/or terrorist/insurgent groups considered separately appear to be dramatically increased, and indeed made more resilient in substance, when such shadow forces within criminalised states find it convenient to pursue their interests or view of statecraft by exploiting, appropriating or acting in combination/ collusion with them, and even more so with their nesting within governments that act as identified sponsors of non-state armed groups and paramilitary organisations, some of them designated terrorist groups, including those that actively participate in the narcotics trafficking trade and various form of illicit lucrative activities. Such use of non-state proxies, hybrid of criminal and terrorist/insurgent groups, as a form of statecraft by shadow forces engaged in a series of obscure transactions with formal state power within criminalised states, yet eventually turn out to be unaccountable to elected political authorities, brings fundamentally new elements to the dangerous spaces where state and non-state actors intersect with regions of weak sovereignty and alternative governance systems.

The threat posed by each of these agents of crime and violence considered separately then increases dramatically with the continued convergence between TOC elements, criminalised religious and/or ideological armed groups (terrorists, insurgents, and the like), and organised networks with deep and lasting links to states (i.e. organically linked to them, or part thereof) which have a defined interest in pursuing an overriding design or a grand strategy of projecting instability beyond state borders (with special reference to states such as Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Venezuela, Rwanda etc.), and/or act as an identified sponsor of outsourced pseudo-state actors, armed paramilitary groupings, insurgent armies or designated terrorist groups, including those that actively participate in the global drug trade or, e.g., arms proliferation or WMD-related trafficking. Benefits may be for a particular political movement, terrorist/

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[183] WENNMANN, Achim, "Resourcing the Recurrence of Intrastate Conflict: Parallel Economies and their Implications for Peace-building", in *Security Dialogue*, 36 (2005) 4, S. 479-494 (p. 488).

insurgent operations, theocratic goals, a foreign policy or "grand strategy" dimension, or the factional, sector-based or institutional interests of those involved, or a combination of these factors.

As it occurs *mutatis mutandis* in other parts of the world as well, with special reference to Africa's Sahel Region and the Middle East in particular, such shadow forces within criminalised states in Greater Central Eurasia, from Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands to the margins of "Greater Europe" in the Caucasus and the Black Sea Region, have already been using tactical operations centres as a means of pursuing their view of statecraft. Pakistan's ISI army intelligence's support to the Afghan Taliban, the Kashmiri insurgency, and other criminal-terrorist/ insurgent franchises active in the South Asia and Pakistan itself, and pro-Kremlin paramilitary proxies and armed promoters of the *Russkiy Mir* ("Russian World") in the contested neighbourhood, i.e. with events in Ukraine blatantly exposing the supportive role of Russian non-state actors and OC-related paramilitary groupings in fomenting conflict,[184] are certainly two most blatant examples of this.

These hybrid criminal-terrorist/insurgent/pseudo-state sets of actor-interests (or you may prefer to call them "franchises") leveraging their violent agenda with the active support and/or the strategic inaction of pivotal individuals, shadow or "hidden powers", and infiltrated security forces within criminalised state structures, yet sometimes with the direct implication of certain neighbouring states whose leadership itself may be enmeshed in these activities,[185] operate in, and control, specific geographic territories which allow them to function in a relatively safe environment, meanwhile controlling significant portions of the trans-Eurasian illicit conducts along with other TOC groups (especially Russian, but also Chechen and Central Asian crime syndicates)[186] that regularly cross the external borders of the European Union with billions of euros in illegal products, reap huge profits from, for example, trafficking in people, drugs and weapons, yet also allow free movement of irregular foreign fighters and international terrorists.

While important amendments can be formulated with due regard to the actual degree of vertical integration of organised criminal, terrorist or subversive paramilitary activities in the formal political structure of the affected states, the fact nonetheless remains that the collusive combina-tion of organised crime, criminalised state structures, and non-state proxies acting by means of terrorism or insurgency meanwhile relying on crime presents a dangerous reality that breaks traditional paradigms. The consolidation, in a growing number of state environments across the world, and the Greater Central Eurasia indeed, of a political-criminal nexus leading to various forms of state protection or support to non-state actors specialised in crime and violence, and the multifaceted avenues of cooperation, competition, and common and competing interests among the actors, has significantly reshaped the state-crime-terrorism/insurgency landscape.

In Pakistan, the role of the ISI army intelligence services, frequently denounced as a state within the Pakistani state,[187] in supporting, mingling and sometimes steering Islamist militant

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[184] See the excellent research by Orsysia Lutsevych for Chatam House (April 2016), *Agents of the Russian World Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood*, available at https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-04-14-agents-russian-world-lutsevych.pdf

[185] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[186] TROY, S. Thomas, and KISER, Stephen D. Kiser, *Lords of the Silk Route: Violent Non-state Actors in Central Asia,* INSS Occasional Paper 43 (USAF Institute for National Security Studies, 2009). See also CURTIS, Glenn E., *Involvement of Russian Organized Crime Syndicates, Criminal Elements in the Russian Military, and Regional Terrorist Groups in Narcotics Trafficking in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Chechnya* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2007), pp. 16–18.

[187] Before her assassination under unspecified circumstances in Rawalpindi on 27 December 2007, Pakistan former prime minister Benazir Bhutto had explicitly warned against the emergence of a parallel state structure in Pakistan (see *The News* 25/07/2007, http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=9205), and told the Council on Foreign Relations in August 2007 "*we cannot allow parallel armies, parallel militias, parallel laws*"

paramilitary groupings carrying out terrorist attacks is notorious although the precise dynamics of current links between members of the ISI, Pakistani Islamists, Afghan Taliban and *al-Qaeda* is a matter of intense concern and speculation.

Albeit of a different kind, Russia is another case in point. Over the past couple of years, the Kremlin has been increasingly asserting its influence in the post-Soviet space and appears prepared to use a variety of methods to achieve its objectives in the contested neighbourhood. Along a broad range of tools it uses to achieve its goals in the region (hard diplomacy, economic levers, energy supply control, trade wars, military force, propaganda, and disinformation etc.), non-state actors, and notably the ones of a paramilitary type (pro-Kremlin neo-*kaza'ki* and *kadyrovsky* Chechen militias), are a key component of this drive. While it was evident in its so-called "hybrid war"[188] with Ukraine in 2014 that Russia uses proxies abroad, it started developing this method a decade earlier or so, as a response to the "Orange Revolution" and other popular electoral uprisings that threatened Kremlin-backed politicians in the region at the time, under the guise of government-organised non-governmental organisations (GONGOs) or pseudo-NGOs,[189] which operate in tandem with the state for projecting Russian "soft power" abroad and helping turn the hearts and minds of citizens in neighbouring countries towards accepting Russia's supremacy. The on-going Ukraine crisis, however, has shed full light on the subversive and more opaque dimension of Russia's efforts through non-state actors, and how these help promote the concept of the Russian World (*Russkiy Mir*) as a flexible geopolitical tool that justifies increasing Russian actions in the post-Soviet space and beyond (think of Syria for instance.) Russian proxy groups undermine the social cohesion of neighbouring states through the consolidation of pro-Russian forces and ethno-geopolitics; the denigration of national identities; and the promotion of anti-Western, conservative Orthodox and Eurasianist values. They can also establish alternative discourses to confuse decision-making where it is required, and act as destabilising forces by uniting syndicates in the criminal underworld and armed paramilitary groupings, and spreading aggressive propaganda. In addition to the growing presence of a state itself, which is increasingly viewed as criminalised, it is attested from several sources that there also has been a significant increase in the presence of Russian non-state actors in the form of TOCs, which are widely involved in drug trafficking, weapons smuggling and illegal firearms sales, and money laundering activities.[190] Events in Crimea and Donbas have exposed the important role of such groups in

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*and parallel government structures*" (see "A Conversation with Benazir Bhutto", CFR meeting transcript from 15/08/2007, p. 8)

[188] In the context of this research, the term "hybrid" war is used to define a strategy that combines conventional and unconventional, regular and irregular, and overt and covert means to exploit an opponent's vulnerabilities and achieve combat superiority.

[189] Registered under Russian law as non-profit civil society organizations (CSOs), such groups are financed by the state, or by companies loyal to it, and operate in tandem with the state. Their purpose is to project Russian "soft power" abroad and help turn the hearts and minds of citizens in neighbouring countries towards accepting Russia's supremacy. Russia, as other countries, promotes its 'brand' globally through multiple routes, including culture, language, tourism and economic connections.

[190] Asal Azamova, "The Military is in Control of Drug Trafficking in Tajikistan", *Moscow News*, 30 May 2002. This was the firstt acknowledgement of Russian officials of the long-suspected involvement of its troops in Tajikistan in the drug trade. See also "Civil Order Still a Distant Prospect in Tajikistan", *Jamestown Monitor* 7, No. 137 (18 July 2005), Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Central Asia: Charges Link Russian Military to Drug Trade", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 8 June 2006. See also Bolot Januzakov, quoted in CURTIS, Glenn E., *Involvement of Russian Organized Crime Syndicates, Criminal Elements in the Russian Military, and Regional Terrorist Groups in Narcotics Trafficking in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Chechnya* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2009), p. 14; KALIYEV, Rustam, "How the Mafias Were Formed", pt. 1 of "Russia's Organised Crime: A Typology", *Eurasia Insight*, 17 June 2012, accessed at http://www.eurasia net.org/departments/insight/articles/eav013102.shtml. In *Russian Business Power: The Role of Russian Business in Foreign and Security Relations* (London: Routledge, 2011), WENGER, Andreas, ORTTUNG, Robert, and

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fomenting and exacerbating conflict. The activities of those proxy groups – combined with the extensive Russian state administrative resources and security apparatus, as well as the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, pro-Russian elites, criminal sub-culture and the media – could seriously damage political transitions and civil societies in the region.

While the regional convulsions from Eastern Ukraine through the Black Sea Region are not to be viewed as a "criminal insurgency", the role played therein by state-sponsored criminal-lised pseudo-state actors and paramilitary proxies however tends to demonstrate the geopolitical implications of the conversion on a quasi-permanent basis of criminal violence into political resources by a world-class guardian state which subscribes to a policy of using hybrid criminal/pseudo-state franchises operating, and controlling, tactical operations centres outside its borders as instruments of statecraft, at the expense of a weaker neighbour, for the purpose of power politics. This brings new elements to the dangerous spaces where non-state actors intersect with regions of weak sovereignty, pseudo-state actors, and criminalised state structures. It creates new dynamics that fundamentally alter the structure underpinning the global order.

Just as the crime/terrorism divide has been increasingly fading away over the past two de-cades or so, and is today recognised as overly permeable indeed, given also how it can be highly contentious to differentiate between politically inspired and economic-criminal activity in situ-ations of persistent civil war or insurgency-based conflict, the traditional state/non-state dicho-tomy appears to be no longer relevant for adequately illuminating the scale of challenges posed to the sovereignty of nation-states by the interplay of metastasizing groups of agents of crime and violence with criminalised state structures, "stateless" regions, and the multiple networks that exploit, support, and/or appropriate them as a means for pursuing their own factional, sector-based or institutional interests, yet also eventually their view of statecraft. If any, our mainstream policy toolkit does not appear to have any workable paradigm fit for giving full account of the actual dimensions of the emerging combination of threats at hand, which comprises not only the development of workable relationships between organised crime networks and terrorist or insurgent organisations, but opportunity structures derived from criminalised state structures providing support services to both criminal and terrorist/insurgent groups.[191] The strengthening of the crime-state nexus, the proliferation of criminalised "parallel" states, and the consolidation of a broader criminal-political nexus resulting of the development of collusive linkages between state-related (or "pseudo-state") actors, organised crime networks, and non-state armed groups, present an evolving reality that breaks traditional paradigms.

In light of the alliances of convenience and interest which, as Farah, Hansen, Liang *et al.* explored, prove to have developed in many contexts of fragility and conflict between non-state and state actors throughout the ways both relate means to ends in serving their respective inter-ests, we contend that the recombinant overlap in the interplay of criminalised values and interests in government (or parts thereof) and group decision-making, i.e. the politics of crime across the state/non-state divide, precisely is what underpins the connectivity among the variety of groups operating along different geographic and/or functional segments of the overall criminal-terrorist/insurgent conduct across the broader Central Eurasian macro-region. As seems likely in a region

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PEROVIC, Jeronim (eds.) explore the powerful impact these actors are having on the evolution of the Russian state and its foreign behaviour. Unlike other books, which focus either on Russia's foreign and security policy, or on the evolution of Russian business, legal and illegal, within the context of Russia's domestic transition, this book considers how far Russia's foreign and security policy is shaped by business. It considers a wide range of issues, including energy, the arms trade, international drug flows, and human trafficking, and examines the impact of Russian business in Russia's dealings with Western and Eastern Europe, the Caspian, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Far East.

[191] SMITH, M. L. R., NEUMANN, Peter, *Strategy of Terrorism: How it works, and how it fails* (London: Rout-ledge, 2008), p.7

historically subject to flux, identifying the drivers of that connectivity is all the more important that similar hybrid models are also developing in other parts of the world as well, i.e. across the Sahel Region and in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East as well, which makes understanding their dynamics essential as they stand increasingly prominent as a critical element in the broader global insecurity context, and certainly that of Europe as a whole. A refined anatomy of how these relationships evolve, and the relative benefits derived from the relationships among and between state and non-state actors in particular, can greatly enhance our understanding of this "*new-but-old*" hybrid threat and offer practical insights of how to better deal with it.

As criminal agents, state actors are obviously only part of the picture. They collude with both organised crime and terrorist groups and insurgents, two sets of actors who in turn collude between themselves. As Figure below indicates, not all states are criminalised, not all organised crime (TOC) groups/organisations/networks are engaged in terrorism or collude with terrorist/insurgent groups, and not all terrorist/insurgent groups conduct criminal activities. The overlap between all three groups (or parts thereof) within the political-criminal "nexus" constitutes a small but highly dangerous sub-set of cases.
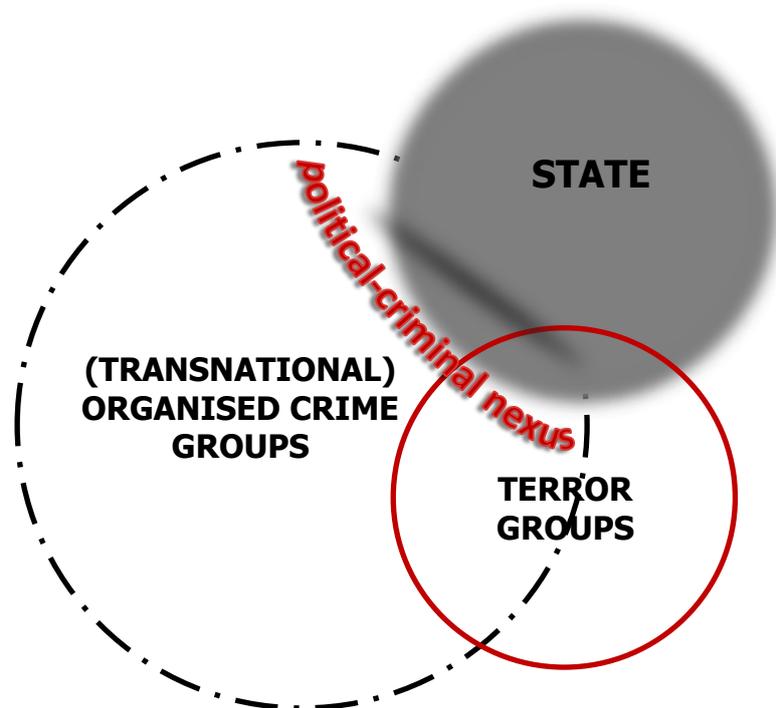


**Locating of the political-criminal nexus – Overlap of the State, Terror groups and criminal (TOC) organisations in criminalized states**

### 2.3 The Crime-Operations Nexus

In the same scenario as the criminalisation of governance benefits both criminal networks and terrorist/insurgent groups and fosters an environment that is conductive to both, the co-incidence of organised crime and terrorism or insurgency in contexts as diverse as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Mali (in Libya, tomorrow in Syria?), has not only showed the extent of its full impact on exacerbating efforts in war-fighting and peace-making when it comes to reactively reclaiming "back holes" and "draining the swamp" as counterterrorism officials hope to do, but also how severely – and this could not be otherwise – it is affecting the effectiveness of the tools that came over the past decade to be favoured by the "R2P" community as its primary instruments for "stabilising" and "securitising" the affected regions. And this primarily includes peace or stabili-

sation operations by internationally operating armed forces – with their security assistance, peace-enforcing/counterinsurgency and state-building tasks as stabilisation and securitisation processes.

There does not exists a widely accepted definition of this kind of mission mixing hard and soft security tasks, and even about the term itself there is confusion. Next to peace operations,[192] this kind of military mission characterised by a combination of military warfare with a high level of violence (hard security tasks), on the one hand, and reconstruction and aid activities that seem rather uncommon to the normal military tasks on the other hand, is sometimes described in broader terms of military interventions or humanitarian interventions, or in more specific terms of counterinsurgency operations or even peace enforcing operations.[193] There is also a discussion as to the "newness" of these operations. Most experts agree that many examples of this kind of operations can be found in history.[194] What may be new, however, is that these operations have become more commonly called for as ultimate global security governance tools than they used to be. And though their end has often been predicted,[195] it has in fact new arrived. While NATO has now cut by and large its largest stabilisation (/counterinsurgency/security assistance) mission ever in Afghanistan, new theatres have emerged in places such as Mali, Libya and the Levant, where the conditions and requirements of long-term needs and commitments are still unclear.

Because of the mist surrounding the concept of stabilisation operations, a broad approach has been chosen in this paper: within the framework of stabilisation operations, military (humanitarian) interventions and counterinsurgency operations are also included, as well as peace operations within the higher levels of violent interaction (for example, peace enforcement.) Thus the definition of stabilisation operations used here could be described as follows: "*Stabilisation operations are military missions that are aimed at creating stability in a certain area, stability meaning a stable, safe society with no place for insurgents, terrorists and other safety under-mining elements.*"[196] Archetypical example of this has been the NATO-led multinational military mission of ISAF in Afghanistan (2001-14). A specific feature of such stabilisation operations is that they incorporate a certain level of violence due to resistance to the stabilisation forces by (irregular) combatants or insurgents. It is this violent character that amounts to the difference between stabilisation operations and "real" peace operations based on peace-keeping, although the difference between stabilisation operations and peace enforcing operations is less clear.

Not only the characteristics of such multi-tasked operations are unclear, but there is also little unanimity among the military and scholars about their effectiveness. A long series of work has been written by both civilian and military experts on this subject matter during the past decade, presenting research results or personal experiences that for some of them become useful when

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[192] By peace operations we understand operations mandated by the UN Security Council and led by the UN, NATO, the EU or other regional organisations. Even though in the field of peace/capacity-building operations the UN still is the largest deployer with more than 92,000 uniformed personnel currently serving in 16 operations worldwide. Figures are from April 2015, see UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Peacekeeping Fact Sheet*, April 2015. Figures refer to the number of peacekeeping operations. Additional UN deployments include the so-called "Special Political Missions", see UN Department of Political Affairs: *United Nations Political and Peace-building Missions, Factsheet*, 31 January 2015.

[193] MEER, Sico J. van der, Factors for the Success or Failure of Stabilisation Operations, Den Haag, Nederlands Instituut voor Internationale Betrekkingen Clingendael, May 2009; full text available at https://www.clingendael .nl/sites/default/files/20090500_cscp_security_paper_meer.pdf

[194] For historical review in context, see for instance: SEYBOLT, Taylor B., *Humanitarian military intervention. The conditions for success and failure*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 23-41.

[195] SCHMIDL, Erwin A., "Into the twenty-first century: some thoughts on interventions and peace operations", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 15 (2012) No. 2, pp. 201-205; ROTHSTEIN, Hy S., *Afghanistan and the troubled future of unconventional warfare* (Naval Institute Press; Annapolis 2008).

[196] MEER (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

looking at the challenges posed to effective mandate implementation and the sustainability of achievements.[197] In order to keep to the point, we limitedly took up those works dealing with the implications of organised crime and its role in the moral and political economy of conflict for operations. Now, the volume of research at hand was of the lowest possible size…[198] As astonishing it may indeed seem in light of the magnitude of the strategic challenges posed to international and national security by the nexus between organised crime and conflict – and notably with regards for resilient linkages between terrorism/insurgency and organised crime in mission context, careful consideration of the ways criminalised governance (*largo sensu*) impact the tools and processes through which efforts aimed at "stabilising" and "securitising" are carried out in context is only just beginning. In a view with more direct and immediate relevance for Belgian, European, and Atlantic military the discussion that follows is largely derived from research on the stabilisation/capacity-building and counterinsurgency as peace-enforcement operations conducted in Afghanistan within the multinational framework of the ISAF mission between 2003-04 and 2014. As reflected from the puzzles and pitfalls of that decade-long mission still lacking certainty of outcomes, this discussion has critical implications for future armed conflicts and multilateral military involvement within. Although the confluence of organised crime and terrorists or insurgents groups, and implications for conflictuality at large, is today widely recognised, agencies that deal with law enforcement, security and intelligence, and military establishments alike, remain behind the curve in confronting the combination of threats that stems from these consolidating patterns of interaction and convergence of shadow networks that are empowering terrorists, criminals, and proliferators in some of the most critical parts of our world (think of Libya, Syria etc.) Even before factoring in the growing efficiencies derived from collusion with organised networks enjoying some deep and lasting links to certain states, and all the more so when forms of state sponsoring and protection are to be considered, the effects of this combination of threats on the politics of terrorism and conflict around the world are enormous.

Although there has been in recent years a growing awareness consciousness of the widely detrimental field-effects of the nexus between crime and conflict, it cannot but be noticed bewildering that consideration of the challenges posed to the sustainability of an operation's efforts – and its exit options indeed – by the whole array of problems that arise from the centrality of the politics of crime to shaping the societal and cultural complexity from which terrorism and insurgency thrive have been largely absent from mandates, strategic guidance and capacities provided to operations so far. So while the threat posed by organised crime is part of a larger rhetoric around stabilising conflict-ridden and post-conflict states, peace or stabilisation operations with their early peace-enforcement and state-building processes are rarely designed to deal with the challenges and complexities of addressing the overall factors that make a country vulnerable to organised crime and serve as enablers for the development of linkages between organised crime and seditious non-state armed groups, and their effects on the exacerbation of efforts in war-fighting and peace-making. However severely affected by the presence of organised crime and its multiple field effects in the mission area, they lack strategies, instruments and capacities to do so. This is all the more detrimental as, having regard to the fact that the scourge of organised crime, terrorism, and insurgency must be regarded more as the symptom that the root cause of a set of deep crises in society that underline the conflict situation in which they thrive,[199] proper consi-

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[197] For a complete literature review on that subject matter, see MEER (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 6-11.

[198] There are some notable exceptions, see for example the contributions in the special issue of International Peacekeeping by James Cockayne, Adam Lupel (eds): *Peace Operations and Organised Crime: Case Studies, Lessons Learned and Next Steps, International Peacekeeping*, 16 (2009); see also Walter Kemp, Mark Shaw, and Arthur Boutellis, *The Elephant in the Room: How Can Peace Operations Deal with Organised Crime*, International Peace Institute, June 2013.

[199] Assessment made in light of the Afghan case by Thomas Ruttig in: RUTTIG, "Afghanistan between Democratisation and Civil War", in KING MALLORY, and KRAUSE, Joachim (eds.), *Sustainable Strategies for Af-*

deration of the root factors providing opportunity structures and serving as enablers for organised crime prolonging or exacerbating conflict by funding or resourcing armed groups, should not start once a mission is on the ground, but well ahead of its deployment, so as it is mandated to deal with likely scenarios from the outset and equipped with strengthened capacities for analysis and response, so as to avoid this way time-lags which in the end benefit criminals and other violent non-state actors. If there is one thing coming back loud and clear from the (to say the least) mixed results of ten years of counterinsurgency *cum* stabilisation/state-building in Afghanistan, it should be that one.

A more strategic for countering the political economy of organized crime in the context of internationally supported stabilisation processes is needed – not only to contain the spread of criminal networks and the corresponding risk ("exposure") to strengthening the nexus between organised crime and non-state armed actors, but also to protect the achievements of a mission and make stabilisation achievable as well as sustainable.

We've already pointed out, throughout our discussion above, the cardinal need to acknowledge the broad range of networks and actors who, beyond and beneath the sole "crime-terror nexus", draw on organise crime, and the variety behind their involvement:[200] for mafias or criminal groups these activities are an end in itself; for rebels and insurgents they can be a way of funding a political agenda; for elites, illicit profits can be a political resource; for ex-combatants crime can be a way of earning a living in a post-conflict situation. For mission planning and mandate implementation, two particularly critical questions arise, that should be mainstreamed into mission assessment and planning as early as possible so as to include threat assessments focused specifically on organised crime and its potential impact on mandate implementation and staff security:[201] first, whom is involved or profits from the predominant organised crime acti-vities in the host country; and second, what is the relationship between these actors and the state? If non-state actors profit, there are all chances they will become spoilers of the stabilisation/peace-building processes. If state actors and/or the relevant elite are involved, there is a danger that those processes, and the institutional framework that comes along it, will be hollowed out from within.

It is well established by now that legitimate, functioning and reliable state institutions are critical for long-term peace and stability. Henceforth, stabilisation or peace operations today are widely concerned with supporting the emergence of such institutions and with the extension of state authority. As it occurs, the politically relevant elite therefore is one of the key partners in the host nation. Without the cooperation of this group, sustainable stabilisation and peace-enforce-ment/building processes are almost impossible to achieve. Meanwhile, for organised crime groups and other experts in crime and violence, the corruption of a country's elite is a key stra-tegy for conducting their violent and illegal activities with impunity. As noted above, crimina-

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*ghanistan and the Region After 2014* (Conference Papers), Aspen European Strategy Forum, The Aspen Institu-te, Berlin, January 2012, p. 150.

[200] When a state is unable to maintain its monopoly over the use of violence, power vacuums inevitably arise. In many ways, particular strong-arm brokers fill these vacuums in failed. In a foundational piece on warlordism in *International Security* (2006-7), American sociologist Kimberly Marten demonstrated that then often emerges "*a set of organisational decisions and action strategies enabling the conversion of organised force into criminal as well as legal resource exploitation on a permanent basis*"; also pointing to a wider process of conversion of military force into economic and political resources by "violent entrepreneurial structures"

[201] See HOLT, Victoria K., and BOUCHNER, Alix J., "Framing the Issue: UN Responses to Corruption and Criminal Networks in Post-Conflict Settings", in: *International Peacekeeping*, 16 (2009) 1, S. 20.32; see also COCKAYNE, James, and LUPEL, Adam, "Conclusion: From Iron Fist to Invisible Hand – Peace Operations, Organised Crime and Intelligent International Law Enforcement", in: *International Peacekeeping* 16 (2009) 1, pp.151-168 (162).

lised governance benefits both criminal networks and terrorist or insurgent groups and fosters an environment that is conducive to both. As for engaging more effectively with the large impact the nexus between organised crime and non-state groups has in terms of emboldening terrorism and sustaining insurgency, hence exacerbating efforts in war-fighting and peace-making, important lessons must also be drawn with regards for the infiltration of fragile foreign-supported government structures by criminal actors, the fostered growth of a "political-criminal nexus" enabled by increased opportunities afforded by huge inflows of donor money, and the corruption that comes along in the wake of a stabilisation operation's efforts, as well as the ways shadow networks colluding with organised crime networks, and therefore indirectly also with illegal armed groups, may hollowed out supported institutions from within, and divert financial aid mechanisms and logistical/procurement models that nerve stabilisation efforts in operational context.

During the short decade that marked the most active phase of international operations in the Afghan theatre (2004-2012) not only did internationally operating armed forces face a resilient insurgency resourcing its armed struggle through criminal means in an environment heavily shaped by the drug trade, but the "hearts and minds" paradigm of the counterinsurgency (COIN) plan that was followed has proven, in many instances, powerless to influence a situation in which the broadest spectrum of local actors, ranging from insurgents and criminals, to warlord militias and privateers to government authorities to local communities in large numbers, happened often to be organised around livelihood/profit generation schemes driven by the proceeds from organised crime, chiefly the drug economy. Not only this political economy of crime has been fuelling the prolonged existence of insurgent and criminal groups, but it also made it extremely difficult to win the support of communities whose livelihood depends on the cultivation of poppy, which continued to convert them to the social basis of the insurgency amidst joint military-civilian efforts aimed at "bringing the state back" in Afghanistan, meanwhile oiling the wheels of the politico-administrative structure of the *state-to-be-built*. Owing to the Afghan experience and some others, although less "comprehensive" in other parts of the world as well (Columbian, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Mali etc.), this retrospectively should raise some important questionings about possible inadequate features of COIN/state-building as stabilisation processes in strategic environments as heavily dependent on a large shadow economy as Afghanistan.

Not only are stabilisation operations bound to confront the detrimental impact of organised crime and illicit economic activities on the preferences of those involved to the detriment of mandate implementation, but their tools and processes are also directly affected by the presence of organised crime and the multifarious linkages between criminal groups and other spoilers of peace who are sharing expertise and are cooperating in kidnapping, arms, drugs and human trafficking etc. in the mission area, and this impact is not limited – and we underline this point – to those parts of the mission explicitly dealing with issues of crime, such as the police component. In fact, organised crime, its moral and political economy, and nexus to others agents of violence appears to affect many areas of mandate implementation and, indeed, the core business of operations. It can undermine a secure environment, spoilers motivated by criminal gains can undermine the implementation of peace agreements, and – perhaps even more critically – organised crime and its linkages to other actors (both state and non-state) threatens to undermine state-building or peace processes and with that the sustainability of an operation's efforts – and its exit options. NATO itself, like the UN in other contexts,[202] has highlighted how severe of a threat organised crime and the corruption that accompanies it, generally unconditionally blaming Af-

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[202] Aspects of this are well documented in the reports of the Secretary-General for the time period concerned as well as in the reports of the expert panel, see for example *S/2000/1195*, 20 December 2008, p. 8, para 3 as well as p. 19 para 90.

ghan "traditions" for, have posed to the core aim of the Afghanistan mission.[203] But has it done all what was possibly achievable not to reinforce and nurture it? Here questions do arise as to whether operations do not sometimes inadvertently fuel what is intended to be cured.

Even paved with the best of intentions, international interventions have important "side effects" or unintended consequences that must be acknowledged. Meanwhile being vulnerable to organised crime by impacting the demand side themselves,[204] and being severely affected by the effects of its nexus with non-state armed actors in the field, stabilisation or peace operations – or accompanying measures – also create evident opportunities for criminal networks to thrive and expand their illicit businesses. Foxy military planners should be prepared for this, as the impact on the credibility of a mission can be considerable. In Afghanistan, proliferating criminal activities like kidnapping, ransoming and theft amidst the growing insurgency and worsening security conditions promoted a state of disorder which worked against the legitimacy of the international intervention, and eventually served the insurgents' strategic objectives while also financing their organisations. Also, deployment decisions, particularly during start-up, can advantage criminal actors. In Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo (but also in Haiti, Sierra Leone etc. as far as the UN is concerned), security gaps during the deployment phase (not to mention the mere and dramatic absence of such deployment in Libya, now facing the consequences you cannot bomb a country from 9,000 m into a western-style democracy) provided criminal groups with opportunities to proliferate and expand, make their illicit businesses flourish, and develop deeper and more complex connections amongst and between them and other malicious actors like insurgents, arms proliferators and indeed terror cells. UNMIK's (UN Interim Administration for Kosovo) Central Intelligence Unit has found that Kosovo came to be seen as a safe transit area for illegal goods and a human trafficking hub in 1999 and 2000 – a period of time during which KFOR and UNMIK were already deployed.[205] Also, think of the dramatic increase in opium production and trafficking in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2007 while ISAF and the COIN strategy was rolling out into Helmand, Kandahar, and the other Afghan provinces of the Pashtun belt.[206] Similar patterns can emerge when a mission withdraws. Regarding Afghanistan, the UN Secretary-General has noted that, "[the] *financial impact of the large-scale departure of international forces may make the illicit economy, notably that based on narcotics, even more attractive to those with*

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[203] See for example *Commander of the Joint Chief of Staff Address to the Troops at ISAF HQ Afghanistan*, last accessed URL at: http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/transcripts/commander-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-address-to-the-troops-at-isaf-hq-kabul-afghanistan.html

[204] There have been cases where peace-keepers themselves have been involved in organised crime activities. The issue attracted public attention notably during the 1990s Balkan missions – not least when an UNPROFOR (UN Protection Force) contingent was redeployed due to its involvement in the drug trade. However, such incidents are neither limited to one particular operation nor to a particular troop contributor. Such cases, when they become public, attract a considerable amount of media attention and fan public debates on the faults of peace operations. As a consequence, the public perception of the extent of this problem might not necessarily match reality. Even single cases show, however, that stabilisation or peace operations, too, are vulnerable to infiltration by organised crime. The causal linkages between a rising demand for prostitution and an increase in human trafficking is well known, fairly well researched and documented, and has led the UN Secretariat as well as missions to adopt counter-measures. In fact, this is one of the few areas where missions can impact the demand side. However, the predominant organised crime activities in mission areas are generally driven by an international demand. For an in-depth, though a bite dated discussion of that issue in UN-led operations context, see AOI, Chiyuki, and THAKUR Ramesh, *Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations*, Tokyo/NY/Paris 2010.

[205] See UNMIK, *Pillar 1 Police and Justice Presentation Paper*, p. 36.

[206] For an updated commentary from the field on the problem of organised criminal activity related to opium production and narcotic trafficking posed to counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan see: EVANS, Ryan, "Setting the Record Straight on Eradication in Helmand", *Kings of War Blog*, 23 May, 2012, http://kingsofwar.org.uk/2012/ 05/setting-the-record-straight-on-eradication-in-helmand/

*large patronage systems to sustain*."[207] Reasons for this have to be understood in the context of the debate on the so-called "war economy" whose mainsprings, in Afghan context, cannot be conceived of otherwise than in collusion with the predations of corrupt officials, regional power-brokers, tribal chieftains and other pseudo-state violent political entrepreneurs dubbed "warlords", which all have a vested interest in perpetuating a state of protracted instability and conflict to continue benefiting from pooled donor money and military resourcing which have been slowly but inevitably drying up since the end of ISAF mandate.

Important questions that arose about the impact of the procurement and contracting procedures of such large international military forces as ISAF on criminal networks highlight an important area where decisions by foreign interveners in operational context can inadvertently benefit criminal actors. At the same time, one may also argue that the enormous enlargement of ISAF forces in the late 2000s and its vast expenditures often actually inadvertently fuelled the insurgency.[208] Though issues related to the militarisation of aid in the context of stabilisation/ COIN *cum* operations in ISAF's Afghanistan will be addressed in further detail later on, suggested reasons for this is that ISAF unintentionally – but sometimes also intentionally – became entangled in local power conflicts in the context of what the U.S. armed forces representatives called "tribal warfare",[209] while the enormous influx of money transformed local economies, created or amplified inequalities and fuelled existing or new conflicts. In post-2001 Afghanistan, delegitimised members of the former *mujahedeen* factions were successively integrated into the country's emerging governance and administrative structures without necessarily shedding their criminal ties. Many of those unsavoury pseudo-state "warlords" largely maintained they powerful private armies, which were made inescapable in the fight against the Taliban, and co-opted state authority in their regions of influence through organised crime (mostly related to drug-trafficking) and their close ties with Afghanistan's powerful criminal and drug-trafficking rings. What was one a crime-rebel nexus thus turned into a powerful criminal-political nexus.[210] Interconnectedly, the crime-insurgency/terrorism nexus has continued to thrive, with the Taliban and other related insurgent/terrorist groups – most spectacularly Islamist militant warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i Islami* faction in Kunar, Laghman, and Paktia provinces, Eastern Afghanistan, establishing their own income generation schemes (mostly through indirect taxation) in areas of poppy cultivation/traffic closely associated with their presence or where the population is controlled by their criminal intermediaries.[211] Proceeds from the drug/crime economy provided some local insurgent commander networks the capacity to violently challenge and undermine the extension of state authority in several key strategic areas. Three different aspects of the international intervention in Afghanistan, ISAF and peace-enforcement/counterinsurgency, the NATO Training Mission (NTM-A) and security sector reform, and the United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) and state/capacity-building, subsequently struggled with the implications.

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[207] *S/2012/462*, 20 June 2012, para 69, p. 16

[208] On that line of argumentation, read the excellent peace by Philipp Münch for the *Afghanistan Analysts Network* (AAN), *Resolute support Light. NATO's New Mission Versus the Political Economy of Afghan National Security Forces* (pp. 7-8), AAN Discussion Paper 1/2015; Stable URL https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/ wp-content/uploads/2015/01/20150112-PMuench-Resolute_Support_Light.pdf

[209] The best-known example for this was Jim Gant's paper "One Tribe at a time: A strategy for success in Afghanistan" that became required reading in the U.S. forces. See for example also Martine van Biljlert, "The Revolt of the Good Guys in Gizab", *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 24 June 2010, at https://www.afghanistan-ana lysts.org/ the-revolt-of-the-good-guys-in-gizab/

[210] See SHAW, Mark, *Chapter 7: Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organised Crime in post-Taliban Afghanistan*, in: *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008*, UNODC (November).

[211] GIUSTOZZI, Antonio, *Empires of Mud: Wars and Warlords in Afghanistan*, C. Hurst & Co, 2009, p. 79-81.

Criminal proceeds influence the preferences of those involved to the detriment of security and state-building efforts. Depending on how deep the followings are embedded in the political economy of crime, illicit profits can affect the will for genuine reform among political elites, reduce the attractiveness of critical disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes for ex-combatants, and undermine law enforcement if profiteers include members of the security services – a central dilemma for security operations or other actors involved in stabilisation efforts and state-building processes. In Afghanistan, corruption in the police service set up under the framework of the ISAF-driven security sector reform has fuelled (and been fuelled by) the local opium trade and, at the same time, weakened the population's confidence in the security sector. This led to an increased use of and reliance on non-state or private security actors (tribal militias, vigilante groups, warlord militias etc.) by parts of the population, which has been further weakening the states' already weak monopoly on the use of force. The example illustrates that corruption or infiltration of institutions by criminal actors – undertaken to protect their own operations – can further weaken the fragile relations between states and their citizens. It also directly affects the implementation of mandated tasks such as the extension of state authority.

Then, as was made clear by the puzzles and pitfalls of Afghanistan's battle for "hearts and minds", the moral and political economy of crime, and notably the dependence of large segments of Afghanistan's rural population on the cultivation of poppy for livelihoods, along with its tolerance or even support for criminal activities related to the drug economy, can often play a major role in maintaining, restoring or increasing at once the insurgents (or terrorists) ability to keep control and convert local folks into the social base of the insurgency, attract to the ranks of their fighting cells, bands or units new recruits that enlist to eat and to empower themselves socially and economically.[212] Yet, besides "easy money" to those involved, proceeds from organised crime also provide a lifestyle which makes spoilers particularly difficult to deal with, as it also tightens the grip of crime "as a way of life" (with special reference to the so-called "Kalashnikov culture") on all those willing to defy and subvert the system rather than seize opportunities to succeed within peaceful, "civilised" parameters that run against custom and the everyday reality of a culture of violence reflected in a weak and corrupt state unable to enforce law and order and to discipline its own citizens and officials. Thereby inducing ways local actors relate means to ends in engaging into violence with regards for the interplay of needs, interests (or greed) and values in their decision-making, the politics of access to and use of the proceeds from crime, whether of "local" or transnational organised crime, hence play a critical role in fuelling the existence and violent activities of armed groups and, at the same time, nurturing the support of all those they proceed or traffic the goods and products which the livelihood or wealth depend on. In the geographic territories they operate, and control, criminalised armed groups often develop strategies that seek to create loyalties and support among the local population, whether this is through the provision of protection, other basic services or through charity or revolutionary taxation.[213] Ever sensitive to local social and political dynamics, insurgent groups like the Taliban do not necessarily seek to interfere with established practices, mostly if they play in their best interest. The criminals and insurgents/terrorists who have chosen to operate there do so as participants in existing social, political and economic environments; there are not necessarily considered as exogenous actors by the locals nor are they necessarily seen as threats. At times, once entrenched, they can even act as providers of basic security for segments of the population to which they provide cash and employment (e.g. proceeding their illicit agricultural production), hence leading them to reject the legitimacy of the state through the adoption of alternate norms which, all grievances

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[212] GUTIERREZ, Francisco, and GIUSTOZZI, Antonio, "Networks and Armies: Structuring Rebellion in Colombia and Afghanistan", in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33: 9 (2010), p. 843

[213] See GIUSTOZZI, Antonio, "Hearts, Minds, and the Barrel of a Gun: The Taliban Shadow Government", in *PRISM*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Washington D.C., March 2012, pp. 75-87.

added, can convert peasants and casual folks to the social basis of an insurgency (such as in Taliban-controlled poppy-growing areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.)

In this respect, it is important to consider – and it is indeed a critical aspect to be taken into account when it comes to design counter-strategies – that local groups and individuals are not necessarily coerced into criminal activities. In fragile, in- and post-conflict countries, organised crime has a lot to offer indeed: it offers jobs, income and opportunities for survival (or enrichment) that are not available in the legal economy often dwarfing not only local salaries but also the financial potential of international donors. At the same time, whilst the specific motivation that drives local actors to engage in organised crime is not necessarily decisive for the impact on the state (cf. insurgents occupying drug-saturated areas create zones out of state control just as drug-cartels controlling strategic territory),[214] that motivation, and in particular the place of greed in the interplay of values and interests in group (and individual) decision-making when relating the means and methods of crime and violence to the ends to be accomplished (cf. *is involvement into crime a means to an end or is it the end in itself?*) turns out to be a key factor when it comes to devising appropriate counter-strategies. In some cases, a narrow focus on law enforcement, with regards for e.g. poppy cultivation or contraband, might end up criminalising whole segments of the population where the creation of job-opportunities might have been a more effective counter-measure. On the other hand, pitfalls of Afghanistan's "hearts and minds" battle also tend to suggest that so-called "population-centric COIN schemes", i.e. military efforts accompanied by civilian-led stabilisation strategy aimed at coordinating agencies in an effort to "bring the state back"[215] – mainly focused at breaking the rural population's link with the drug economy through alternative development, integration to the national market, and humanitarian aid – may not be the alpha and omega of every stabilisation policy, given the mixed, to say the least, results it has achieved in Afghanistan in burning out the social basis of the insurgency. Eventually, counter-insurgency had to be separated from counter-narcotics by and large, at least in some of the most volatile areas operated by insurgent groups, in hope of not alienating any further the peasantry who stubbornly supported non-state groups (far from being confined to the Taliban only) trafficking their production.[216] Clearly, this approach has resulted not only in keeping unabated (or quasi) opium production levels in Afghanistan, therefore keeping ahead the political economy of organised crime that had to be severely undermined instead in order to impede the structural factors enabling the crime-insurgency/terrorism nexus to thrive on, but it has also worked in fine against the very requirements of stabilisation/state-building by allowing those elites using illicit profit as a political resource to be integrated into Afghanistan's emerging governance and administrative structures without necessarily shedding their criminal ties.

Difficult in such certain situations where the moral and political economy of organised crime is shaping the preferences of a whole array of local actors for which dealing with illicitness as a method is common, to integrate into stabilisation and state-building processes those that are

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[214] See KEMP, Walter, SHAW, Mark, and BOUTELLIS, Arthur, *The Elephant in the Room: How Can Peace Operations Deal with Organised Crime*, International Peace Institute, June 2013, p. 18.

[215] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[216] This is well illustrated by what was found in some poppy growing regions of Afghanistan, like Nangarhar, where Anatol Lieven asked the local population what would their response would be if the West launched a programme of crop eradication. The answer of a tribal elder: "*First we will kill every Westerner in the province - a pause - Except you of course because you are our guest; and then we will join the Taliban.*" Financial compensation would not be considered as an option either, as in their humble opinion any money sent by the west would end up in the hands of corrupt Afghan officials. See LIEVEN, Anatol, "Afghanistan: An unsuitable candidate for state building", in *Conflict, Security & Development* 7:3 (2010). For an updated commentary from the field on the problem counternarcotic programs pose to counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan see: Ryan Evans, "Setting the Record Straight on Eradication in Helmand", *Kings of War Blog*, 23 May, 2012, http://kingsofwar.org.uk/2012/05/setting-the-record-straight-on-eradication-in-helmand/

likely to disrupt them out of criminal-economic interests. Commensurate challenges occur under conditions of governance where – and we come back with this to our previous consideration – such economic spoilers are parts of the government on whose consent the international mission is based. Indeed, whilst the specific motivations that drive actors to engage into criminal activity are not necessarily decisive for the impact on the state, in turn, truly are so those that drive elites to use illicit profits as a political resource.

If state actors, or the effective powerbrokers on which international partners rely, are involved or profit from predominant organised crime activities in the host country (such as evidenced with regards for certain ex-*mujahideen* commanders/regional power-brokers in Afghanistan that were integrated into the country's emerging governance and administrative structures), there is a danger that state institutions that are being built up will be hollowed out from within. Then, as their role in "getting things done" and striking deals with "real" (i.e. relevant on the ground) political leaders, becomes essential to foreign interveners understanding the conditions of governance in the host country, criminalised "parallel" state structures are being built up and eventually consolidated within "stabilisation" processes that inadvertently end up co-opting spoilers motivated by a criminal-economic agenda instead. Then, the argument goes on as to whether accepting evidences provided as to the development of such hybrid (state and non-state) criminal and terrorist/insurgent franchises, the pervasiveness of political-criminal dynamics of "hidden powers" that underpin them – even in the absence of armed conflict or once peace process in underway – should caution the international community against blueprint solutions treating fragile and conflict-ridden states as cohesive entities that invariably require a heavy dose of state-building, or are best strengthened through the rapid construction of powerful domestic security forces, which, if these aspects do not receive priority attention, will only but strengthen in effect rather than actually short-circuit the working relationship between criminal or violent actors and political leaders or state officials.[217] If states harbouring ungoverned areas must win back control of their territories, this should not come at the cost of sowing today the seeds of tomorrow's criminalised states and replacing a once crime-rebel nexus by a criminal-political nexus.

In principle, strategies of co-optation make sense in the context of stabilization or peace operations particularly as capacities to act against spoilers are limited and broad-based local ownership is essential for the sustainability of stabilisation efforts. However, co-opting groups of actors into the political process is more likely to be successful where actors pursue a political agenda and can be motivated by political incentives. The same kind of approach will reach its limits where actors are motivated by a criminal-economic agenda. The international community did not foreseen that risks in rushing for building the Afghan state anew against the backdrop of the weight of the political economy of organised crime in the country.

Stabilisation or peace operations and organised crime intersect in a variety of ways – not only because they share the same operational environment but also because they pursue diametrically opposed goals and often depend on the same actors to realise them.

A broad approach to countering organised crime, and thus the crime-terror/insurgency nexus, which includes local and international measures against actors, activities and enablers/opportunity structures, can only be realised through the combination, coordination and linking of various different instruments and checks and balances, of which military relevant aspects are only part of. Many aspects of criminal activities, including the better organised ones (often of a transnational nature),[218] are indeed outside of the reach and sphere of influence of mandated stabili-

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[217] In line with the thesis developed by Ivan Briscoe in: "The Proliferation of the Parallel State", FRIDE Working Paper 71, October 2008

[218] In conflict-ridden and post-conflict states, peace operations are frequently confronted with a whole array of illegal economic activities – some are clearly organised crime, others are organised but not criminalised and yet

sation or peace operations. Besides, it is obvious that such operations are not primarily a crime-fighting tool. Is also clear that organised crime in fragile and conflict-ridden states cannot be contained through measures employed by military operations alone, even in the form of modern population-centric counterinsurgency/capacity-building campaigns which do not appear sufficient deterrent for criminal elements to spread and develop linkages to other agents of crime and violence, both state and non-state. And still, they have to be dealt with as part of a mission planning processes and operations because their activities contribute to the conditions of chaos and instability in which insurgency and terrorism thrive. As a minimum standard, it is essential to ensure checks and balances are created so that operations do not fuel, co-opt or get infiltrated by organised crime. As peace or stabilisation operations are already involved in countering crime in various ways, it only seems logical to seek for enabling them to do so with effective tools that can chip away at favouring modalities of convergence and transnational spill-overs. It could also be a primary way of supporting more effective mandate implementation and greater sustainability of achievements. A precondition for devising such specific measures and mainstreaming them into a comprehensive approach to stabilisation and securitisation is the detailed knowledge of the streams and networks as well as those power structures or clientele networks that underpin criminal activities and favour the modalities of their connectivity with the interests and motives of other non-state armed actors as well as those of corrupt and criminalised state actors. We further elaborate on those important aspects later on.

## 3. Intermediate Conclusions

Since those dynamics have a direct impact on issues such as firearms control, countering illegal resource exploitation and trafficking of all kinds, the nexus between organised crime and terrorism, as well as between rebellion/insurgency and criminality, stabilisation (peace-building/ enforcement and state/capacity-building) processes, peace or stabilisation operations, and foreign assistance to fragile states attempting to govern fragmented societies, the following loci of policy co-ordination are to be considered priorities in foreseeing how dealing with them:

(1) Addressing the ways non-state actors with criminal capacities and expertise in the use of violence interrelate in context, and eventually converge into hybrid sets of actor-interests, and how environments that are heavily permeated by crime, e.g. dependant on the drug economy and shaped by its trade, necessarily impact the importance of the politics of crime in the ways non-state actors relate means to ends in the conduct of their activities and operations;

(2) Incorporating, by way of consequence, the role played by the politics of crime in shaping the means and ends of some conflicts, especially those of insurgency-based conflicts, i.e. the importance of the politics of crime and of war economy in prolonging or exacerbating conflict by resourcing non-state armed groups and fuelling their social basis of support;

(3) Apprehending how the use of instrumental violence in support of extremist ideology and the movement towards terrorist means of action is to be related to an ingrained culture of violence in which crime has often worked over generations to shape a society's political and cultural reflexes (cf. the "Kalashnikov culture"), and its impact on marginalised and embittered segments of society. This has critical implications on ways we comprehend the inter-

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others are criminal but not organised – the lines between those different phenomena are often blurred. While many of these activities (often the better organised ones) are of a transnational nature, "local" organised crime – in the form of rackets, kidnapping or organised forms of robbery and looting – is also a frequent phenomenon.

action between radical groups and criminal subculture, as well as important repercussions on what can be a calibrated po-licy answer;

(4)    Offering some practical insights into how non-conventional security threats develop and overlap in situations where the political and/or criminal agenda of non-state actors can intersect with criminalised state struc-tures and "state-less" regions characterised by "parallel", political-criminal arrangements that divert or coerce government policy toward the interests of *de facto* powers, thereby factoring in the growing efficiencies derived from collusion of or-ganised criminal networks and non-state armed groups with "facilitation net-works" enjoying deep and lasting links to the state, and all the more so when forms of state sponsoring and protection are to be considered (cf. with special reference to the construct of the "criminalised state");

(5)    Reflecting upon the suitability, effectiveness and limits of strategy blueprints and operational caveats to influencing the enduring effects of such clandestine arrangements out of which emerges and reinforces an evolving combination of threats which, we underline, combines multiple categories of actors acting in concert and/or as proxies for certain nation-states that can sponsor, exploit or appropriate them as a means of pursuing their view of statecraft;

(6)    Linking these reflections to current debates on the implications of ways orga-nised criminal behaviours and organised criminal activities are affecting and being affected by (a) local conflict dynamics, especially that of insurgency-based conflicts, and the politics of terrorist and insurgent violence in context of state fragility or failure, and (b) the processes of global security govern-ance, of which stabilisation (peace-building and state-building) processes and indeed peace operations are one of the international community's primary tools for stabilising fragile or conflict-ridden states.

In the followings, an empirically-informed framework will be set out to assess some of the recurrent patterns of interaction and the multifaceted avenues of cooperation, interrelation, and common and competing interests among organised criminals and political armed groups in relation to the agency and strategic calculations of the groups to access "resources of violence" in environments where combinations of poor governance, a legacy of violence and conflict and/or a tradition of criminal activity are most likely to support crime-terror interactions. To inform that assessment, analysis of engagement opportunities, network connections, organisational and moti-vational structures, and behavioural and operational methods will take place, mixing bottom-up and top-down analysis, to explore the modalities of the interplay of connecti-vity between orga-nised crime and non-state armed groups, especially those operating by means of terrorism and/or insurgency in/from Greater Central Eurasia. This conceptualisation elaborates on the "hybrid mo-del" developed by Shelley and Picarelli to reflect upon the expanding breadth of an evolutionary spectrum of crime-terror interactions that serves as a common basis for discussions of such often used terms as "nexus", "convergence" or "confluence" between organised crime and terrorism, also as a tactical modality by insurgent and rebel groups in regions of fragility or conflict.

Having identified the possible interfaces of interaction and factored the drivers of connec-tivity between the disparate organisations and networks which, in aggregate, make up the bulk of non-state actors with criminal capacities and expertise in the use of violence, a second strand of research will then focus on the sociological and geographical "scaling" and "sitting"[219] of those relationships along different geographic parts of the overall criminal-terrorist/insurgent trans-Eurasian conduct, from the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands to the margins of Europe in the

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[219] Adams *et al.*, 1997; Potkanski & Adams, 1998; Cleaver & Toner, 2006

Caucasus and the Black Sea Region. The actors along the conduct form and dissolve alliances quickly; thereby shaping highly adaptive, recombinant chains of networks which occupy both physical and cyber space, and use both highly developed and modern institutions, including the global financial system, as well as ancient routes and methods. The interconnected shadow networks they form operate in, and control, specific geographic territories on the fringes of the West-phalian system, in "*the grey areas of territoriality*"[220] whose conditions of governance allow them to function in a relatively safe environment. These regions that generally overlap more than one state represent a powerful component of the threat from the hybrid mixture of organised criminals and other non-state armed actors that control them, which makes understanding their moral and political economy and the fabric of their social and political orders all the more important. An area for further exploration precisely is the degree to which these conducts are characterised by traditional smuggling routes in rugged border regions governed in the absence or defiance of the state. Then, the geopolitical dimensions to the problem extend to the geostrategic value of geographical spaces that become the object of competition and war. So, in turn, do the commodities on their way into the supply chain of the illicit economy.

In dealing with the impact evolution of existing social and political orders and the conditions of governance in the affected regions, our analysis will take on describing the ways how local elites and societies have been familiarising themselves against the backdrop of serious state failures in terms of lack of resources, weak institutions, inertia, corruption etc. Thereby showing how such circumstances are affecting and being affected by the place and role of crime in politics and the underlying values that shape the societal and cultural complexity from which conflict and terrorist/insurgent violence arise,[221] we will then go on discussing the interplay of organised crime and non-state armed groups with criminalised state structures, self-serving factions with the state apparatus, "quasi-" or "pseudo-state" actors, and the multiple networks that support, exploit and/or appropriate them. Guided by the need to provide the reader with a prism highlighting the mutually beneficial relationships of protection and profit that can develop quite unnoticed between state and non-state actors within the dynamics of the wider "criminalisation" of the state and of society in number of contexts presenting heightened international security concern,[222] our analysis will go on to incorporate into the proposed model the threat dimension of a "political-criminal nexus" broader in scope than more circumscribed crime-terrorism/insurgency interaction spectrums,[223] hence adding to Shelley and Picarelli's hybrid model elements of discussion of the unrecognised role of the criminalised, "parallel state" colluding and sometimes merging with those illicit networks of outsiders specialised in crime and violence it comes to support, exploit or appropriate. Not only these dynamics amplify transnational threats that put security and prosperity at risk around the world, but they have fundamental implications for global security governance, and especially for stabilisation (peace-building/enforcement and capacity/state-building) process and indeed peace and stabilisation operations (including their counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency and security assistance programmes), the primary tools of crisis management implemented by the international community for stabilising fragile or conflict-ridden states.

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[220] KORTEWEG, Rem, and EHRHARDT, David, "Terrorist Black Holes: A Study into Terrorist Sanctuaries and Governmental Weakness", The Hague, Clingendael Centre for Strategic Studies, November 2005, p. 22.

[221] Bardhan 2001; Cleaver 2005

[222] BAYART (1999), *op. cit*.

[223] GODSON, Roy, *Menace to Society: Political-Criminal Collaboration around the World*, National Strategy Information Centre, 2003. See also, SHAW, Mark, "Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organised Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan", in BUDDENBERG, Doris, and BYRD, William A. (eds.), *Afghanistan's Drug Industry: Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy*, UNODC & World Bank, 2006; and ANDREAS, Peter, "The Political Economy of War and Peace in Bosnia", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Spring 2004).

# Modalities of Convergence, and Examples Associated with Terrorism and Insurgency in Greater Central Eurasia



At the turn of the 21st century, Sir Halford Mackinder's "Heartland"[224] – that vast territorial ensemble bearing the hallmarks of religious, linguistic and ethno-cultural diversity at the heart of the Eurasian landmass, also famously encapsulated by Zbigniew Brzezinski in his "Eurasian Balkans"[225] concept en-compassing a broad diversity of Central and Southwest Asian territories ranging from the margins of the former Soviet Empire in the Caucasus/Black Sea Region and Central Asia to the north-western fringes of the Indian subcontinent (Afghanistan-Pakistan), and China's western frontier (Xinjiang) – became the epicenter of America's "global war on

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[224] Hallowed designation of the region stemmed from *The Geographical Pivot of History*, i.e. an article submitted by Sir Halford John Mackinder in 1904 to the Royal Geographical Society that advanced his Heartland Theory.

[225] BRZEZINSKI, *The Grand Chessboard*, Palgrave MacMillan, 1997. Map above is from the book, p. 27

terror". Ever since then up until the breakthrough of the terrorist organisation of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/*Dā'esh*), and the proliferation of its mortal threat in several parts of the Islamic world and beyond, almost every danger associated with violent extremism and international terrorism has been linked to that part of the world.[226] Over the two past decades or so, crime, terrorism and violent extremism have surged to unprecedented levels in several parts of the Greater Central Eurasian region as the symptoms of a set of deep crises in society that underlie the scourge of war and terrorism that has seized several parts of the broader region for the long haul. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, the convergence of crime, terrorism and insurgency has given form to two of the most protracted and unsolvable conflicts of our modern time.

Already in the 1980s, certain Afghan *mujahedeen* insurgent factions, then at war against the Soviet Army, turned to narcotics trafficking to fund their activities. However, the 1990s was the decade in which, under Taliban rule, the nexus between organised crime and terrorist groups was consolidated. By the end of the decade, Afghanistan was a backwater. Thirty years of conflicts had deeply disrupted the country's mosaic of populations. In some areas, the organic structures that had somehow maintained law and order had broken down; in others, the micro-societies had suffered from penetration by *al-Qaeda* and the Taliban, or from narcotics traffickers and criminals; and still in others, the delicate balances of power that had existed for decades had shifted to a fragmented structure.[227] Any remnants of government infrastructure from the Soviet regime and before had been destroyed by the subsequent civil war, regional proxy war, and Taliban rule. There was no monopoly on force, and the countryside was infested by lawless bands of armed groups, predatory commander/warlord militias, narcotics traffickers and criminals. Moreover, the economy and major income generation schemes were based upon the drug (poppy) cultivation and trade. State sovereignty and law and order, in any shape or form, simply did not exist. Essentially the environment was anarchic.[228]

By neglecting Afghanistan's downward deadly spiralling into chaos, its black hole syndrome, the sufferings of its people, and by failing to devote necessary resources to supporting a viable political process free of external manipulations, the world had to face a steadily worsening instability in the country. When the collapse of public security and state fragmentation started threatening its national security interests, Pakistan responded through covert actions to sustaining the Taliban's extremist "Islamic Emirate" as a client regime. Then, when refuge granted by Mullah Omar to *al-Qaeda* emerged as a malignant security threat to the United States, Washington lately decompartmentalised its understanding of the Afghan problem, and eventually extended its focus beyond sole emergency assistance, limited demining projects, and on occasion condemning of the Taliban's treatment of women. Ultimately, the spread of instability from Afghanistan showed its global reach by striking to the very heart of the American superpower with the 11 September 2001 "hyper-terrorist" attacks perpetrated by *al-Qaeda* from its Taliban granted sanctuaries. Then, for over a long decade, Afghanistan became the overarching centre of international attention. Now, amid fifteen years of U.S./NATO-led military intervention and international assistance to the Central Asian nation's security and reconstruction, hence turned into somewhat of a global protectorate, Afghanistan still is a far cry from stability, and misconceptions leading to other conclusions further erode the potential of progress and peace in the country and the region. Despite all promises to the contrary, the international community is now drawing down by and large, and the region is all over again at risk of being left on its own to devise mechanisms to

[226] http://www.geocurrents.info/geopolitics/self-declared-states-geopolitics/islamic-states-aspirational-map

[227] DANSPECKGRUBER, Wolfgang, and FINN, Robert P. (eds.), *Building State and Security in Afghanistan*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado, 2010 (reprint), pp. 7-9

[228] YAQUB, Daoud, "State-building in Afghanistan" in: DANSPECKGRUBER, Wolfgang (ed.), *Working Towards Peace and Prosperity in Afghanistan*, Liechtenstein Colloquium Report, Volume 5, Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, 2011, pp. 31-32

mitigate and eliminate the metastasising menace of terrorism and violent extremism. And yet, while the presence and support of the international community is indeed vital, there however must a shift in approach in/towards Afghanistan. Although helping counter insurgent violence, hence providing security assistance and capacity-building is essential, relying on state-building policies that place overwhelming emphasis on security force enhancement does not tackle the role played by the politics of crime in shaping both the ends and means of the Afghan conflict(s) and bestow a "culture of violence" and stubborn criminality, reflected in a weak state unable to enforce law and order and to thrive against the moral economy of jihadist indoctrination which is the main root cause of the Taliban success. Alongside the field effects of decades-long guerrilla warfare at the heart of Eurasia, the ever strengthening nexus between terrorist violence and organised crime, along with other "non-conventional" security threats from violent non-state actors operating in and from the Greater Central Eurasia proved over the past decade to be one of the more critical vulnerability gap faced by the international community at large, and with important effects for European security in particular. Ironically, as the macro-region threat matrix has become more complex in recent years, and with the concomitant deterioration of international security and the emergence of new catalysts for war, these developments certainly provide the basis for the forces of fanaticism, terrorism and full-blown regional instability to gain and hold the upper hand again. Now, against the backdrop of scaled down rhetoric to "*Afghanistan good enough*" meant to allow face-saving disengagement from the past decade's overarching focal point while developing narratives of relative success, that is our contention that beyond all of the current commonplaces on the much highlighted "crime-terror nexus" in Afghanistan, the consolidation and growing network connectivity of a hybrid mixture of rogue armed actors with a variety of motives, including those engaged in transnational organised crime and international terrorism, religious-oriented sectarianism, and criminalising state structures from and within the Greater Central Eurasian region is something new and in many ways more dangerous than the sole Taliban insurgency. The regional convulsions from the country through Central Asia are to be viewed as something broader than a solely Taliban-centric problem.

## 1. The significance of crime-terrorism/insurgency interactions in geographical terms: The case of Greater Central Eurasia

The depth of the relationship between organised crime, terrorism and insurgency is often dependent on the nature of the geographic region in which any specific nexus operates.

As it occurs throughout the whole central sector of the arc of crisis that stretches from the Indian subcontinent in the East to the Horn of Africa in the West,[229] organised crime, the trafficking of narcotics and people, the illicit and uncontrolled circulation of armaments and ammunitions, with which now prominently overlap the shadow networks of international jihadist militancy (and its financing), all appear to be mutually reinforcing and destabilising factors. Scoping well beyond traditional categories, a broad diversity of actors, groups and networks have been identified by various research works as operating different parts of the overall criminal-terrorist/insurgent transcontinental conduct stretching from Central and Southwest Asia to Europe and the Middle East throughout fragile and/or in-conflict regions at the heart of the Eurasian landmass. Besides, the duplication and hybridisation of unconventional threats emerging out of the interplay of disparate sets of actors proceeding illicitly along this "Trans-Eurasian" pipeline today go well beyond "traditional" transnational organised crime activities, such as narcotics and fire-arms trafficking, as it also includes smuggling vulnerable people, the movement of insurgents, irregular

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[229] LENCZOWSKI, Georges, "The Arc of Crisis: Its Central Sector", in *Foreign Affairs*; Stable URL https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/1979-03-01/arc-crisis-its-central-sector

foreign fighters, crime enforcers etc., and also encompasses the potential for weapons of mass destruction-related trafficking by designated terrorist organisations.[230] As seems likely in a region historically subject to flux and where the resources of conflict have become so intertwined, identifying the interplay and connectivity among these entrepreneurs of crime and violence appear to be all the more important that similar convergence models are also developing in other parts of the world as well, i.e. across the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa (of special relevance to Europeans), also in the Middle East, that makes understanding their recombining dynamics essential, as they stand increasingly prominent as a critical element in the broader global security context, and certainly that of Europe as a whole.
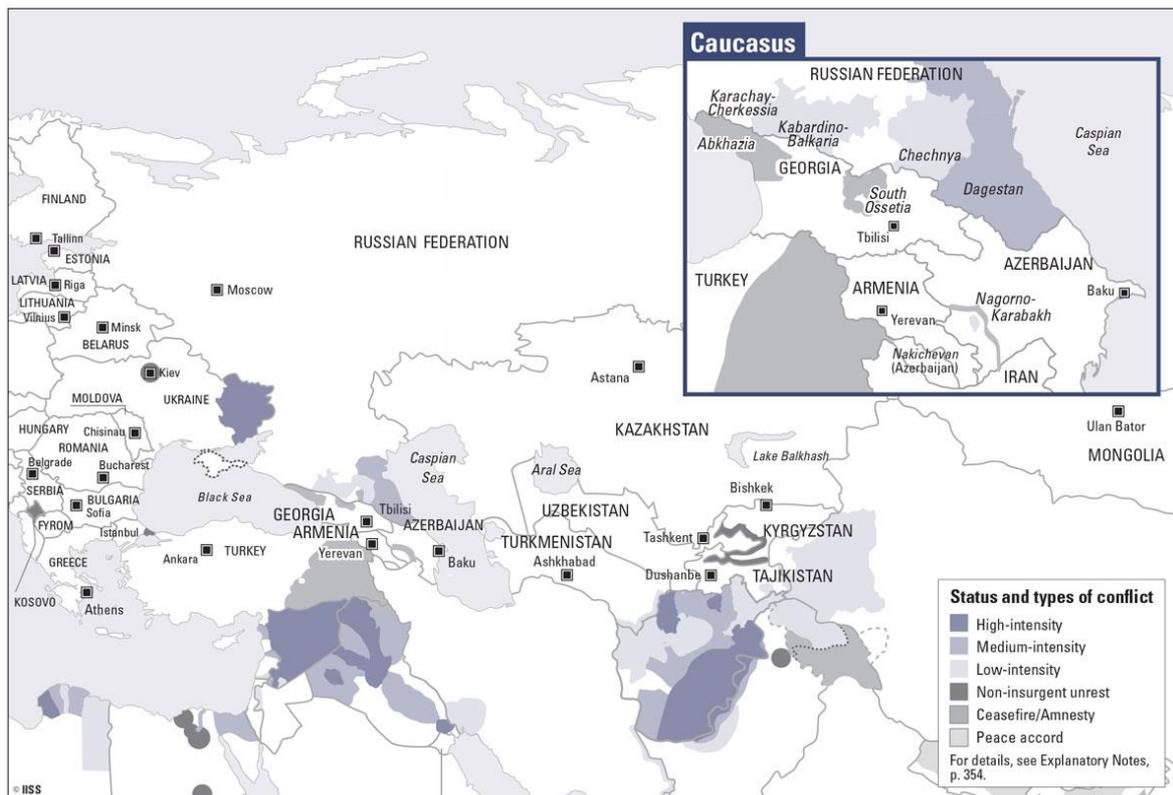


Greater Central Eurasia, map from *Military Balance* 2014

Throughout the broad diversity of territories ranging from the margins of the former Soviet Empire in the Caucasus and Black Sea Region to Indo-Pakistani and China borderlands in Central Asia, now also in broader connection with metastasising hot spots in the Middle East (Iraq, Syria, Kurdistan etc.), conflicts of varying intensity, the morass of protracted war and insurgency, and control of "ungoverned spaces" by non-state armed groups dedicated to a whole spectrum of violent seditious activities beyond any state monopoly of legitimate violence not only undermine the security of an entire region of a historically great strategic interest for the stability of the world, but also facilitate the proliferation of a whole range of criminal activities and trafficking of all sorts, both northward/westward and eastward/southward through highly adaptive transcontinental conducts that are able to move a multiplicity of illicit products (drugs, weapons,

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[230] See HOWARD, Russell D., and TRAUGHBER, Colleen M., "The 'New Silk Road' of Terrorism and Organised Crime: The Key to Countering the Crime-Terror Nexus", in: *Armed Groups: Studies in National Security, Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency*, Newport, Rhode Island: U.S. Naval War College, 2009, pp. 371-387.

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humans, bulk cash) that ultimately cross the external borders of the EU undetected thousands of time each weeks.[231] Against the backdrop of a lingering 40 year-old long conflict that, still a far from and end, seems to have been, in certain respects, aggravated instead of alleviated by the flawed intervention of the international community, a particularly acute problem, and perhaps the root cause of all others, remains illicit drug trafficking from Afghanistan, including its routes, profits, and corruptive influence, and certainly the nexus between the whole political economy of organised crime its entails and political violence, violent extremism, and jihadist terrorism, both globally and regionally, with its local insurgent offshoots in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Research conducted by UNODC maintains that the trafficking of opiates and weapons from Afghanistan creates instability and generates extremism, organised crime and terrorism at a considerable distance in the Caucasus, Kosovo, Fergana Valley, India, China's Xinjiang Region etc., and can strike as far as in the United States and in Europe.[232]

However conceived under the heading "non-conventional" or "non-traditional", ensuing security threats shall be best understood in their causal relationship to conventional security problems (active and potential armed conflicts) they predate in most cases as the evolving combination of threats stemming from the convergence and hybridisation of illicit networks that empowers terrorists, criminals, and proliferators across the Eurasian landmass with the billions of dollars illicit activities generate in crowded shadow economies where the politics of crime is increasingly defining the rules of the game in front of states that have little resources and legal or law enforcement capacities and/or are them-selves captured by criminal interests. Throughout the region, a number of states have forcefully consolidated their institutional apparatus over the past two decades, only to find that organised networks with deep and lasting links to the state are diverting public policy, colluding with criminal and drug-trafficking rings, and weakening public authority and the rule of law. If any, this is well the epistemological reality of much of Greater Central Eurasia today – a reality compounded by the possibility several states in the region are actually susceptible to failure (or have already largely done so.) In broader connection to the Middle East, the former Soviet South, also with its South Asian extension in Afghanistan and Pakistan, i.e. Washington's "Greater Middle East", contain a bulk of polities that are physically and governmentally gravely challenged by puzzles and pitfalls in their statehood. This, we argue, is notably caused by the expansion of a deeply embedded political-criminal nexus within state structures – the consolidation of a "parallel statehood", whose influence over the judiciary, intelligence sectors, security forces, and state structures at large, in addition to the penetration of institutions by criminal actors and the endemic corruption that comes along, the perils of absolutism, and institutional animosity toward genuine political participation, all contribute to instability, regime volatility, and ultimately state failure.

In the worst cases, notably in Afghanistan and Pakistan, extreme levels of violence underscore the merging of criminalised power networks within organised crime networks or experts in violence whose influence over the judiciary, the security forces and state structures at large appears resistant to the reforms initiated by political and social leaders. The election of a new president in Afghanistan last year has so far done little to restrain the country's extreme levels of violence, which have recently included the Taliban regaining control of several districts in several opium-saturated southern provinces, massive suicide bombings downtown Kabul, and a campaign of targeted assassinations of state and judicial officials. In Pakistan, the role of the ISI army intelligence service in carrying out terrorist attacks is notorious, although the precise dynamics

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[231] Illicit movements of goods (drugs, precursors, ammunitions and weapons, looted antiques, cigarettes, counterfeits and pirated goods, stolen cars etc.), people (human trafficking, refugees and migrants, insurgents, terrorists and foreign fighters etc.), and cash.

[232] UNODC Crime Threat Assessment Report, UNODC, Vienne, 2014, p. 204-210.

and the full extent of current links between Pakistan military, Islamist militants, Afghan Taliban and *al-Qaeda* remains a matter of intense speculation.

Afghan and Pakistani cases notwithstanding, criminal groups and organised interests from and within the broader Central Eurasian macro-region have been steadily growing in financial strength, territorial control and political alliances over the past two decades, be it throughout deep and lasting links to political leadership, collusion with self-serving factions within the state apparatus and/or outsiders specialised in violence. [233] Whilst states in the region are not collapsing as such – there often remain pockets of political will to avoid full state collapse and reassert state sovereignty (e.g. the Tajik government is believed to help thwart drug flows from neighbouring Afghanistan) – some of them however risk becoming shell-states, hollowed out from the inside by criminal interests colluding with corrupt officials in the government and the security services. This not only jeopardised their survival, it also poses a serious threat to regional and international security because of the transnational nature of the crimes. Throughout Greater Central Eurasia, rampant corruption in all levels of regional government and law enforcement mechanisms renders portions of several countries nearly ungovernable. In addition to a vast increase in the prevalence of violence, especially in economic sectors with close ties to organised crime, commercial ties in the drug trade between local crime groups and Islamist terrorists based in Afghanistan and in Pakistan's tribal regions and the presence of numerous re-gional and transnational crime groups as well as recruiters for militant groups on terrorist watch lists, one gets altogether a cocktail of instability and uncertainty rarely met in other parts of the world. Now, in states like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, criminal groups have acquired high level skills in the use of force that pose serious challenges for states. In a somewhat similar vein to what was observed in Latin American context in the 1980s/90s, significant synergistic destabilisation patterns can now be observed in several regions at the margins of Greater Europe (from Ukraine and Moldova to the Black Sea Region and the Caucasus), and throughout the broader Central Eurasian space, where enduring patterns of interaction and co-operation between insurgent/armed opposition groups, eventually falling onto the legally defined category of foreign terrorist organisations (FTOs), and organised crime organisations, often transnational in nature (TOCs), and deeply infiltrated within state institutions, are thriving around an estimated $50 billion Afghan heroin market as cornerstone of a transnational political economy of crime.[234]

As Moíses Naim wrote:

*"Ultimately, it is the fabric of society which is at stake. Global illicit trade is sinking entire industries while boosting others, ravaging countries and sparking booms, making and breaking political careers, destabilising some governments and propping up others. […] Coupled with terrorists and insurgents feeding on illicit activity, and in some cases morphing into exclusively criminal organisations themselves, the potential for further destabilisation of weak states and catastrophic attacks developing in ungoverned and weakly governed spaces challenges law enforcement, security, and military officials globally. […] Unless confronted head-on, it is a vicious, never-ending circle that further degrades already weak governance and mostly results in a total security collapse – all precisely planned and promoted by those who stand to gain the most by creating degenerate environments."*[235]

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[233] BERDIKEEVA, Saltanat, *Organised Crime in Central Asia: A Threat Assessment,* (Uppsala: silk Road Studies Programme, China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly, Volume 7, No. 2, 2012, pp. 75-100.

[234] UNODC Crime Threat Assessment Report, UNODC, Vienne, 2014, p. 204-210.

[235] NAIM, Moises, *Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers, and Copycats are Hijacking the Global Economy*, New York: Anchor Books, 2006, p. 33.

Trite to say, the different patterns of convergence between terrorism, also in relation to insurgency-based conflicts (or insurgent activity in general), and organised crime which this research identifies and discusses have adverse repercussions at more than one level. The co-existence and hybridisation of threats that stem from the convergence of organised crime and ethno-political/sectarian violence and conflict in such varied strategic environments as, as far as our region of primary interest is concerned, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Central Asia's Ferghana Valley, Kashmir, China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Chechnya and several others Northern Caucasus Republics of the Russian Federation, Georgia (one could also consider about Ukraine, post-Saddam Iraq, Somalia, Libya, the Western Sahel, Syria etc.), has severely punished the local populations, worsening the conditions of security in the extreme and exposing them to the risks of attacks, aggression, threats of the practice of extortion, theft, etc. In addition – and this could not be otherwise, the co-incidence of terrorism or insurgency/armed rebellion and organised crime has caused harm to the economies of the countries and areas involved, raising security costs for the existing local businesses, increasing investment risks and, along more general lines, putting the brakes on all options for growth and economic development.

Going beyond the preceding human, social and economic repercussions, it is necessary to consider those of a political nature. With the end of the Cold War, the accelerating pace of globalisation, the era of instantaneous communication, the Internet, and the criminalisation of religious and/or ideological groups, the convergence of illicit networks of experts in crime and violence has aggravated the particular institutional shortfalls, which, from the outset, had stimulated and facilitated terrorist, insurgent and criminal activities. Firstly, the substantial economic resources extracted by terrorist or insurgent groups and other rebel factions and armed paramilitary groupings, thanks to their involvement in illegal businesses and practices, have augmented the prevailing political instability at the same time. Second, the destabilising impact that is provoked by terrorist and insurgent activity contributes towards deepening the problems of governability and represssive inefficiency that had existed before that. This serves to remove obstacles to the work of the criminal networks and organisations, and in this increases their opportunities for enrichment and provides incentives for them to collaborate with other non-state armed groups, so as to maintain the climate of instability and the repressive vacuum that they both take advantage of. This vicious circle of crime-fuelling-violence-fuelling-crime encapsulated by scholars in concepts such as the "crime-fragility" and "crime-conflict nexus", which at the time helped to prolong several of the internal liberating wars in Africa over the last days,[236] has also manifested itself in the epicentres of instability found within the geographical scope of this research.

## 2. Co-existence, Co-operation and Convergence of Terrorism, Insurgency and Organised Crime in Greater Central Eurasia: A Whole Spectrum of Interactions

The aforementioned seminal research work conducted in 2007 for the U.S. Department of Justice by Professors Louise Shelley and John Picarelli on the anatomy of linkages between transnational organised crime and international terrorism is particularly illuminating of what happens in terms of convergence of shadowy actors/networks in those areas of the world where, such as found in several parts of Greater Central Eurasia, combinations of poor governance, ethno-political/religious/sectarian mobilisation and/or a tradition of criminal activity are most likely to support crime-terrorism/insurgency interactions – such as, as they point out, failed states, "stateless" areas and in-conflict regions.

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[236] BOER, John de, and BOSETTI, Louise, *The Crime-Conflict "Nexus": State of the Evidence*, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, Occasional Paper 5, July 2015; Stable URL: http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:3134/unu_cpr_crime_conflict_nexus.pdf
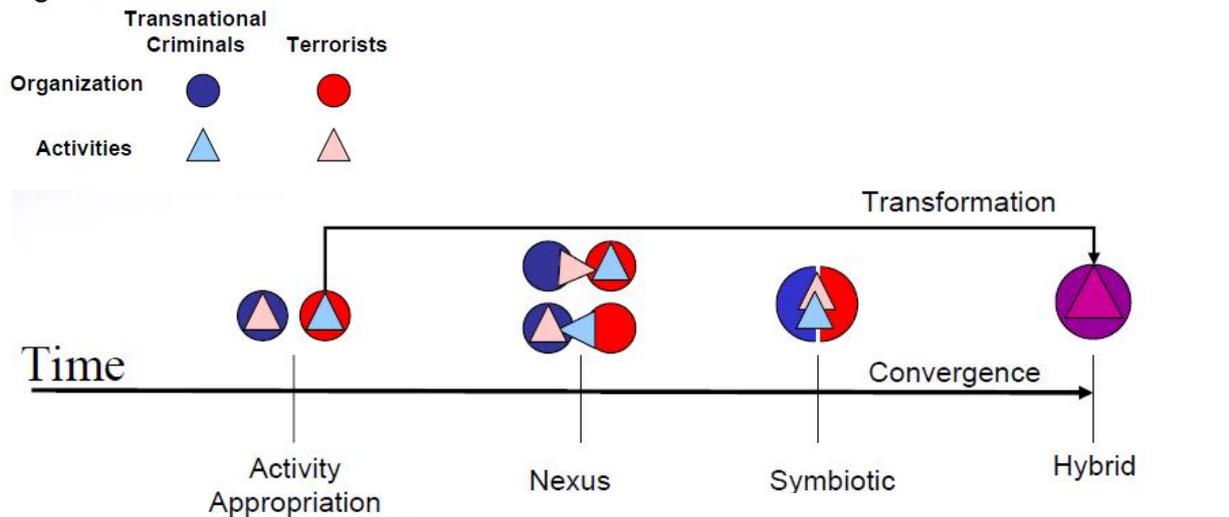
**Shelley & Picarelli's "Crime-Terror Interaction Spectrum"**

Generally speaking, whether throughout Greater Central Eurasia or any other context of violence and conflict around the world, the whole array of non-state actors who might resort to violence likewise benefit and actively seek out governance gaps, socioeconomic vulnerabilities, and character weaknesses as openings to conduct their violent activities and expand their power and influence. In the practical terms of their moral economy, our research indicates they flourish most when certain groups (or individuals) in society see their own interest as separate from that of the governmental regime of the centralised state system, eventually allowing criminality to de-velop as a "normalised" set of alternative norms of practice and also, as Delgado suggested, as a form of social protest and parallel authority. "Lawless" enclaves may then develop which allow the non-state actors who operate in, or control them, to function in a relatively safe environment. In a certain number of instances, and this is especially the case in conflict zones where there is no effective governing state presence on parts or whole of the territory (as in Afghanistan), criminal organisations and violent political groups can often occupy the same geographic space at the same time, and this is not necessarily coincidental, as both groups operate best in environment characterised by weak government, and more often than not, no (state) government. This is espe-cially the case in those "low intensity conflict" zones that are so saturated with all kinds of orga-nised crime as well as terrorist, insurgent and privateers/paramilitary activity (such as large parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan's tribal areas, Kashmir, Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Region, areas of China's Xinjiang Province or some of Russia's North Caucasus territories to name a few) that it is often difficult, not to say meaningless, to draw a clear line of distinction between politically/ ideologically inspired and economic-criminal activity, their agents, and proponents, since one another's operations and activities are generally conductive to the conditions in which the others may thrive. Against this backdrop, the multifaceted avenues of co-incidence, competition, coope-ration (or not), and common and competing interests among the actors, appear to be, in effect, what is shaping the conditions of governance of the affected regions. Eventually, disparate groups of actors, with distinctive agendas and motives, may either coexist, cooperate or compete to exert influence, dominate, and derive benefits from the same space either abandoned or never occupied by the state. In substance, they share a common "*habitus*". A broad range of possible patterns of interaction then becomes practicable. This chapter argues that these patterns of interaction can be group into several broad categories of potential convergence of shadowy actors and networks: co-existence, cooperation and hybridisation/transformation, all of which have emerged in Greater Central Eurasia.

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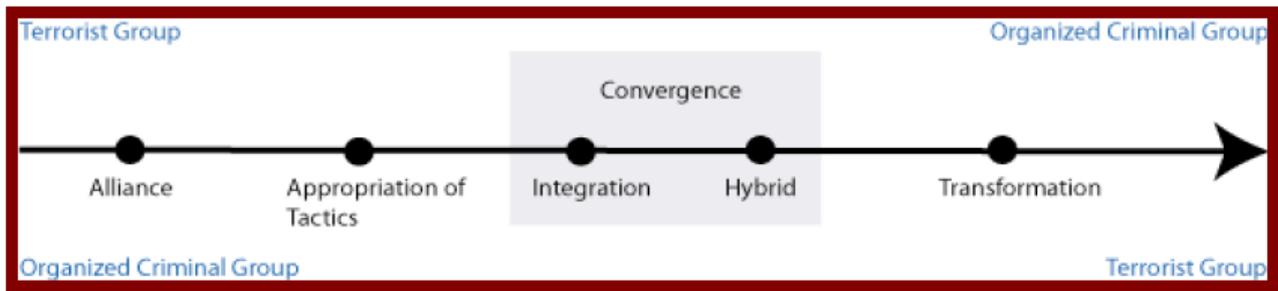
**Locating Crime-Terror Convergence: Makarenko's "Refined Nexus Model"[237]**


### Scheme 1: Convergence by appropriation of methods and tactics

In a first instance, the criminal groups and rebels/insurgents and/or terrorists might both be sharing and/or operating in the same geographic space, yet there appears to be little or no co-operation between them. And still, this does not necessarily mean that the activities of each don't benefit the other, should even these sets of actor-interests actually be competing to dominate that geographic space. In some such cases, Shelley and Picarelli observe "[…] *terrorists* [and this may also be true of insurgents and other armed paramilitary groupings as well] *simply initiate the criminal behaviour they see around them, borrowing techniques such as kidnapping, racketeering and extortion* […] *This is a shared approach rather than true interaction.*"[238] The two specialists refer to this phenomenon as "***activity appropriation***." It could also be called "*convergence by appropriation of tactics*",[239] and it deals with the most basic form of this. It occurs when terrorist groups or insurgent/rebel organisations are involved in activities that are typical to organised criminality, and thereby adopt the working methods and tactics in line with it (cf. criminal *modus operandi*.) We are thus essentially referring to criminal actions of a different nature, chosen so as to meet logistical or financing needs. To raise funds, terrorists habitually turn to drug trafficking, smuggling, and other illegal trade, theft and organised robbery, kidnappings, extortion, and other staple activities of organised criminals. We set out an incomplete overview below, illustrated with a specific example that involves groups or organisations that form part of the insurgent-terrorist (*jihadist*) sphere in Central Eurasia (and other parts of the world as well.)

As it occurs, activity/method appropriation thus takes place when terrorist (or rebel/insurgent) and criminal groups adopt the one another's methods and tactics without coincidentally working together,[240] i.e. with the former adopting criminal modus operandi and means (as most ideological and/or religious-oriented terrorist and/or insurgent groups do), while criminal groups might be using terrorist and another analogue tactical modalities to dominate their operating areas. Beyond contextual variances in motivational structures and declared goals behind the use of instrumental violence, this frontier dissipation and permeability of respective operational and

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[237] MAKARENKO, Tamara, *Europe Crime-Terror Nexus: Links between terrorist and organised crime groups in the European Union*, Study for the Policy Department C - Citizens's Rights and Constitutional Affairs, PE 462.503, Directorate-general Internal Policies, European Parliament, Brussels/Strasburg, 2012, p. 6.

[238] SHELLEY, Louise I., PICAREKKI, John T. *et al.*, *Methods and Motives: Exploring Links between Transnational Organised Crime and International Terrorism*, Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, September 2007, p. 12.

[239] SMITH, M.L.R., NEUMANN, Peter, *strategy of Terrorism: How it works, and how it fails*, London: Routledge, 2008, p. 53.

[240] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 7.

behavioural methods and spheres of criminal activity may be considered a nearly world scale invariant.[241] Albeit contingent and highly contextual, these dynamics of confluence and growing alignment between organised crime elements (both TOC and "local" OC) and terrorists, insurgents, and other armed groups around predominant criminal activities (cf. organised crime *as an activity*), such as e.g. the drug trade, has been ever further blurring already porous boundaries between organised criminality, terrorism and insurgency, without even implying any actual cooperation between terrorists and criminal networks.[242] Whilst it does not amount to the existence of organisational linkages between organised crime networks and terrorist or insurgent groups, activity/method appropriation does however capture the merger of methods and tactics that can occur between the two types amid an absence of effective cooperation between them. Not capturing this form of convergence between violent political entrepreneurs and organised crime *as an activity* is to lose one explanation of why organised crime and terrorist/insurgent *groups* might converge. It means that an overlap in transnational organised crime and terrorism can occur without any cooperation between two groups. It is worth noting in this regard that some of the most serious terrorism cases detected in recent years have not involved organised crime groups at all – the terrorists have acted alone using the methods of organised crime.[243] Similarly, a terror/insurgent group may traffic drugs to fund its campaign of violence, but it remains first and foremost a terrorist organisation. The fact of the matter however remains that activity/method appropriation is one important way that terrorists and insurgent groups are exposed to organised criminal activities and therefore, by force of circumstance and by way of necessity and/or practicality, can in turn often (but may also not) lead to more intimate connections.[244]

As James R. Clapper stated on the record of his prepared testimony of Director of National Intelligence (U.S.) to the Senate Selection Committee on Intelligence (12 March 2012):

"In some instances, terrorists and insurgents prefer to conduct criminal activities themselves; when they cannot do so, they turn to outside individuals and facilitators […] [including] corrupt officials who provide support services to *both criminal and terrorist groups* (emphasis added)."[245]

U.S. intelligence, law enforcement and military services have reported that more than 40 of the officially listed "foreign terrorist organisations" (FTOs) – i.e. 60 per cent of them – have links to the drug trade.[246] Amid a broad diversification of criminal fields of activity appropriation by terrorist groups in recent years, especially those involving groups or organisations that form part of the insurgent-terrorist jihadist sphere, trafficking drugs remains the most common criminal act that is uniting organised criminals with terrorists and other ideological and/or religious militant groups worldwide, and this is especially so with regards for Afghan narcotics in Greater Central Eurasia. This has been developed in two ways: on a large scale, as is proven by the significant involvement in "policing" the cultivation of poppies and trafficking of opiates by the Taliban and other violent extremist jihadist groups with a presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan (the Haqqani "network" is often highlighted) or in Central Asia (with the preponderance of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, IMU); on a small scale, as happens in the case of the small amounts of hashish trafficked by the Abdelslam brothers in their Molenbeek café as part of the background of the

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[241] ALDA and SALA (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 5

[242] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 2

[243] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[244] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[245] CLAPPER (2013), *op. cit.*, p. 5

[246] ROLLINS, James, and SUN WYLER, Louise, "International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress", CRS, Washington, DC, March 2014, p. 38.

Franco-Belgian jihadist connection behind the Paris and Brussels 2015-2016 terrorist attacks. In all of the cases, these forms of participation in the narcotics business similarly require a complementary form of convergence beyond mere activity appropriation: assistance from/cooperation with professional drug-traffickers and linkages to "facilitations networks"[247] which facilitate access to transnational export channels as well as to other goods and services required by terrorist/insurgent activities, such as stand-off weapons and explosive devices.

Douglas Farah and Matthew Levitt, for instance, have heavily documented how both the *Hezbollah* and *al-Qaeda* have operated in the "blood diamond" trade in West Africa, greatly enhancing their financial structures.[248] In a somewhat similar vein with regards to Afghan narcotics, some prominent affiliates/partners of the Afghan Taliban, such as the virulent Haqqani "network" (HQN), Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i Islami* faction (HIG) or *al-Qaeda* (and now ISIL/*Dāʿesh*) "affiliated" groups of foreign jihadist militants often described as "Arabs", "Chechens" or "Central Asians", such as the "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan" (IMU), on which we elaborate hereafter, or the "Islamic Jihad Union" (IJU), as well as certain factions of the Pakistani Taliban movement (TTP) and related jihadist groups such as the *Jaish-e-Mohammed* (JEM) and *Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami* (HuJI), or their competitors of the 2008 Mumbai attacks' *Lashkar-e Tayba* (LeT), are all designated Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTOs) whose involvement for funding and resourcing in parts of the transnational criminal structure from their Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands strongholds where is produced almost all of the world's consumed heroin has been consistently pointed in various well-grounded reports.[249] Likewise, *al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb* (AQIM) has notoriously been using cigarette smuggling and kidnappings for ransom to finance its activities in the Sahel Region and beyond, while both AQIM and *Boko Haram* are known to be involved in smuggling narcotics along their respective sections of the cocaine trafficking highway from West Africa and heroin from East Africa northwards across the Sahara.[250] Also, ISIL/*Dāʿesh* offshoots and other *takfiri-jihadist* militias operating in Libya and Egypt's Sinai Region have been identified as actively involved in reviving the agonies of a new barbaric "slave trade" from the Horn of Africa (Somaliland, Eritrea, South Sudan etc.) and achieving dramatic profits from refugee/migrant human trafficking along the southern Mediterranean coasts their control and hold passage from.

Combating the financing of terrorism has led some terrorists to transform their organisations into (transnational) criminal organisations with "profit-minded agencies" in order to effectively seek their political ends. Whether these groups then engage in illegal activities in order to generate revenue for financial or organisational needs, they remain first and foremost terrorist organisations. Crime is the means to an end: their self-declared ideological ends. There is however one strong viewpoint that, as terrorists/insurgents get accustomed to receiving financial support from other parties in the context of these criminal operations, this leads them to mimic and ally with organised crime groups that could successfully generate funds though engaging in illicit

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[247] CLAPPER (2013), *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 8.

[248] FARAH, D., *Blood from Stones: the Secret Financial Network of Terror*, New York: Broadway Books, 2004

[249] See, for instance, CORNELL, Svante, "Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflicts in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Issue 17 (2008), HOWARD, Russell D., and TRAUGHBER, Colleen, "The Routes of Terro-rism and Trafficking from Central Asia to Western Europe", Strategic Studies Institutes (2013). Lately again, *World Drug Report 2015* (Vienna: UNODC, 2015)

[250] "Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa," New York: UN Office on Drugs and Crime, October 2012. For a detailed look at this development, see Antonio L. Mazzitelli, "The New Transatlantic Bonanza: Cocaine on Highway 10," North Miami, FL: Western Hemisphere Security Analysis Center, Florida International University, March 2013.

cross-border activities over time.[251] However, it seems that some terrorists have actually developed into self-sufficient organisations with "in-house" criminal capabilities through the process of self-transformation. This is believed to be the case of a minority of groups today in all the countries of the Central Eurasian macro-region. Certain factions of the *Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan*, or the Pakistani Taliban, are believed to be amongst those.[252] Most groups simply prefer to dawn upon a broad and deep pool of expertise that can be found across the region. As long as the price paid for such support remains within reason, they are unlikely to turn away from it.

This also occurs the other way around in context where, insurgent/terrorist groups and organised crime overlap in regard to the drug and abduction industries, mainly in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Criminal networks and local bandits adopt the "Taliban" label to instill a higher degree of terror in their victims. At the same time, Taliban groups are involved in assassinations, abductions or robberies or sometimes commission them from criminal gangs. In areas of Afghanistan where, like in Ghazni or in Baghlan, armed bandit gangs are today proliferating, Thomas Ruttig contends a portion of reported "insurgent" activities can be attributed to them.[253]

### Scheme 2: Co-operation, tactical alliances, and symbiotic relationships

Once terrorists or insurgents and other criminals begin to work together, they have moved beyond activity appropriation to a different, closer, form of interaction. Shelley and Picarelli put this evolution in those terms:

> "Starting by borrowing each other's methods, terror and crime groups naturally begin to buy and sell services and goods from each other instead. […] Engaging in criminal enterprises, purchasing of supplies, and document fraud are all areas where criminals and terrorists *might* (emphasis added) intersect or collaborate to accomplish their respective goals."[254]

Unless all required capacities, resources and expertise are available in-house (which is admittedly hardly ever the case), these activities are likely to bring a terror group into regular contact with organised crime, as terrorists and insurgents often find it expedient indeed, even necessary, to deal with outsiders to get funding and logistical support for their operations. As they attempt to acquire false documentation, firearms, chemical precursor, explosives, bring the narcotics production from their operation area to the world market, or launder money, it then appears somewhat of a natural step to draw on the support, "know-how", and connections of specialised operatives or external TOC facilitators that are likely to have more expertise in these activities. Buying specialised goods and services from criminal gangs turns out a strategic resource that terrorists can make use of when they are short of the capacities or opportunities necessary to obtain these products by their own means.[255] Clearly, it is more efficient to outsource complex *ad hoc* services such as passport forgery to an established specialist than to try and master the necessary techniques yourself. Likewise, requirements of processing then exporting across borders the narcotics produced in the area of cultivation/production they operate and/or control mean that

[251] DISHMAN, Chris, "Terrorism, Crime and Transformation", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24 (1), 2001, pp. 43-58; SANDERSON, T. M., "Transnational Terror and Organised Crime: Blurring the Lines", *SAIS Review*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2004, p. 49.

[252] Evidence found in RUTTIG, Thomas, *The Other Side. Dimensions of the Afghan Insurgency: Causes, Actors, and Approaches to 'Talks',* Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), AAN Discussion Paper 7/2009, pp. 17, 23; Stable URL http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/10/AANRuttigSummary2.pdf

[253] RUTTIG (2009), *Ibid.*, p. 32

[254] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 56

[255] *Idem*

insurgent groups in conflict zones are also more likely to develop contacts and cooperate at different levels with organised crime networks and drug-trafficking rings. This kind of business-oriented collaboration partnership essentially focused on individual transactions that may not persist beyond the short term precisely is what is referred to by Shelley and Picarelli as a "*nexus*."

In a first instance, such form of collaboration between terrorists/insurgents groups and criminal gangs and organisations stems from purely practical interests and this entails a material or economic transaction exchange. Thus, a typically short-term relationship, a nexus does not imply that the criminals share the ideological views of the terrorists, merely that the transaction offers benefits to both sides. After all, they have many needs in common: safe havens, weaponry, evasive tactics, and other strategies to lower the risk of being detected. Cooperation between terrorists and criminal networks take place, as Erik Alsa and Joseph Sala put it, "*when each group determines that their inherent fear of contact outweighs the risks.*"[256] Interestingly, this progression in the interaction suggested by Shelley and Picarelly as a contingent continuum from borrowing each other's methods (activity appropriation) to buying and selling services and goods from each other instead, then eventually maturing recurring short-term transaction exchanges into longer-term collaborative relationships, is the contraposition of Makarenko, who sees organisational alliances occurring *prior* to groups appropriating the activity of the other.[257] Williams, on the other hand, confirmed the direction in which Shelley and Picarelli's ordinate this continuum, noting that terrorists first engage in "*do-it-yourself*" organised crime, and then turn to organised crime groups for specialised services like document forgery or money laundering, hence evolving more towards supplier-customer relationships.[258] These collaborative links, however, might be deemed merely transactional. As Shelley and Picarelli refer to them as a "*nexus*", these material or economic transaction exchanges indeed are "[…] *usually brief encounters, rather than a sustained relationship*"; [they] *routinely take the form of 'pay-as-you-go' operations, one-off instances of customer-service provider relationships.*" "[Given that] *one group approaches the other to fulfill a specific requirement or service* […]. [Contacts] *tend to be focused on individual short-term transactions.*" And yet, applying Sutherland's principle of differential association, the "intensity and duration" of the collaboration between terrorists/insurgents and criminal groups (and their respective individual members accordingly) make then the former more likely to adopt each other's behaviours (i.e. adopting criminal *modus operandi* that, in operation context, make them more impervious to COIN tactics.[259]) Sutherland observes that, in conflict regions, where there is much more intensive interactions between criminals and terrorists and where such inter-actions often involve more large scale criminal elements, there is more shared behavior and a process of mutual learning that goes on.[260] And we argue the same process can also be seen in certain urban areas of developed countries and in the prison context as well – both locations where petty or professional criminals have been found interacting with terrorists or those inspiring their motives. In "stateless" regions and conflict zones, criminals and terrorists/insurgents tend to spawn more collaborative relationships that are closer knit, whereas under more "classic" circumstances, organised crime is more likely to coexist with terrorism through arm's length business transactions.[261] Notwithstanding this, the point however remains that, whatever the context, seditious non-state

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[256] ALDA and SALA (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[257] MAKARENKO, Tamara, "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism", in *Global Crime*, Vol. 6, No. 1, February 2004, pp. 129-145

[258] WILLIAMS, Phil, "Terrorism and Organised Crime: Convergence, Nexus or Transformation?" in JERVAS (ed.). *FOA Report on Terrorism*, Stockholm, Defence Research Establishment, 1998, pp. 69-92 (74).

[259] DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 5

[260] SUTHERLAND (2009), *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 34

[261] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 16

actors routinely use petty crime and banditry to support their activities, and to some large extent, this natural orientation towards criminal patterns of everyday activity stem from the fact that many of them have a history in crime.

Whether insurgents or a terrorist group seek cooperation with a criminal organisation, the ensuing relationship then tends to be one of mostly functional cooperation in order to e.g. share "expert knowledge" (i.e. bomb-designing, money laundering, communication technologies) or "operational support" (i.e. access to trafficking routes.) Then, the former are just getting access to criminal activities and develop their own revenue through contacting with the latter. As Maka-renko summarises: co-operation, most of the time, is one-spot or short timeframe, tactical, and without any complementary enduring goals.[262] And this is the practical meaning of a "*nexus*." In most cases, it involves "[organised] *criminals providing goods and services to terrorists* [or insurgents] *for payment or service load*",[263] although it can work in both direction as cases where also found where criminal organisations moved into terrorism under certain circumstances (then more in terms of appropriation of terrorism *as an activity/method*) to foster their criminal-economic goals and dominate their operating areas, especially when state authorities threatened their existence.[264] We've already pointed out the fact that a number of contemporary criminal organisations, cartels, gangs etc., although they lack an ideological foundation, and typically do not share the goals of terrorist groups they may be in contact and/or collaborate with, however increasingly tend to use both political tools and instrumental violence along insurgency-like tactical modalities: selective murders; hit and run tactics, subversive methods, and indeed terrorism, to accomplish their criminal-economic goals, dislodge the state from local territory and compete to dominate ungoverned spaces. Apart from the often cited and widely recognised case of Mexican cartels and Central American *maras* or street gangs, the use of terrorist and insurgent-like modus operandi that characterised the bloody episodes of ethno-political violence that broke out around and beneath turf battles between competing "crime clans" around the control proceeds of the local drug trade and crime rackets in the summer 2010 in Osh and other cities of South Kyrgyzstan, or in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Region (GBR) in the summer 2012, yet in the autumn 2015 all over again, against the backdrop of political uncertainty and shifting balance of power within regional elite power networks in these two small Central Asian republics gravely challenged by the drug trade from Afghanistan, is good example of this. We will come back on this later. In Afghanistan, powerful opium barons have employed "Taliban" anti-government groups to patrol and keep safe their opium planted areas.[265] Likewise, there also exists evidence

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[262] MAKARENKO (2004), *op. cit.*, p. 131

[263] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[264] However considering that possibility important when explaining why organised crime and terrorists groups might convergence, Shelley and Picarelli found little clear-cut examples of organised crime groups having moved into terrorism *as an activity* beyond temporary shifts, then best described as appropriation of terror tactics by organised criminals, such as when the Sicilian Mafia bombed the Uffizi museum in Florence and the Lateran Cathedral in Rome during a fresh attempt by the Italian authorities to halt its existence in 1993. They acknowledge the case when Pablo Escobar hired *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) terrorists to wage a bombing campaign against the Columbian government on his behalf as illustrating one of the much rarer occasions has such relationship resulted in a nexus. Whether the case is valid, the assumption has often been made, then in a fairly comparable way, that the 1999 bombing campaign downtown Tashkent, the capital and largest city of Uzbekistan, had actually been carried out by elements of the terrorist group IMU (or some other elements within Uzbekistan's Islamist armed militancy) acting in collusion with some discontented crime permeated factions within Uzbekistan's parallel state to challenging the power of president Islam, whose shift in clan politics was challenging the criminal interests at the time. For an evidenced argumentation of that view on the Tashkent 1999 events, see NAUMKIN, Vitaly V., *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between the Pen and the Rifle*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, pp. 53-56.

[265] SHAW, Mark, *Chapter 7: Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organised Crime in post-Taliban Afghanistan*, in *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008*, UNODC (November), p. 194

that the Taliban (i.e. organisation of the self-declared Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) has been using criminal elements as a base of recruitments, not only giving criminal gangs incentives to operate in government controlled areas, but also using them as intermediaries to control the population when the areas of poppy cultivation are closely associated with Taliban presence.[266] We discuss this essentially more symbiotic relationship between criminality and insurgency below.

More generally, a typically short-term contingency-driven relationship, a nexus does not imply that the criminals share the ideological views of the terrorists or the insurgents' political motives, but merely that the transaction offers benefits to both sides. As such, it may not endure over time, and will therefore end when partnership is no longer mutually beneficial. In this respect, Alsa and Sala made an important point recalling that "*while collaboration […] might deliver some mutual benefits and/or satisfy some organisational necessity, there are common disincentives to affecting such partnerships including increased and unwanted attention and surveillance, fear of compromising internal security through infiltration and the heightened prospect of capture. Criminal networks are likely to risk disrupting their illicit relationships with governmental institutions only for short periods of time and only for lucrative financial returns. Terrorist organisations, on the other hand, are likely to see such contact as merely the means to an end, their self-declared ideological ends.*"[267] It is, however, an open question as to whether these short-term partnerships can mature into longer-term strategic alliances. Most observers argue that far more likely to see the convergence of terrorist and criminal groups into an organisation where the two groups' separate and distinct operations are merged and conflated.

While different groups often come to develop closer ties with one another, and even may come to overlap in allied networks, their interrelationships, of an essentially transactional and convenience-driven nature, are contingency-based, hence short-lived and shifting by nature. Most end when they are no longer mutually beneficial.[268] And yet, if the nexus continues to benefit both sides over a period of time, the relationship will deepen and somewhat naturally evolve towards a stage of greater convergence. As two or more groups are working together more regularly, more of their individual members interact and increasingly share each other's working methods and tactics. Eventually, the groups will institutionalise their business transactions, transfer skills and/or share best practices. Certain individuals might also become members of both organisations which facilitate their activities and assure mutual gains. Meanwhile, the groups, or elements thereof, may well begin to share each other's goals as well as they find common cause against a government and its security forces, and/or an international military effort aimed at "draining the swamp" and reclaiming the "black hole" they operate in, and eventually control. This stage of a closer, more sustained cooperation of political/ideological groups with criminal gangs and organisations is the anatomy of what Shelley and Picarelli referred to as a "***symbiotic relationship***", they define as "*a relationship of mutual benefit or dependence.*"[269] It is nonetheless important to recognise, as the two scholars underlined, that operatives of a terrorist/insurgent group may persist with involving into criminal activities themselves or borrowing methods of organised crime indefinitely without ever progressing to greater cooperation, e.g. merging and conflating their separate and distinct operations.[270] And yet, all in all, there are times in which the initial collaboration may indeed give rise to the development of collaborative dynamics that last

[266] GIUSTOZZI, A., "Hearts, Minds, and the Barrel of a Gun: The Taliban Shadow Government", in *PRISM*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Washington D.C., March 2012, pp. 82-83.

[267] ALDA and SALA (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[268] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[269] *Ibid.*, p. 22

[270] *Ibid.*, p. 57

longer and are more wide-ranging, especially in chaotic environments that are favourable to sustained contacts between political groups and criminal organisations: the first one entails an overall criminalisation of the conditions of governance of their operational context that serve as enabler of symbiosis between organised criminality and terrorism or insurgency *as activities* dependent in their context. The second one, on the other hand, entails a densification of interactions that provide opportunity structures for organised criminals and terrorist/ insurgent *groups* to converge.

A good example of the symbiotic relationship that can exist between terrorism, insurgency and criminal activity in a chaotic environment occurred in Iraq in the years that followed the American invasion of the country and the toppling of the Saddam Hussein regime. From late 2004 onwards, amidst the growing anti-occupation Islamist insurgency and worsening security conditions in Baghdad, the Sunni Triangle (Tikrit-Ramadi-Fallujah) and throughout the country at large, feral gangs and crime-embedded militias began to proliferate under conditions of socio-political degeneration, rebellion and spiralling violence that were also found in Afghanistan around the same period of time. Not only did collaboration amongst criminal gangs, unreformed/ unpaid militias and insurgent/terrorist groups satisfy some immediate organisational necessity against U.S. military pressure, hence leading to the development of strong cooperative links between crime operatives and insurgents, but some individuals were members of both organisations, which facilitated their activities and assured mutual gains.[271] Mutual interests were both served, or at least not severely threatened, by working together. Activities like kidnapping, fuel smuggling, and plundering of public and cultural property, promoted a state disorder which worked against the legitimacy of the U.S.-led coalition and served the insurgents' strategic objectives, while also financing their organisation (and notably *al-Qaeda* in Iraq, which was later to give rise to ISIL/*Dā'esh*). In a quite similar vein, in post-2001 Afghanistan, while corruption, predatory governance, and the return to their fiefdoms of unsavoury warlords whose endorsement by the U.S.-led coalition in need of local partners enabled "*to use the money and arms they receive* [i.e. for "hunting" the Taliban and *al-Qaeda*] *to invest in drug production and engage in land grabs, predation, and political intimidation*",[272] had already discouraged many Afghans from standing firmly by the Karzai government, the Taliban-led insurgency recommenced before its very surge became palpable. One of the first markers of Taliban recrudescence was when, on 27 March 2003, just a week after the commencement of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, a Red Cross worker, Ricardo Munguia, was murdered by "bandits" near Kandahar.[273] It was going to take yet another two years for the ISAF troops to be deployed deep into the Afghan South.

At the time, the conditions of criminalised governance and political marginalisation within the country had already set up the grievances of large segments of the local Pashtun population that allowed the Taliban to launch their campaign and build an insurgency of sufficient strength to cripple the Western intervention in the country. There was no monopoly on force, and the countryside was infested by lawless bands of mercenaries, predatory commander/warlord's militias, narcotics traffickers and criminals. Moreover, major income generation schemes were heavily dependent on the drug/war economy. State sovereignty and law and order, in any shape or form, simply did not exist. Essentially the environment was anarchic.[274] In many areas, the organic structures that used to maintain law and order had completely broken down; in others,

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[271] RUSSELL, James A., *Innovation, Transformation, and War. Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005-2007*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011, pp. 69-70

[272] RUBIN, Barnett R., *Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy*, Council Special Report No. 12, Council on Foreign Relations Press, March 2006, p. 6.

[273] MALEY, William, "Afghanistan: an historical and geographical appraisal", in *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 92, No. 880, December 2010, p. 25.

[274] RUBIN (2006), *op. cit.,* p. 9.

micro-societies had suffered from penetration by *al-Qaeda* and the Taliban, or from narcotics traffickers and criminals; and in still others, the delicate balances of power that existed for decades had shifted to a fragmented structure.[275] While rearming the same warlord-strongmen who had previously dominated (and torn apart) the country, the initial flaws of the pre-ISAF Kabul-centric U.S.-led anti-terrorist campaign set the stage for anarchy in the provinces, and led to a feeling of alienation from the state that was not perceived to be serving their interests by whole segments of the predominantly Pashtun Afghan rural population whose livelihood largely depends on poppy cultivation. This converted them to the social base of the resurgent insurgency. Many of these alienated individuals and communities then joined opportunistically re-proclaimed Taliban commanders after the movement's surviving top leaders had started reorganising in Pakistan. This was to mark the beginning of a compelling nationwide offensive to reclaim influence across the country. From then onwards, Afghanistan's general security situation has been worsening year on year, according to the growing strength and influence of the recrudescent insurgency.

While it feels prudent to note that the Taliban, as an organisation, has been playing a less dominant role than often believed in the planting, cultivation, production and trafficking of all illicit drugs in Afghanistan, not the least because of the power of domestic drug mafias and warlords in the country,[276] evidence nonetheless remains that the criminal enterprises of leading Afghan drug kingpins (so-called "opium barons") such as Hajji "Juma" Khan,[277] Haji Bagcho, and Matiyullah aka "Mirza" Khan[278] have often been actively or tacitly facilitated through cooperation, and closely symbiotic relationships at times, with certain local/regional "Taliban" insurgent commanders and *al-Qaeda* related terrorist groups active in the poppy-saturated borderlands with Pakistan (IMU, IJU etc.), as has also been the case for narco-trafficking figures such as Haji Ayub Afridi in Pakistan.[279] Although the main finances of Taliban were historically generated from the cross-border smuggling of licit commodities (such as gasoline or cigarettes) and credit card fraud as well as organised robberies,[280] documentation of the movement's financing activities also demonstrated it derives part of its revenue from "private donations" from criminal networks and leading figures of the Afghan criminal underworld.[281] In other instances, when they do not directly traffic in drugs, insurgents simply force established traffickers to pay a "tax" for transporting the drugs across territory they control.[282] It would seem that the symbiotic relationship between Afghan insurgent forces and local and transnational organised crime networks around narcotics production and trade in Afghanistan has become somewhat of an evolving

[275] YAQUB, Daoud, "Afghanistan and State Building" (pp. 18-42), in DANSPECKGRUBER, Wolfgang (ed.), *Working Toward Peace and Prosperity in Afghanistan*, Liechtenstein Colloquium Report Volume 5, Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, 2011, p. 36

[276] SHAW (2008), *op. cit.*, pp. 192, 194

[277] DALY, Max, "How a DEA Agent Befriended and Betrayed an Afghan Opium Lord", *Vice Media LLC*, 9 March 2015, latest accessed on 5 June 2016 at https://www.vice.com/read/my-mate-the-opium-lord-036

[278] FILKINS, Dexter, "With US Aid, Warlord Builds Afghan Empire", *The New York Times*, 5 April 2010, latest accessed on 5 June 2016 at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/06/world/asia/06warlords.html?_r=0

[279] See "The Return of Haji Ayub Afridi", in: LABROUSSE, Alain, and LANIEL, Laurent, *The World Geopolitics of Drugs 1998/2009*, London, Routledge, 2013, pp. 68, 69

[280] See, MAKARENKO, T. (2002). "Crime, Terror, and the Central Asian Drug Trade", in *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, 6(3): 1-24, WANNENBURG, G. (2003). "Links between Organised Crime and al-Qaeda", in *Spring*, 10 (4): 1-14.

[281] FARMER, Ben, "Afghan Drug lord who Funded the Taliban Faces Jail", in *The Telegraph*, 10 June 2012, latest accessed on 5 June 2016 at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9322693/Afghan-drug-lord-who-funded-Taliban-faces-jail.html

[282] SHAW (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 194.

dynamic with the relative increase of the value attributed to these channels for funding and re-sourcing amidst increasing military pressures by international military forces towards the end of the 2000s decade. After having implemented a policy of de facto *internal* prohibition when it was on power in the late 1990s, the Taliban appears to have revamped, since the very resurgence of its insurgency campaign in the years 2005-2007, a more vivid relationship with narcotics-related criminal groups. Respected Afghanistan analyst Antonio Giustozzi however stressed in a 2010 comparative analysis between the FARC and the Taliban that, while the first group has always sustained a more vertical and centralised relationship with criminal elements, even in the wake of a heavy counterinsurgency/counter-narcotics campaign that severely affected their command and control capabilities, the Taliban has maintained a more "ambiguous" relationship with criminals. Giustozzi underlined the fact that, while it indeed cooperates with criminal groups, the Taliban does not tolerate criminal competition in the areas it controls. Also, he reported that criminal elements who join Taliban ranks, and there are many of them, would actually do so obliged to renounce all links with their past life.[283] And yet, he also stressed the Taliban not only gives criminal gangs incentives to operate in government controlled areas, but also found evidence that Taliban commanders are using criminal elements as a base of recruitment, especially in areas of poppy cultivation closely associated with their presence where the population is controlled by insurgents or their criminal intermediaries.[284] In those poppy growing regions of Afghanistan, as also featured in tribal regions of north-western Pakistan, Baluchistan and Kashmir, alliances and divisions of labour, notwithstanding often fierce competition/rivalry and blood feud, around the drug trade among "*mujahedeen*"/insurgent factions and criminal and drug-trafficking rings oscillate between non-aggression pacts between concurrent armed groups, coexistence in common areas, separate spheres of influence along the overall criminal-terrorist conduct, divisions of labour, or even temporary military alliances to confront another non-state group or the security forces.[285] As a result, rather by a mistakenly narrowing crime-terror/rebellion nexus, the Afghan drug trade has been controlled by a broader criminal-political nexus where domestic drug mafias, transnational criminal groups, criminalised state structures, regional power-brokers/warlords, and the Taliban converge. In a somewhat similar vein, we believe opportune to consider the characterisation of the close association of Albanian crime gangs and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), whose members were successively integrated into Kosovo's emerging governance and administrative structures without necessarily shedding their criminal ties, or the symbiosis of Kadyrov's Chechnya ruling paramilitary and Chechen crime syndicates,[286] yet the embeddedness of pro-Kremlin armed separatist proxies in eastern Ukraine with Donbas criminal underworld and Russian mafia rings as well,[287] as meeting such characterisation criteria.

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[283] GUTIERREZ, Francisco, and GIUSTOZZI, Antonio, "Networks and Armies: Structuring Rebellion in Colombia and Afghanistan", in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33: 9 (2010), p. 843

[284] GIUSTOZZI, A., "Hearts, Minds, and the Barrel of a Gun: The Taliban Shadow Government", in *PRISM*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Washington D.C., March 2012, pp. 82-83.

[285] WANG, Pen, "The Crime-Terror Nexus: Alliance, Transformation and Convergence'", *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 6, No. 6, June 2010, pp. 16-17.

[286] CURTIS, Glenn E., *Involvement of Russian Organized Crime Syndicates, Criminal Elements in the Russian Military, and Regional Terrorist Groups in Narcotics Trafficking in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Chechnya* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2009)

[287] GREGORY, Paul, R., "Putin's Government in Donbas", *Project Syndicate*, 13 April 2016, latest accessed on 13 June 2016 at https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/bild-russia-controls-donetsk-by-paul-r-gregory-2016-04?barrier=true

### Scheme 3: Hybrid blending and self-transformation

As to whether the porosity between organised crime and terrorism can lead both criminal type to find common cause, consideration should also be given to situations where the involvement of violent political entrepreneurs in illegal businesses and operations becomes something that recurs or is systematic and, as numerous lines of revenue are produced, then arises the possibility that actors can raise the value attributed to these illegal practices, to the point of taking on, for all or part of, the economic-criminal motivations that is characteristic of organised criminality.

As we previously shed some light onto, many provinces of Afghanistan, broad swaths of Pakistan, notably in the FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Northern Balochistan, Kashmir etc., certain remote valleys of Tajikistan, and parts of Russia's North Caucasus (such as Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria etc.), among other adjoining peripheral areas in Greater Central Eurasia, are so saturated will all kinds of organised crime, armed rebellion and/or terrorist activity that it is often difficult not to say meaningless, to draw a clear distinction between any kind of clearly delineated politically inspired *vs.* criminal-economically motivated activities. Moreover, relationships among groups often are more complex than most observers can posit. Far too often and far too easily every event in the sub-region, and especially so in heavily monitored Afghanistan, have been trumpeted as a terror attack, despite the fact that a whole lot of those "events" were featuring at least as much the usual characteristic of tribal blood feud or criminally motived acts as those allowing to relate them to terrorism or the insurgency anyhow.

As Makarenko observed in early 2000s' Chechnya context, many agents of crime and violence active in those various settings actually evolve in both spheres of activity, belong to interlinked networks, and can conduct a variety of tasks attributable to both insurgency/terror and organised crime groups.[288] Under such circumstances the sociological processes of reciprocal socialisation, symbiotic relationship and convergence at work in the interactions amongst actors can eventually progress towards situations of merging and hybrid blending of motives and functions where, having collaborated continuously and deepened interpersonal and sometimes inter-organisational links over years, members of both criminal and terrorist/insurgent groups, organisations or networks, and their respective leaderships, not only turn out sharing methods and tactics, but they also appear to share each other's goals and motives. Most observers argue that far more likely to see the convergence of terrorist/insurgent and criminal groups' separate and distinct operations are merged and conflated.[289] In other words, bandits, criminals and traffickers form common cause with the ideological and/or political goals of the terrorists or insurgents, while the latter adopt the formers' modus operandi, interests, and underlying norms of practice. This is an option that is rather less than abstract when a criminal gang or organisation decides to provide support to a terrorist structure, due to reasons of ideological or religious affinity. As regards this situation, the closest possible case is perhaps that of the *D-Company*, an Indian criminal organisation of Muslim militants whose leader, Dawood Ibrahim, was the top criminal boss of Mumbay for many years. He was highly involved in the trafficking of drugs, weapons and human beings, and in activities of extortion and money laundering. A wave of street attacks against India's Muslim community, unleashed between 1992 and 1993, would have fostered the radicalisation of Ibrahim and this followers, until it brought about close cooperation between various jihadist groups in the region and Pakistan ISI-sponsored terrorist group *Lashkar-e Tayyiba* (LeT, the perpetrators of the 2008 Mumbai attacks) whose involvement for funding and resourcing in parts of the drug-trafficking transnational criminal structure operating from Karachi and Pesha-

[288] MAKARENKO, Tamara (2002). "Crime, Terror, and the Central Asian Drug Trade", in *Harvard Asia Quarterly,* 6(3): 11-12.

[289] SHELLEY, Louise I., PICAREKKI, John T. *et al.*, p. 20.

war has been consistently evidenced.[290] This cooperation too the form of joint participation in various campaigns of attacks on Indian soil that led to hundreds of deaths.[291]

Further evolution can be substantiated at two different levels: the first one entails the group or organisation evolving towards a hybrid set displaying the characteristics of both criminal types, which Shelley and Picarelli refer to as a "***hybrid group***"[292] – a new organisational form, halfway between organised political violence and organised criminality that can be likened to Dishman's "*dark network*",[293] but we find however best referring to, after Douglas Farah, as a "*hybrid criminal-terrorist/insurgent franchise*",[294] since such hybrid sets of actor-interests often happen to be nothing else than loosely knit networks of cells, divisions, and sub-groups of umbrella organisations having modified their structures and strategies to take advantage of networked design within which economic-criminal and political/ideological motives and criminal *modus operandi*, terrorism, and irregular warfare tactical modalities overlap at once. Considering the interplay of values and interests in the strategic calculations of the group with regards for the ways it relates means to ends in carrying out violent activities and armed actions, the use of political tools and instrumental violence then makes no distinction between criminal-economic objectives and those aimed, at least rhetorically, at creating the conditions for political change or revolutionising society. Such an organisation engages in criminal acts but also has a political agenda.[295] And both the criminal and political ends are forwarded by the use of violence. Dynamics are cross-breeding and mutually-reinforcing. In the most advanced cases, the value attributed by the group to the illegal businesses it is involved into raises to the point of taking the economic motivation characterised of organised criminality on the political agenda of the group.

As contemporary insurgent/terrorist groups, especially the religious oriented ones, all needs to commit theft, traffics, kidnappings, extortion and other staple criminal activities in order to fund their guerrilla/terrorist operations, this has led some scholars to argue in the sense of a generalised tendency of those groups to put more emphasis on deriving benefits from the "ungoverned" spaces they control (cf. *oxymoron*) than on seeking the accomplishment of clearly defined political objectives or attainable goals. And that such a tendency therefore somewhat automatically provides opportunity structures for a great deal of convergence between terrorist/insurgent and criminal groups. As we argued above, this understanding tends, in our view, at least as far as ideological groups are concerned, to underestimate the weight of jihadist indoctrination and self-declared ideological ends in ways those actors relate means to ends. To some extent, ideological or theocratic purity may also preclude the possibility for complete organisational convergence/hybridisation at the group level.[296] On the other hand, individual notion of this appear much more flexible and, to say, approximate.

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[290] SARKAR, Sumita and TIWARI, Arvind. "Combating Organised Crime: A Case Study of Mumbai City", in *Faultlines*, Vol. 12, n° 5, 2008, KING, Gilbert, *The Most Dangerous Man in the World: Dawood Ibrahim*, New York: Camberlain Bros., 2004

[291] SARKAR and TIWARI (2008), *op. cit.*, pp. 103-105.

[292] SHELLEY, Louise I., PICAREKKI, John T. *et al.*, p. 37.

[293] "Dark networks" have been defined as "*competitors, rivals or adversaries who are modifying their structures and strategies to take advantage of networked design: e.g., transnational terrorist groups, black proliferators of weapons of mass destruction, drug and other crime syndicates, fundamentalist and ethno-nationalist movements, and immigration and refugee smugglers* […] *urban gangs, rural militia groups, and militant single-issue groups* […] *anarchistic and nihilistic leagues of computer-hacking 'cyboteurs',* […]" See DISHMAN, Chris, "Terrorism, Crime and Transformation", in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24(1), 2006, pp. 43-58.

[294] FARAH (2012), op. cit.

[295] SHELLEY, PICAREKKI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[296] ALDA and SALA (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

In *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bank-rolling the Taliban and al Qaeda* (2010), Gretchen Peters argues that the insurgency will not end unless the eco-system of opium and Taliban militancy (of which jihadist indoctrination and the burden of ignorance is a root case) can be severed.[297] From her 2010 field survey, she estimated that more than 80 per cent of Taliban commanders in the South of Afghanistan were fighting for profit rather than religion or ideology,[298] as NATO military intelligence estimated that as few as 5 per cent of insurgent commanders were fighting for ideological reasons by then.[299] By account of such difficultly auditable assessments, we find important to recognise that whether a broad range of actors disrupt peace and state-building processes out of criminal-economic interests in Afghanistan – and understanding the actors' motivation has indeed, we argue, key implications when it comes to designing appropriate counter-strategies, this should however not let us believe that, because they moved forward in deriving economic benefits from spaces either abandoned or never occupied by the state, "insurgents" or "terrorists", hence defined in existential terms, would have by that very fact automatically stopped aiming at any defined political objectives or attainable goals, or e.g. that they would have definitely abandoned their wish to overthrow an existing regime. Rather, it shows that, as far as considered in functional terms or in relations to their goals (and the ways they relate means to them), there often exists a merging and blurring of functions and motives that has been memorably described by Dishman as "*terrorist by day and criminal by night*"[300] (that could be translated in Afghan context as "*poppy cultivator by day and Taliban by night*".)

As already noted, to differentiate between politically inspired activity and criminal (profit-driven) activity can be highly contentious in context, especially in conditions of insurgency-based conflict, as is also to distinguish between socio-political or ideological (grievances and moral adhesion) and criminal-economic (livelihood and greed) motivational incentives that can drive individual engagement behind. This is particularly the case where organised crime as a method for various actors or parts of society is common or where it comes with the control of strategic territory and of the local population. Then, we must recognise that local groups or individuals are not necessarily coerced into criminal activities; and that the tolerance of or even support for criminal activities by the population can be a powerful enabler for crime-rebellion convergence. Such patterns of hybridisation of functions and motives today seem to have become common standard among a number of contemporary terrorist groups linked with the worldwide jihadist movement, notably those that operate as franchised offshoots of transnational militant salafi-jihadi meta-networks *al-Qaeda* and ISIL/*Dā'esh*, some of which appear to be increasingly active in the Greater Central Asian region.[301] We illustrate that case with the topical example of the terrorist jihadist group best known in the English form of its name as the *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (IMU), which emerged in Central Asia's Fergana Valley after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, and now is reportedly operating throughout insurgent-controlled areas across the northern sections of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.[302] The concatenations of

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[297] PETERS, Gretchen, "Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda", *Picador*, 2010.

[298] PETERS, Gretchen, "How Opium Profits the Taliban", United States Institute Peace, Washington, DC, 2009, p. 6

[299] *Ibid.*, p. 7

[300] DISHMAN, Chris, "The Leaderless Nexus: When Crime and Terror Converge" in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* Issue 28, 2005, pp. 237-252

[301] "ISIL and Central Asia", *PULS of Central Asia*, Issue No2, June 2014, last accessed on 16 June 2016 at https://pulsofcentralasia.org/2014/10/30/this-months-special-isil-and-central-asia-potential-risks-and-responses/

[302] For a recent account on IMU, see BALCI, Bayram, "From Fergana Valley to Syria – the Transformation of Central Asian Radical Islam", *Carnegie.ru Commentary*, Carnegie Moscow Centre, 25 July 2014; Stable URL http://carnegie.ru/publications/?lang=en&fa=56252&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+carnegie%2Fmoscow%2Fall_publications+(Moscow+-+All+Publications)

this groups tend to illustrate how a little bit more than twenty years after it first appeared, its on-going criminalisation has made it much less connected to its primary historical political objective of overthrowing Uzbekistan's regime of President Islam Karimov, and much more to the global jihad and Afghan drugs trafficking. The current proliferation of self-declared *Dāʿesh*-affiliated groups across the region (notably in Eastern Afghanistan and the North Caucasus) may well pre-view the development of an increased willingness to cultivate in house criminal expertise in addition to dawning upon the deep pool of criminal expertise that can be found across the region.

Then, an area for further exploration is the degree to which such dynamics of functional and motivational merging can be translated within individual behavioural patterns. As seen in Europe at present, individual movements toward violent Islamist actions in contemporary Central Asian context are also to be critically related to the relative importance of the criminal sub-culture in the affected country, and its impact on disenfranchised youth. Anecdotal evidence reviewed in the light of recent developments in countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan shows that the porosity and the complex patterns of interaction between "home-grown" terrorism and criminal sub-culture, with its extension in the penitentiary environment, also is one important way that can lead to a transformation of petty crime circles into terror cells in post-Soviet context.[303] The proponents of what is in effect a "do-it-yourself" (DIY) form of terrorism[304] can then adopt criminal *modus operandi* that make them impervious to stove-piped counter-terrorism programmes or, in conflict zones, counterinsurgency tactics. As realised by investigators in the aftermath of the current wave of *Dāʿesh*-inspired terrorist attacks in Europe, and especially with regards for the Paris, Brussels and Nice attacks indeed, both types of criminal behaviours and the respective underworlds they stem from frequently overlap as such. What is true for groups, organisations and networks can also therefore be held true for individuals: temporalities of individuals' life trajectories may likewise "hybridise" and "self-transform" (in Shelley and Picarelly's terms.) It is now a well-established fact that convicted terrorists and preachers of hate in European prisons (and elsewhere) recruit criminal to their violent extremist cause, allowing incarcerated individuals move between their identities as terrorists and criminals.[305]

By the same token, from activity appropriation and systematic involvement in illegal businesses and operations, the possibility may also arise that the members and leaders of a terrorist group or part or whole of an insurgent/rebel organisation raises the value attributed to these lucrative illegal practices to the point of wholly taking on the economic motivation that is characteristic of organised criminality. Eventually, as Chris Dishman noted, this shift in the primacy of motivational incentives for action can lead to a *de facto* transformation of terror cells or local rebel/insurgent groups into a criminal enterprise geared towards the accumulation of economic profits.[306] In this process known as "***transformation***",[307] a terrorist or insurgent group can become so keenly fixated on its criminal activities and the illicit profits they generate that it seems, in all appearance, to have largely abandoned its insurgency and/or terror campaign alto-gether,

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[303] For a good field-informed illustration of this dynamic, see BEISSEMBAYEV, Serik, "Religious Extremism in Kazakhstan: From Criminal Networks to Jihad", *The Central Asia Fellowship Papers*, No. 15, February 2016, Central Asia Program Georgetown University, Washington, DC; Stable URL http://centralasiaprogram.org/blog/2016/02/29/religious-extremism-in-kazakhstan-from-criminal-networks-to-jihad/

[304] Coined from Stratfor, *An Online University of Terrorism*

[305] For early warning of this dangerous phenomenon, see CURTHBERTSON, Ian, "Prisons and the Education of Terrorists," *World Policy Journal* 21 (Fall 2004): 15-22.

[306] Dishman based this conclusion on the case of IRA's evidenced implications in a series of violent bank robberies in Belfast in the late 2000s , which followed a long period of relative inactivity by Republican terrorists in northern Ireland, as indications of a process by which the IRA has been transforming itself into an organised crime group.

[307] SHELLEY, PICAREKKI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit*., p. 29.

along with its old-defined political objectives in favour of a specialisation and "professio-nalisation" in directly profit-oriented targeted actions. Usually, the pattern followed in this option, however, involves the original ideological facade being maintained, which makes it hard to distinguish these cases from the previous ones.

Amongst those people involved who have maintained some links with the worldwide jihadist movement, there are few that have followed this path; and yet we are not short of some illustrative examples, whose names have already appeared in these pages. The group Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines (Jolo Island) is most commonly presented as one of these. In spite of having come from the most radical wing of a separatist Muslim movement, following the death of its first leader Abdurajak Janjalani, in 1998, this hybrid criminal-insurgent/terrorist group initiated a new phase that was focused on kidnapping and collecting ransoms, as well as becoming involved in drug trafficking and money forging operations.[308] This change would lead to most of the analysts making reference to the transformation of *Abu Sayyaf* into a mere criminal gang. A similar judgment has sometimes been applied, wrongly in our view, to the *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*, on the basis that the organisation, which takes its roots in the Ferghana Valley criminal sub-culture and gangsterism in the early 1990s, thereby indeed offering the valid example of a criminal paramilitary grouping having transformed itself into a multinational terrorist religious-oriented group, reportedly came to control most of the routes that Afghan opium and heroin passed through to the Central Asian republics northwards during the first half of the 2000's.[309] Anecdotal evidence of the group dislocation in the first years following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, which was followed by a long period of relative inactivity by IMU militants, has been interpreted by certain analysts as yet another indication of an eventual process by which IMU was transforming itself into an organised crime groups.[310] Nevertheless, inasmuch as none of these groups has publicly renounced neither violence, its thinking, it political goals or religious ones, it seems prudent to consider that both are still examples of hybrid blending between terrorism, insurgency and organised crime, rather than fully transformed organisations. This is not necessarily incompatible with economic motivations predominating amongst the paramilitary/insurgents/terrorists, to the detriment of policies. For those crime-first "religious" groups and other such criminalised rebel organisations elsewhere (think, for instance, of Congolese or foreign armed groups engaged in the illegal exploitation of the vast mineral and other natural resources of eastern Congo),[311] the profits derived from the proceeds from illegal resource exploitation or e.g. involving in the narcotics business not only resource the organisation, finance its acquisition of illicit weapons, and attract and maintain recruits, but have also become an end in themselves. As such, "*drugs pay for bullets and provide with a lifestyle*."[312] When "crime pays", and pays a lot, it provides formidable motivational incentives for the continued existence and operations of armed groups – even in the absence of armed conflict or once a peace process is underway. In some cases, illicit profits thus seem, in all appearance, to have changed the motivational incentives of a group from political/ideological to criminal economic motives.

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[308] SCHLOSS, Glen, "Cutting Terrorist's Cashflow", South China Morning Post, 28 November 2002, available at http://www.scmp.com/article/358875/cutting-terrors-cashflow; WANNENBURG (2004), *op. cit*., pp. 18-21

[309] CORNELL, Svante E. "The Narcotics Threat in Greater Central Asia: Fromm Crime-Terror Nexus to State Infiltration", *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 4, n. 1, 2006, pp. 37-67.

[310] NAUMKIN, Vitaly, *Militant Islam in Central Asia. The Case of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*, Berkeley Program in Soviet and post-Soviet Studies, Working Paper Series, January 2004; Stable URL http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7ch968cn

[311] BOER, John de, and BOSETTI, Louise, *The Crime-Conflict "Nexus": State of the Evidence*, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, Occasional Paper 5, July 2015; Stable URL: http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:3134/unu_cpr_crime_conflict_nexus.pdf

[312] UNODC, *Crime and Instability. Case Studies of Transnational Threats*, February 2010, p. 1.

It is important to recognise that, even once two or more groups have reached the point of hybrid, or when there is a complete blurring of functions and spheres of activity within one particular group, there is no reason per se to suspect that transformation will follow. Indeed, the fact that review of existing scholarly found little evidence of a wholly transformed hybrid organisation (aside from the often quoted case of the Aum Shinrikyo sectarian group in Japan) is a testament to the number of hurdles that hamper their formation. Likewise, a rebel/insurgent/terrorist group may persist with borrowed methods of organised crime without ever proceeding to a nexus arrangement or progressing to closer cooperation. This may be because no crime group is willing to do business with it, or because the former see no benefits in working with outsiders.

Thus, however security experts and analysts have focused a great deal of attention on the Russian Mafia because they feared that the Russian crime syndicates would ally with (jihadist) terrorist groups or involve in moving CBRN material out of Russian in order to gain huge amount of money,[313] there is no evidence to prove that the Russian Mafia has engaged in this business. For Varese, "*the Russian Mafia are satisfied with their steady and huge profits raised from their traditional and low-risk business, such as private protection service, debt collection, extortion and legitimate business.*"[314] On the other hand, involvement in trafficking CBRN materials tend to bring a fierce response from the Russian authorities and huge political pressures from the United Nations, the doom of the Russian criminal groups would be inevitable.[315] Additionally, there remain cultural, operational, and practical differences between older criminal groups and terrorist groups, thus the different aims and motivations of the two entities also make them difficult for collaboration.[316] In practical and political terms, older criminal groups are engaging in organised crime without attracting the public attention, while terror groups tend to draw unwellcome law enforcement attention. As appear to be the case in Russia and the Central Asian Republics, older criminal organisations are closely associating with the law enforcement agencies through the political-criminal nexus.[317] By *a contrario* reasoning, Schori Lang found younger and more disaggregated criminal cartels such as those proliferating in conflict zones appear more willing to do so. "*Possessing no real loyalties to any state,* [these groups] *cooperate transnationally and conduct their criminal activities in fluid network structures. They are able to offer their services to the highest bidder. In some cases younger, smaller and more loosely organised groups have become ideologically radicalised and actively pursue business in the interest of politics as well as to support the goals of terrorist groups.*"[318] Our example of the "D-Company" presented above is a case in point in this respect. Because those criminal groups do not possess long-term and efficient financial strategies and they do not need stability neither strong states that can control them, such groups are now more inclined establishing links with terrorist groups. Another significant reason put forward by Shelley is that new transnational groups likely take advantages of the chaos of war and dysfunctional state functions and generate huge profits from cooperating with terrorists. Consequently, the new types of transnational crime groups share consistent interests with rogue non-state political actors and they gradually form terrorist-transnational crime relationship. As she argued, "*the terrorist-transnational crime relationship extends beyond a marriage of convenience that generates profits or provides logistics: it goes to the very heart of*

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[313] VARESE, Franco, *The Russian Mafia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 37

[314] *Idem*

[315] LEE, Robert, *Smuggling Armageddo.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008, p. 66

[316] WENGER, Andreas, ORTTUNG, Robert, and PEROVIC, Jeronim (eds.), *Russian Business Power: The Role of Russian Business in Foreign and Security Relations*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 103, 107.

[317] CHIN, K. L., and GODSON, R., "Organised Crime And The Political-Criminal Nexus in China", *Trends in Organised Crime*, 9 (3), 2006, pp. 5-44.

[318] SCHORI LANG, *op. cit.* (2011), p. 8.

*the relationship between crime groups and the state.*"[319] That logic coincides perfectly with evidenced linkages between certain Afghan insurgent groups and Afghanistan's drug barons. In a somewhat similar vein, in Libya, the Sinai, and throughout the Sahel Region, salafist-jihadist groups now provide protection for human smuggling and drug trafficking operations by clan/tribe-based organised crime networks on which they rely for funding and logistics. Think also for instance of the symbiotic relationship between *al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb* (AQIM) and Tuareg rebellion's contraband networks in Northern Mali and Niger.[320]

While alliances of criminal organisations (especially for transnational crime groups in multi-frontier and porous borderlands, such as drug-trafficking rings in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Caucasus) and terrorist/insurgent groups indeed exist and constantly occur depending on their consistent interests, these developments are neither systematic nor inevitable. Rather, they result from a series of opportunities that eventually can lead to a next stage of co-operation. Along the whole spectrum of interactions between organised crime and terrorism/insurgency, the contingent dynamics of convergence of armed groups and organised actors with criminal capacities and/or expertise in the use of violence, whatever their primary motivational incentives for operating may be, can evolve into a more symbiotic relationship, which in turn can turn into hybrid (criminal and terrorist/insurgent) groups, networks or franchises that operate in, and control, specific geographical territories which allow them to function in a relatively safe environment. It is important, however, to emphasise that many do not. While convergence is a dynamic and incremental process, many crime-terrorism or crime-insurgency links do not ever progress to close co-operation indeed, let alone merger. Dynamic movement among these various conditions of interaction is, at least, *possible*. While some groups might move backwards or even skip a stage,[321] others may not ever move beyond a particular form of interaction. In fact, as Shelley and Picarelli highlighted: "*Territorial co-incidence and close proximity does not even guarantee that crime and terror* [or insurgent/rebel] *groups will collaborate.*"[322] Furthermore, we have already pointed out the fact that the potential for activity appropriation means that an overlap in organised crime and terrorism and/or insurgency as patterns of activity and operational and behavioural methods can occur without any cooperation between two groups. Some of the most serious terrorism cases detected in Europe and the United States over the past few years have not involved organised crime groups at all – the terrorist have acted alone using the methods of organised crime. Similarly, a terrorist or insurgent group may traffic drugs to fund its campaign of violence (such as the Taliban or *Dā'esh*, but it remains first and foremost a terrorist organisation and/or one using a strategy of insurgency aimed at defined political goals and/or self-declared ideological ends.

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[319] SHELLEY, *op. cit.* (2005), p. 105.

[320] Excellent overview in: ALDA and SALA (2014), *op. cit.,* pp. 6-9

[321] For example, a terror group robs tourists for money and credit cards. The terror group comes to realise that it can leverage this by working with an organized crime group that can sell the credit cards. The terror group sells two batches of credit cards to the organized crime group, but then decides to return to simple theft. It has thus gone from activity appropriation to nexus and back to activity appropriation. Again, time and reward are the key analytical factors here – the terror and crime groups only came together twice and never found mutual benefit to support working closer together. Furthermore, steps could be eliminated but the lack of trust between groups is a significant impediment that would have to be overcome.

[322] SHELLEY, PICAREKKI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 6

## 3. **Predominant Criminal Activities in Greater Central Eurasia**

The significant criminal-terrorist/insurgent connection found in those parts of Central Eurasia both at the group and sub-group level demonstrates, we believe, there is a symbiotic relationship between these groups. Often, they occupy the same geographic space at the same time and it is not coincidental. Both groups operate best in environments characterised by weak governance, and more often than not, no governance. Both maintain their ranks by drawing on the same demographic – young and dissatisfied/disenfranchised men. Both groups evidence cooperation when it serves their individual organisational needs and purposes. But this is done only if a determination is made that such co-operation does not result in increased scrutiny by the authorities. Criminals will provide terrorist with whatever they require provided the price as right, and along with many other goods and services, the densification of flows of foreign fighters from the Caucasus and Central Asia to the Levant shows that also includes forged documentation and safe-conducts.[323] An essential element shared by the convergence scenarios that are examined here is the involvement of the terrorist/insurgent individuals and groups in several of the typical activities of organised crime included in the general list that we set out in an earlier section.

Following the same order used here, the predominant category of criminal activities underlying the connectivity of groups along the trans-Eurasian criminal-terrorist/insurgent conduct draining to the world market the criminal wealth of an estimated $50 billion Afghan/Pakistani heroin market is *drug trafficking*. Afghan opiates is by far the merchandise that is most commonly trafficked throughout the region. This is not coincidental, given that for some decades Afghanistan has figured as the world's leading opium-producing country, with a great advantage over any other one (about 90% on average.)[324] We cannot say that it is a coincidence either that for years most of the opium from Afghanistan has been grown in the south-western provinces of Helmand, Zabul and Kandahar, and in the north-eastern provinces of Badakhshan, Nurestan and Kunar, the strategic centres for the Taliban-led insurgency and other related jihadist groups (with special reference to the Haqqani network, IMU and *Hezb-i Islami*.) In more general terms, the cultivation of opium in a minimum of 34 Afghan provinces,[325] and the exporting of this to the rest of the world, would have been impossible if they had not had the backing from and participation of insurgent/terrorist organisations and organised crime groups of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia that we have already referred to before. Over the course of the decade of the 2000s, this amalgam of local insurgent militants, associated with global jihadi terrorism (*al-Qaeda*), have taken part in nearly all of the operations that fall within the drug business cycle. They generally act as facilitators and protectors: from the growing of the opium, moving on through the processing of it as it is transformed into heroin, the storage and transporting of it, or its ultimate exportation and sale. By way of example and starting from the basis of the estimates made for the period 2008-12, the support of Afghan Taliban for these activities could have brought them a minimum income of greater than 125 million dollars per year.[326] All in all, most experts assume the Taliban and other related insurgent groups, when they are not involved in drug-trafficking circuits directly themselves (as for IMU or *Hezb-i Islami*) have been applying charges to the heroin traffickers

[323] See IBRAEV, Belek, *Addressing the Daesh Threat in the context of Central Asia*, Working Paper Series #31, January 2016, OSCE Academy, Bishkek; Stable URL: http://www.osce-academy.net/upload/file/Brief31.pdf. Also, "Syria Calling: Radicalisation in Central Asia", *Briefing Europe & Central Asia* No. 72, 20 January 2015, International Crisis Group, Brussels/Osh; Stable URL: https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/central-asia/syria-calling-radicalisation-central-asia

[324] UNODC. *Addiction, Crime and Insurgency. The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, Vienna, 2012

[325] UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2013* (April 2014), p. 14, 15

[326] *Idem*, p. 17

who cross the territories that are under their control, in return for allowing the drug (and other illicit goods) to be moved and protecting the convoys in which they transport it.[327] This particular measure seems to be applied to the cargos of heroin that cross the border with Central Asia.[328]

In addition to trafficking in drugs, the involvement of these groups in organised crime relates to various forms of illegal trade. Both the Afghan Taliban and the rest of the *AfPak* jihadists have complemented their income related to drug trafficking by means of their participation in operations of trafficking in chemical precursors for preparing drugs, cannabis, weapons, precious stones, tobacco, gasoline, and looted antiques. The Taliban and other Afghan jihadists seem to have been making significant profits from this two latest criminal activity. These illicit forms of trade have also performed a significant role amongst the activities that have concerned the terrorist cells of the jihadist insurgency in certain parts of the North Caucasus as well, here also smuggling patterns form an entire cultural pattern.[329] Along with direct involvement into trafficking activities, the gains extracted by insurgent/terrorist groups by charging money to the smugglers that cross their operation areas should not be underestimated.

The jihadist insurgent/terrorist factions established in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the armed paramilitary groupings active in Central Asia and the Caucasus have committed themselves to other characteristics of organised criminality in addition to illegal trafficking. In the previous sections we have already mentioned the extortion practice carried out in Pakistan and Afghanistan by jihadist groups close to the Taliban, imposed on various segments of the population and of the local businesses. The reinforcing of this around the years 2008-2010 allowed the Taliban-led insurgency to make it extremely hard for internationally operating armed forces in controlling Afghanistan's strategic motorways, which then translated into the imposing of transit costs. The victims of these ransom collections would include the foreign and national U.S. and NATO contractors that that had to carry out the reconstruction of the particular motorways as well as the drivers who transported all kinds of merchandise, whether legal (especially food, fuel and engineering material) or illegal (such as products stolen for smuggling). In these latter cases, the extortion could be complemented by part of the confiscation of part of the material transported (weapons included).[330] Thus, in the time in which ISAF were operating across most of the country, virtually any lorry loaded with fuel that was travelling by road across the Afghan-Pakistani border in the Pashtun/Balouch South would be required to make an average payment of some 500 U.S. dollars. In turn, quite a lot of contractors and businessmen would get used to inflating their cost estimates so that these include the sums of money necessary in order to avoid attacks, kidnappings and other acts of sabotage by criminal and insurgent groups.[331] In addition to this came the forced collection of taxes imposed on the staff of non-governmental organisations, and in these cases tolls of up to 200 dollars were imposed on every vehicle that went into the area with the intention of giving out humanitarian aid.[332]

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[327] UNODC (2012), *The transnational threat of Afghan opium*, 2012

[328] RUTTIG, Thomas, "Afghanistan between Democratisation and Civil War", in MALLORY, Charles K., and KRAUSE, Joachim (eds.), *Sustainable Strategies for Afghanistan and the Region After 2014*, Aspen European Strategy Forum, The Aspen Institute, Berlin, January 2012, p. 148

[329] ARASLI, Jahangir, "The Rising Wind: Is the Caucasus Emerging as a Hub for Terrorism, Smuggling, and Trafficking?", *Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 2010), pp. 5-26.

[330] LOONEY, Robert E, "The Business of Insurgency", *The National Interest*, No. 81 (Fall 2010), pp. 71-72; KAPLAN, David, "Paying for Terror", *U.S. News and World Report*, 5 December 2010, p. 43

[331] *Ibid.*

[332] OEHME III, CHESTER, G., "Terrorist, Insurgents, and Criminal-Growing Nexus?", Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2010, pp. 92-93.

The use of intimidation and threats, as a means of collecting specific or regular sums of money, is an old criminal method. For example, aggression and threats for the purposes of extorting money from traders and professionals of different levels has become kind of generalised practice amongst the terrorist groups established in different provinces and regions of Pakistan: from the tribal regions, Afghanistan, to the more developed provinces of the Punjab and Sindh. The usual victims of these acts of extortion are traders and professionals of different types. This practice is sometimes based upon the kidnapping of the particular individuals subject to extortion or their family members. The terrorist groups involved include Jihadist elements such as TTP factions (*Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan*) and the Haqqani Network.[333] Specifically, some information indicates that radical Pakistani groups have obtained funds in Europe by carrying out extortion on compatriots who were living in our country. In some cases, these forms of extortion were in the form of express kidnappings.[334] Leaving aside the examples of the illegal capture and holding of people with the exclusive aim of forcing political concessions and obtaining publicity, kidnappings for extortion constitute a recurring mode of financing in the general history of terrorism, and also in that of some of the regional or local individuals associated with global terrorism.[335] Jihadist insurgents of Central Asian and the Caucasus joining in with the kidnapping business at the end of the 1990s decade is the experience that is by no means unique. In no way less interesting, and probably most well-known and spectacular is the case of AQIM in the Sahel Region. In Afghanistan, and even more so in Pakistan, the Taliban and other *al-Qaeda*-related groups also have become involved in recent years in the undertaking of kidnappings and the subsequent ransom demands (in combination with some drug-trafficking operations).[336]

The data available about kidnappings in Afghanistan and Pakistan are significant. Facilitated by a tradition of kidnappings related to tribal disputes, business conflicts and forced marriages, this activity quickly became a kind of epidemic in which old and new criminal networks profusely participated, along with the insurgent factions. In Pakistan in the 2000s, kidnappings came to represent 70% of registered crimes, with an average of two kidnappings per day. In 2012 alone, that proportion grew from two to a total of ten incidents per day. It has been estimated that there has been an average of 6,000 kidnappings per year in Pakistan over the past couple of years.[337] Unlike what has happened in the Sahara, foreigners in Afghanistan and Pakistan (as in the Caucasus and Central Asia) only constitute one of many other targets for the kidnappers, and it has been the figure of locals kidnapped that has overwhelmingly predominated. In Afghanistan, the national victims have included government officials, businessmen, journalists, aid workers, women, teenagers, children etc. One of the most reliable reports on the issue indicates that this business could have contributed between 80 and 120 million dollars per year to various criminal insurgents groups in Pakistan, without counting the money obtained from foreign kidnappings.[338] In this last instance, kidnapping becomes a weapon of intimidation and political pressure. The first example of this became known on February 1, 2002. This was the day on which a video appeared on Internet that showed the decapitation of the American citizen and *Wall Street Journal* correspondent Daniel Pearl in Karachi. While other captured victims often ended up in less a dramatic way, many armed groups in the region, included the Taliban itself, gradually came round to

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[333] AGHA, Ambreen, "An epidemic of extortion", *South Asia Intelligence Review*, vol. 11, nº 18, 2012, p. 24

[334] AGHA (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 25

[335] U.S. Department of the Treasury, Remarks of Under-Secretary David Cohen at Chatham house on "Kidnapping for Ransom: The Growing Terrorist Financing Challenge", October, 2012; Stable URL https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Meetings/Meeting%20Transcripts/051012CohenQA.pdf

[336] *Ibid.*, p. 5

[337] *Ibid.*, p. 9

[338] *Idem*

the idea of kidnapping as a business, charging money to release hostages. However, it has not been possible to specify the gains obtained by this means to date.

In these cases and many others, *Xawilaad*, also known as Arabic *Hawala* (aka the "Jihad's Western Union"), an informal value transfer system based on the performance and "Islamic" honour of a huge network of money brokers, primarily located in the Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Indian sub-continent, and operating outside of, or parallel to, traditional banking, financial channels, and remittance systems,[339] play a major role. In January 2012, the Kabul office of New Ansari Exchange, Afghanistan's largest *Xawilaad* money transfer business, was closed following a raid by the country's national anti-political corruption unit, on the ground this company was involved in laundering profits from the opium trade and the moving of cash earned by – and this is especially interesting – both government allied warlords and leading figures of the insurgency, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, through extortion and drug trafficking. Thousands of records were seized, from which links were found between money transfers by this company and political figures in the country, including relatives of President Karzai.[340]

There is general agreement among analysts that Afghan organised crime trafficking groups, to an ever greater degree than the Taliban and other insurgent groups, control the drug trade up to the borders of Afghanistan, from where consignments are sold to trafficking networks in the surrounding countries. There is, however, substantial evidence that the networks and contacts of Afghan traffickers, particularly those based in the south, extend well beyond the borders of the country, with Dubai serving as a key financial hub for transactions conducted outside of Afghanistan. There is limited evidence that some Afghan trafficking groups have sought to transport drugs to their end destinations in Europe (where some arrests have been made), but this is not yet a widespread phenomenon.[341] The overall result of this process is that actual drug trafficking operations across and outside the borders of Afghanistan are being shifted from hands to hands, from groups to groups, and from networks to networks. This is achieved by compromising key state institutions to support criminal activities.

## 4. Of Borders, Routes, and Geographical Conveyor-belts: The Politics of Access in Greater Central Eurasia

Even though they do attack different vulnerabilities for certain specific needs, all the disparate groups and organisations which, in aggregate, make up the bulk of non-state armed actors ultimately all appear to use the same illicit ducts and structures to evolve their respective bases of recruitment, access and diversify capabilities, exploit altered logistical models and financing mechanisms etc. At the most general level, they operate and seek to control, specific geographic territories that allow them to function in a relatively safe environment. As we noted, links between terrorism, insurgency, organised crime and crime are thus more likely to develop in areas of the world where the state has the least presence and means of control – that is, areas with large shadow economies and protracted conflicts. Territory outside the control of the central state such as exists in failed or failing states, poorly regulated polity or border regions (especially those regions surrounding the intersection of multiple borders), and parts of otherwise viable states

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[339] HORST, Cindy, *Xawilaad: The Importance of Overseas Connections*, WPTC-02-14, Amsterdam Research Institute for Global Issues and Development Studies; Stable URL http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/horst2.pdf

[340] ROSENBERG, Matthew, "Corruption Suspected in Airlift of Billions in Cash From Kabul", *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 June 2010, last accessed on 17 June 2016 at http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704638504575318850772872776

[341] SHAW (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 199.

where law and order is absent or compromised, are favoured locales for crime-terrorism/insurgency interactions. At first hand, we discussed in the previous section how these dynamics of convergence and hybridisation of networks relate to the realm of the operational and behavioural methods motivational structures of the actors at stake. Now, it also appears that the growing convergence of illicit networks empowering terrorists, criminals, and proliferators around the world, and certainly so throughout the Central Eurasian drug trade, cannot be thought without conceiving of the clustering role played therein by pivotal individuals acting as critical "shadow facilitators"[342] enabling the interconnectiveness and transnationalisation of various networks. The U.S. Intelligence Community confirms that it is:

> "[…] monitoring the expanding scope and diversity of 'facilitation networks,' which include semi-legitimate travel experts, attorneys, and other types of professionals, as well as corrupt officials, who provide support services to *criminal and terrorist groups* (emphasis added)."[343]

Based on their specific expertise in how to exploit the seams in local, national and international, legal and economic structures, these nodal agents find themselves in positions to enable and facilitate the illicit activities of all those who actively rely on them for financing, resourcing, logistics, and to internationalise their support and operations. Brokering deals and tactical alliances independently of respective aspirations, *they* actually are, in practical terms, what links terrorist groups, insurgent organisations and organised crime rings altogether, eventually leading to the establishment of tactical et/or strategic alliances among them and to the formation of hybrid franchises within the recombinant state-crime/terrorism-insurgency landscape.[344]

Given the importance of an actor-oriented approach to assessing the social compact through which proceeds from organised crime are handled, transformed, and mobilised throughout social technologies that generate often intimate connections between a broad diversity of groups with a variety of motives, the central feature binding them together is best sought in the informal chain of overlapping networks – we refer to hereinafter as "conveyor belts" – that interconnect these operations along different geographical parts of the overall criminal-terrorist/ insurgent conduct. Because of their essentially informal setting, these recombinant chains of networks are highly adaptive and flexible in the their ability as much to trafficking people and laundering illegitimate funds as to move illegally a wide diversity of illicit products, money, weapons, personnel and goods that are crossing borders undetected thousands of times each day. As discussed above, rather than operating in isolation, many of the stakeholders in each geographical segments of the conduct often have complex but significant interaction with each other, based primarily on the ability of each to provide another with a critical service. But at the same time, different aims and motivations of political and criminal groups lead organised crime groups and terrorists or insurgent factions more likely to cooperate only on a short-term, punctual basis. Makarenko believes most of the evidence of linkages between the two entities around the trafficking of opiates from Afghanistan could prove that co-operation tend to be one-spot alliance or functional co-operation within shorter time for specific needs.[345] Most terrorists/insurgents groups in the region are

[342] For a good illustration of the importance of the role played by such global facilitators within the crime-terrorism nexus, see REALUYO, Celina, "The Terror-Crime Nexus. Hezbollah's Global Facilitators", in *PRISM*, Vol 5, No 1, 2014, pp.117-132; available at https://www.academia.edu/19545694/_The_Terror-Crime_Nexus_Hezbollah_s_Global_Facilitators_

[343] CLAPPER, *Prepared testimony of Director of National Intelligence to the Senate Selection Committee on Intelligence* (2013), *op. cit.*, p. 6

[344] REALUYO (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 124.

[345] MAKARENKO (2012) *Europe's Crime-Terror Nexus. Links between Terrorist and Organised Crime Groups in the European Union*, pp. 15-18; Stable URL http://www.europarl.europa. eu/document/activities/cont/201211/20121127ATT56707/20121127ATT56707EN.pdf

just getting access to criminal activities and develop their own revenue through contacting with organised criminal organisations which, conversely, gain significant profits through the prolongation of conflict, corruption, and undermining law enforcement. The groups operating in the region do not demonstrate a great deal of convergence. Separate institutions continue to mark their operations. Whether it happens, the alliances they form typically emerge out of necessity and opportunity, i.e. to expel security forces from specific geographic territories where they can make use of both modern institutions and technologies, and ancient smuggling routes and methods.[346]

Criminal "conveyor belts" are both global/transnational in nature and deeply rooted in local realities in practice. They often form and substance well-worn, customary, geographical routes and conduits developed through past conflicts, or traditionally used and handed down by local communities over centuries to smuggle goods without paying taxes to the state. In this respect, their operation by various communities, organisations and networks yields recognisable patterns of activity. Central Eurasia is a densely layered and intricately fragmented region, and that characterisation applies to each sub-region within. Criminals and terrorists who have chosen to operate there do so as participants in existing social, political and economic environments.

The anatomy of conveyor belts may be seen both in human (i.e. historical and socio-anthropological patterns of crime and violence) and geo-morphological terms (i.e. terrain and physical geography.) An area for further exploration is the degree to which conveyor-belts are characterised by traditional smuggling routes in rugged border regions governed in the absence or defiance of the state. These strategic regions, whose the topography and cultural geography may have strengthened their use as tactical operations centres by rogue operatives to smuggle people and weapons, to grow, process, and warehouse drugs or, for example, cache kidnapped victims etc., also as a "safe haven" to rebel groups and those committing terrorist acts, happen often to have developed their own brand of local culture (sometimes referred to as "contraband culture"),[347] which, in the practical terms of their moral economy, may accept as normal and desirable what the state officially considers to be illicit activities. In a number of such contexts, generally owing to local historical conditions of fragility and conflict, crime, having worked over generations to shape a society's political and cultural reflexes as a form of social protest and parallel authority may thus have become a critical element shaping local culture. Coupled with serious state failures in terms of lack of resources, weak institutions, corruption, underdevelopment, this social and cultural entrenchment of criminality has, we noted, considerable implications for the significance of crime-rebellion/insurgency (and also crime-terrorism) interactions in geographical terms. This is especially relevant with regards for those areas where the state has been considered an enemy for generations, such as in Pakistan's tribal areas for instance, Afghanistan at large, or in the borderlands of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

At the heart of the Central Eurasian landmass, in the so-called "Golden Crescent" of narcotic drug production and its peripheries, which overlap the contiguous frontier regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, China and the post-Soviet Central Asian republics, many transnational trafficking corridors locally overlap the patterns of deep traditional routes of the caravan trade of former days that have been maintained despite long and complex political and territorial changes. Throughout that densely layered and fragmented space, intricate mountainous borderlands of the

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[346] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 29

[347] For an examination of the "cultures of contraband" and their implications, yet in Latin American context, see Rebecca B. Galemba, "Cultures of Contraband: Contesting the Illegality at the Mexico-Guatemala Border", Ph. D. dissertation, Brown University Department of Anthropology, May 2009. For a look at the use of traditional smuggling routes in TOC structures in Central America, see Douglas Farah, "Mapping Transnational Crime in El Salvador: New Trends and Lessons from Colombia," North Miami: Western Hemisphere Security Analysis Centre, Florida International University, August 2011. See also, the study by the Center for the Study of Democracy of Sofia University (Bulgaria), *Corruption, Contraband and Organised Crime in Southeast Europe* (2013) available online at http://seldi.net/fileadmin/public/PDF/Publications/CorruptionContraband.pdf

Hindu Kush, Central Asia and the Caucasus have long been a sanctuary for outlaws smuggling persons, gasoline and cigarettes. The region has long seen this residual banditry merge and become intertwined with international drug smugglers using the same routes. This should, however, not be unexpected. While broad swaths of land are made of steppes, uninhabited desert and hostile high mountain ranges, most human activity – legitimate and illicit – relies on the same routes. Although some of them have been regularly used since antiquity, others have fallen from use at different times. Crowded or abandoned, roads, tracks, trails, paths, all kinds of communication channels, wherever they run (dried up river beds, hilltops, mountain slopes, rivers etc.) are potential smuggling routes and, therefore, drug trafficking channels. Routes provide access and are fundamental not only to travellers and traders but also to smugglers and traffickers. Routes and access prove fundamental, indeed, not only to drug trafficking but also to drug production. In the overall context of the global prohibition of certain drugs, agricultural drug production (i.e. drugs that are produced through agriculture – such as opium/heroin, hashish, etc. – which is very different from synthetic production) has increasingly been concentrated in remote regions where the writ of the states does not extent or is limited: hilly and mountainous areas, naturally, but also far more accessible areas of countries or states at war that lack the will, means or ability to renounce or to forbid illicit agricultural drug production. While few routes and limited access tend to play in favour of illicit agricultural drug production, traffickers still need to get the opium and heroin to market, whether national, regional, or global. Drug production and drug trafficking therefore depend upon a fine balance between inaccessibility and accessibility. In this matter, Ispahani explains: "*Since routes perform in both the crucial spheres of state activity, security and development, they are an ideal instrument by which also to reveal the qualitative relationship between these two facets of state policy.*"[348] Insecurity, violence, and economic under-development often characterise areas of illicit agricultural drug production. Quite significantly, the relative lack of routes leading to or coming from these areas reveals, and also explains, the negative relationship between security and development. Ispahani further develops how a route is "*both geographical and a political idea, both an end and a means.*" Her study of the politics of access in the borderlands of Asia draws on the work of French geographer Jean Gottmann, who stated that "*one of the major aims of politics is to regulate the conditions of access.*" Ispahani then contrasts the anti-route – that is, "*any natural or artificial constraint on access*" – with the route: "*anti-routes create pressure against movement – they limit, restrain, or 'channel' it – where routes facilitate broader movement.*"[349] Anti-routes, whether determined by relief features, climatic conditions, border regulations, custom tariffs, political enmities, or armed conflicts, "*may serve the same human purposes as routes*", that is, to regulate the conditions of access. Indeed, "*what routes move, and what anti-routes prevent from moving, are people and goods within and across frontiers.*"[350] And routes are consubstantial with borders, since "*without land routes, borders cannot be defined and secured.*" Ispahani continues: "*Whilst states cannot come into existence without the ability to deny access, they cannot be physically consolidated and politically sustained without the ability to expand access – without the extension of the authority and the legitimacy of the centre to the peripheries.*"[351]

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[348] ISPAHANI, Mahnaz Z., *Routes and Rivals: The Political Uses of Access in the Borderlands of Asia*, Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1989, p. 2

[349] *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 3

[350] *Idem*

[351] ISPAHANI (1989), *op. cit.*, p. 7

Probable Europe-bound opiates trafficking
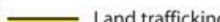
Land trafficking

Maritime trafficking

European Union

EFTA countries

Candidate countries (2004)

Candidate countries in negotiation (2007)
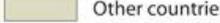
Candidate country with pending negotiation

Other countries

0    400 km

Sources : UNODC, Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy, Michel Koutouzis, Alain Labrousse.
Cartography : P.-A. Chouvy (CNRS-PRODIG & AEGD).
Fonds : Geoatlas - Graphi-Ogre.
for Ministère des Affaires étrangères (2003)

Weak states, Bernd Kuzmits writes, fray at their fringes.[352] Their scant governance capacity is mostly concentrated in urban centres if it goes beyond the capital at all. In weak, fragile or conflict-ridden states, peripheral areas are barely covered by state agencies or authorities capable to provide for public goods and essential services like security, infrastructure, and education or to manage the allocation and redistribution of resources and economic goods. In a spatial sense, borderlands are in most cases peripheral areas, but politically, they belong to the utmost sensitive parts of every state. As to the approach adopted here, borders are tantamount with membranes through which goods, people, ideas and information may intrude providing potentially negative as well as positive externalities for further development. Trading and, of course, trafficking and smuggling have always largely depended on routes and borders, that is, on access, whether granted or denied. A border, though its definition and its delimitation processes, modifies the very nature of any traditional trading that preceded its imposition. In fact, for many local actors, activities suddenly termed smuggling or trafficking are nothing else than traditional trading turned illegal or traditional goods turned illegal; for instance "*what is now called smuggling was normal among the Pashtun nomads of eastern Afghanistan for many generations.*"[353] Indeed, according to a Pakistani Afridi tribesman from the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan:[354] "*You might call what we do smuggling. But to us, it's just trade.*"[355] Between Afghanistan and Pakistan (as is also the case in former Soviet Turkestan), imposed boundaries cut through frontier zones and tribal land, changing frontiers into borders and creating de facto jurisdictions – in effect, bounded legal territories, but boundaries also affect the very nature or existence of routes. For example, "*a road through tribal territory is much more than an avenue of mobility. Here the laws of the state intersect with the laws of the tribe.*"[356] As David Ludden puts it, since "*modernity consigned human mobility to the dusty dark corners of archives that document the hegemonic space of national territorialism […] we imagine that mobility is border crossing, as though borders came first and mobility second.*"[357] Lord Curzon, Governor General and Viceroy of British-ruled India at the turn of the 19-20th century once remarked, "*the earliest frontiers erected a barer or created a gap: that is, restricted movement and access.*"[358] What is true in the borderlands of Central Eurasia, and for its "border landers", can also be observed in the frontier area stretching from the Black Sea to the Caspian through the Caucasus Mountains.

As far as the symbiotic relationship between routes and borders is concerned, Dutch geographer Willem van Schendel explains how "*the act of enforcing a selected flow of people and goods across a border, from border patrols to customs, immediately allows for the possibility of*

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[352] KUZMITS, Bernd, "Local Governance and Fragile Statehood in Amu Darya Borderlands", Research note presented at the EADI-Conference, Bonn, September 2005

[353] CANFIELD (1986: 97), quoted in: CHOUVY, Pierre-Arnaud, *Opium: Uncovering the Politics of Poppy*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 100

[354] The Afridi are Pashtuns, part of the Karlani tribal confederacy, who fought both against and with the British in Afghanistan during all three Anglo-Afghan wars. The British frequently classified the peoples that they conquered with fixed personality or "racial" traits and regarded both the Punjabi Sikhs and the Pashtun Afridi tribesmen as "warlike" peoples. Different Afridi clans cooperated with the British forces in exchange for subsidies, and some even served with the Khyber Rifles, an auxiliary force of the British Indian Army. *See* IBBETSON, Rose (1996). *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province* (re-edition, first edited in 1919, 191, 1914 ed.). Asian Educational Services, pp. 252-253. Full document available at https://books.google.be/books?id=UQUtQzPtC6wC&hl=fr

[355] EDWARDS & BAUMANN (1977: 122), quoted in CHOUVY (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 104.

[356] ISPAHANI (1989), *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[357] LUDDEN, David, "Maps in the Mind and the Mobility of Asia", in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 4, 2003, p. 1062.

[358] ISPAHANI (1989), p. 3

*rents to be charged for circumventing these rules and by the same token provides opportunities for smuggling of people and goods across the borders.*" Of course, "*the weight of enforcement is directly related to the prices than can be charged for getting around it – the risk, uncertainty and demand for these flows 'across the border' all go into making the border a site for illicitness, from an economic point of view.*" But, it is also important to understand that "*making borders also makes illicit the life activities of border communities.*"[359] Not surprisingly, all kinds of smuggling and trafficking flourish in these old frontier areas that often became buffer zones, as is still the case between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics, and with China, Russia and Iran: the border not only affords some protection (from political oppression, economic distress, or law enforcement) for the refugees who cross it, it can also help enrich those who do not travel "empty-handed." Thus, a route and an anti-route can engender one another: a closed border can engender a route to transgress it and the rules and restrictions it implies; the presence of a route can call for an artificial anti-route (a checkpoint for example) to monitor or restrict access. Hence, the ever growing diversity of smuggling and trafficking routes and techniques that arise as a consequence of growing markets and increased controls.[360]

If routes are a means of physical access which make communication and transport possible, if they are vectors of integration, or of assimilation, sometimes also of alienation, then anti-routes are the opposite: they hinder access, either naturally or artificially. Yet routes and anti-routes have in common the fact that they are strategic and political tools that reveal past and ongoing power struggles and conflicts. As borders are symbols of state sovereignty and markers of territorial rule, the state and its representatives are usually keen on showing power and control capacity along them by erecting checkpoints and charging tariffs. Especially in fragile regions, states are usually eager to reduce vulnerability by demonstrating presence at their borders, thus trying to prevent negative externalities like proliferation of weapons and illicit goods or to dam up spill-over effects from crises in neighbouring states. Considering this, borderlands are also characterised by a specific political economy – and a "culture" – that differs from other parts of the state, simply because borders generate revenues – like customs duties, tariffs, taxes or bribes – that are border specific. Access is granted or refused, but only very rarely is it a given. Drug-trafficking thrives according to such geographical and political dimensions. In the context of illicit economies, anti-routes, natural or artificial (customs, police, relief, natural environment etc.), call for routes (avoidance or crossing routes), and routes call for anti-routes (checkpoints, fences, etc.) because, according to the words of Abraham and van Schendel, "*making borders engenders illicitness*" and, according to Roitman whom they cite, "*transgression is creative*";[361] hence the diversification and increasing complexity of unlikely or unexpected drug-trafficking routes that result from artificial anti-routes. Hence, also, the increase in human and material means devoted to anti-trafficking activities along national borders (checkpoints and border patrols) and at strategic crossroads. Traffickers and state authorities vie for control of routes and anti-routes (corruption may allow traffickers to avoid checks and controls) in their respective attempts to secure territories. Thus, trafficking and anti-trafficking activities depend on, and call for, two conflicting territorialisation agenda and processes. Of course, the level of territorial control is constantly adjusted and disputed, as it depends on the human and material means deployed by each side and, therefore, on the overall power balance between them.[362]

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[359] SCHENDEL, Willem van, and ABRAHAM, Itty (eds.), *Illicit Flows and Criminal Things. States, Borders, and the Other Side of Globalization* , Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 64.

[360] ISPAHANI (1989), *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[361] SCHENDEL & ABRAHAM, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

[362] CHOUVY (2009), *op. cit.*, pp. 259-64

Generally said, illicit trade bears opportunities to gain economic sources that might underscore political power. Barriers they may be, borders create their own special opportunities. The less permeable the border may seem, the higher the stakes and the more lucrative the luring returns. For all these reasons, borderlands are instrumental areas for the states to underline their *raison d'être* or, if they fail, to manifest their weaknesses. In the latter case, local non-state actors might step in not only as service providers but also as profiteers of political vacuum. The proximity to the border might bolster up their position, as it could enable them to skim borderland-specific incomes and to harness trans-border networks and borderland identities. In this point, local governance in borderlands becomes interesting, whatever its actors, processes and practices may be. Here, the question of power becomes: Who controls the rents generated by border crossing? Are there any stable structures for rent skimming or is this done on an irregular basis?

In many cases, the functional weakness or fragility of the state in resource allocation, redistribution and service provision offers personal networks considerable room to unfold. Whenever insecurity prevails with regards to the validity of state institutions, incentives for the creation or maintenance of informal regulations are extraordinarily high.[363] These informal regulations can function as parallel institutions outside state structures or overlap with these to form hybrid structures. It is especially on the local ground that state institutions in the course of state building have to prove themselves in direct confrontation with traditional and informal mechanisms. And it is in borderlands more than in other regions where state mechanisms for reallocation may not be nurtured by control over specific revenue. And it is also specific for borderlands that state structures may be confronted with identity patterns that are not core-related but rather localised or centrifugal – sometimes epitomised by official state representatives.[364] In a number of contexts hence, control of borderlands may turn barely existent in effect, on the part of the state at least, as a result of its limited or ineffective presence there, or when territorial control of those areas where the state has few resources and little legal or law enforcement capacity is *de facto* exercised by non-state actors ranging from insurgents and extremist fighters to warlords to paramilitary/ terrorist groupings to criminal rings that are left in conditions to extend their sway and carry out their agenda throughout those "stateless" areas, yet eventually, as will be discussed in more detail in the ensuing section with regards for the Pakistani situation in particular, are turned over, or "franchised out" those territories by the central government or a regional power that, either purportedly or through passive acquiescence, are enabled to both fund their activities and spread unrest throughout the region with its blessing and protection of sponsoring state that sponsor, tolerate and/or appropriate them.

This process of marginalisation, co-option or displacement/replacement of the state from/ in strategic borderlands territories by seditious non-sate structures filling up the blanks in its physical and mental presence so as to establish and perpetuate their own territorial control has led to an underlying conceptual problem in much of the literature describing regions or territories in as "governed" or "ungoverned"; a framework that presents a false dichotomy suggesting that the lack of state presence actually means a lack of governing authority. "Ungoverned spaces" connotes a lawless region with no controlling authority. In reality, "stateless" regions in question almost always fall under the control of non-state actors who have sufficient force or popular support (or a mixture of both), to impose their decisions and norms, thus creating alternate power structures that directly challenge the state, or that take the role of the state in its absence. In fact, while functioning outside or aside state control, yet out of reach of "soft states" captured by self-serving factions, the territories at hand, and the populations who live in, often experience a significant degree of control by the non-state armed groups who dominate them. Whatever their motives and *modus operandi* may be, the actions of their affiliates undermine the control, the

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[363] See KUZMITS (2005), *op. cit.*

[364] *Idem*

authority, hence the legitimacy of the state. Eventually, because the state has a limited or inexistent presence in there, these non-sate actors have become the *de facto* governing force within the area they operate. In certain cases, if the state is present but is viewed, with good reason, as corrupt, incompetent, predatory, and/or not accountable for abuses (e.g. in Pakistan's FATA, Kashmir or in certain parts of Afghanistan or of today's Syria), people may come willingly, yet by default, to prefer them to exercise authority. Enabled through force or even popular support (or a mixture of both) to impose their decisions and norms, they establish alternate power structures that directly challenge the state, yet eventually supersede it, often in its factual absence, or in opposition to its forces, often by means of extreme violence, terrorism, and subversive methods like *entrysm* to gain control. Colluding with local authority figures and power barons that support and/or exploit them, crime interests may then have leeway to "crowd in" spaces and hollowed-out institutions with a view of further degrading regimes already challenged by logics of predatory governance that enable the conversion of their paramilitary force in to economic and political resources.[365] They assemble and mobilise paramilitary insurgent armies and dislodge or capture state authority in their operational area, so much as to project political power (then eventually enacting their ideological revolutionary/extremist vision) than to protect their criminal enterprise.[366] Once these organisations expand or are able to impose their role over the territory, especially after neutralising competing groups, they exert control over the local population, moving from predatory forms of financing, like kidnapping and extortion, to establishing parasitic mechanisms, like taxation, and the establishment of permanent "shadow", pseudo-state structures that offer kind of protection and basic services,[367] yet primarily function as vehicles to their own criminal, profit-oriented interests, eventually to underpin and export an ideological vision. What has been on-going for over two decades in Afghanistan within the conflicting dynamics of "*warlordization*" *vs.* "*talibanisation*", then the surge of the Taliban-led insurgency against the foreign-supported attempts at "securitising" and "re-governmentalising" the country are particularly illustrative of this problem. Now, also especially topical in this subject matter is the predatory governmental regime established by the terrorist-insurgent organisation of the self-declared "Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL/*Dāʿesh*) within its self-claimed "caliphate" across the Syrian-Iraqi border.

Here, as Anne Clunan and Harold Trinkunas rightly note, the essential issue at hand therefore rather turns to be:

> "[…] *not the lack of governance per se, but rather who governs the spaces and how. Governance de facto exists in areas frequently claimed as ungoverned spaces, such as feral cities, failed states, offshore financial markets, marginally regulated reaches of the internet, and tribal areas such as those found on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, yet it is mostly exercised by non-state actors ranging from insurgents to warlords to clans to private corporations. The notion of ungoverned spaces can be more broadly applied to legal, functional, virtual, and social arenas that either are not regulated by states or are contested by non-state actors and spoilers.*"[368]

Thus, for an analytical framework more sound both theoretically and in application with respect for the actual conditions of governance of such crime-prone contexts, regions or terri-

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[365] TILLY, Charles, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 22. The Federation of American Scientists lists 385 such "para-state" actors across the globe; list available at http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/index.html.

[366] COCKAYNE, "Crime, Corruption and Violent Economies" (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 194-196

[367] *Ibid.*

[368] CLUNAN, Anne L., and TRINKUNAS, Harold A. (eds.), *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010, p. 19.

tories commonly described as "lawless" or "ungoverned" shall be best referred to as "alternatively governed spaces",[369] to account for the fact that those *gray zone* territories are in fact to be construed with the rule of alternate power structures created by the non-state armed actor empowered through force or popular support (or a mixture of both) to impose their decisions and norms that directly challenge the state, or that take its role in its absence. These alternatively-governed sectors of one or more national territories represent in fact a powerful component of the threat from TOCs, rebels/insurgents and other armed groups, acting alone or, most often, in the form of hybrids of criminal-terrorist/insurgent franchises that control them, either at the expense of weak host states and their neighbours, or in alliance with stronger ones which host them, tolerate them, or use them as instruments of statecraft. As regards this last aspect, what has been going on in Chechnya since the mid-1990s, Moldova's region of Transniestria, or in Georgia's breakaway republics of South-Ossetia and Abkhazia since the August 2008 Russo-Georgian War (and now to some extent in Ukraine's Donbas as well) forms a striking picture bringing new elements to those "dangerous spaces", where non-state actors intersect with regions of weak sovereignty and criminalised (or "parallel") institutional arrangements in the service of power politics.

## 5. Adding Geopolitical Dimensions to the Problem: Breakaway Politics and "Frozen" Conflicts in the Caucasus

Then, and this will be the last premise of our approach to the risk governance of conveyor belt territory and alternatively governed spaces, the geopolitical dimensions to the problem extend to the high value of geographical spaces which become, as in interstate geopolitics, the object of competition and conflict. And so, in turn, do the various commodities moving through the conveyor belts on their way into the supply chain of the illicit economy.

If any, the anatomy of on-going conflict dynamics in the Caucasus borderlands is particularly illustrative of the importance of such geopolitical dimensions to the problem at stake, as the growth in political alliances of local violent entrepreneurs in several self-proclaimed, breakaway republics backed by titular Russia has largely spread the local politics of crime outward in shaping the ends and means of so-called "frozen" conflicts in the post-Soviet space.

A unique geopolitical and ethno-political formation, the Caucasus has evolved over centuries as a melting pot of populations and a crossroad of cultures and religions. Yet on the darker side, it also stood out as a space rife with conflicts and nefarious transnational activities that made the region an essential link in the supply chain of the illicit economy between East and West, North and South.[370] Long identified as state-challenging and stability-threatening territories harbouring active networks of transnational smugglers often enmeshed with local ethno-nationalist secessionists and insurgent movements, the Caucasus borderlands have proved over years to be particularly active transit hubs in proceeding all kind of traffics, e.g. in people, drugs, weapons, and sensitive military equipment in particular.[371] Now, with its roaring anti-Russian Islamic militant insurgency in the North (Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria) and its flock of breakaway territories in the South (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh), the transcontinental conveyor belt crisscrossing apace through the region's complex human and geographical terrain

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[369] In the sense of alternatives to state authority in an era of weakened sovereignty, See WILLIAMS, Phil, "Here Be Dragons: Dangerous Spaces and International Security", in CLUNAN & TRINKUNAS, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-57.

[370] See "Stability and Security in the North Caucasus", presentation by Aude MERLIN at NATO's Bucharest Summit, October 2011; available at http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=2599

[371] CORNELL, Svante E., "The Narcotics Threat in Greater Central Asia: From Crime-Terror Nexus to State Infiltration?", Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Volume 4, No. 1 (2006) p. 37-67. See also, HOWARD and TRAUGHBER (2009), *op. cit.*, pp. 371-387.

proved itself to be a resource in dispute against the backdrop of the broader geopolitical struggle over this resource-rich region, and a primary source of violence and conflict indeed.



Then, featuring most prominently in the constellation of authority within the region's complex and segmented polities is the case of "pseudo-states", i.e. those self-proclaimed breakaway territories that maintain the forms of true statehood out of their *de facto*, internationally unrecognised independence from a sovereign state with which they remain mired in a state of protracted, so-said "frozen" conflict. Controlling territories that are largely unrecognised and lacking in international legitimacy, yet with the vested support and limited access to resources of their protector state, i.e. Russia,[372] these self-proclaimed authorities however need endogenous resources to survive, not least in arming and paying their security personnel and handing out prebends and public offices. It has been shown that the political entrepreneurs that control them have been forging effective alliances with powerful TOC elements. Eventually, they have turned to be directly involved in criminal activities themselves.[373] Whether because they have few revenue streams, because they are busy enriching themselves, or because they are not integrated into the international legal system, territories in a state of protracted, artificially frozen conflict offer solid ground for cultivating smuggling and black markets.

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[372] Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which won de facto independence with the aid of Russian troops after a brief 2008 war, are black holes for Russian tax dollars. In its Europe Report No 224 "*Abkhazia: The Long Road to Recognition*" dated April 2013, the International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that Moscow had earmarked US$350 million for infrastructure projects in Abkhazia between 2010 and 2012, with that number expected to triple to US$1 billion between 2013 and 2015, but that only half of the US$350 million had been spent because of mismanagement and corruption. The group noted that Abkhazia effectively depended on Moscow for a staggering 70 percent of its budget and also received roughly US$70 million in pension payments for Abkhaz residents, many of whom have Russian passports. "*Abkhazia's economy is like a drug addict on Russian help*", the report quoted (p. 8) an opposition figure in the region as saying. "We want real help to support our economic development, not 'facade' assistance." In South Ossetia, a smaller territory with a much more reduced population compared to Abkhazia, Russia is spending nearly US$1 billion, or roughly US$28,000 per resident, according to another June 2011 Europe Report by ICG (No 205), "South Ossetia: the Burden of Recognition" (South Ossetia's population is difficult to verify, and estimates range from 20,000 to 70,000). In August 2013, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (Caucasus Report, "Tensions rise in Georgia's breakaway regions")* reported that South Ossetia "remains totally dependent on Russian subsidies to rebuild infrastructure and industrial capacity" after its 2008 war with Georgia, and that most of the 27 billion rubles Russia allocated for the province have "vanished without trace", prompting the territory's prosecutor-general to open more than 70 criminal investigations into the mysterious disappearance of the funds (Russia scaled back its funding for South Ossetia in response to this embezzlement).

[373] CURTIS, Glenn E., *Involvement of Russian Organized Crime Syndicates, Criminal Elements in the Russian Military, and Regional Terrorist Groups in Narcotics Trafficking in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Chechnya* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2009), pp. 21-25.

Organised crime, in this context, is not only fuelling political violence and violent extremism, but it also comes to play a critical role in the political structure of the "state" itself. Running parallel to the broader geopolitical interest of their sponsoring protective leadership in Moscow, which indeed still enjoys an overwhelming clout in the region and diverse and historical leverage on local actors,[374] they have an obvious economic interest in perpetuating their current status and not resolving the conflict from which they emerge. As is overall the case with regard to the different dimensions of their pseudo-statehood, public finances of all Russia-supported entities are purportedly being kept at arm's length by the Kremlin whose government slush-funds are known to be largely complacent toward locally grown and raised capital accumulation mechanisms notoriously relying on illicit businesses.[375] Certain Russian federative entities, such as proxy-ruled Chechnya, today appear to have acquired political leverages, communications and financial infrastructures that can provide even higher order criminal services, e.g. in relation to Grozny's booming industry of exporting fierce paramilitary as the fighting agents of Moscow's interests (in Ukraine, Syria).[376] In this connection, the continued presence of Russian security cadres in several parts of the FSU (Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Ukraine etc.) has placed some elements of the Russian federal forces in situation to "monetarise" their protective role, yet eventually to take part in trafficking activities themselves.[377]

Most notoriously, this has long been found in Moldova's breakaway Transniestrian Region.[378] Often referred to as "Black Hole of Europe", this sliver of a former Soviet state, unrecognised by any member of the international community but Russia that maintains it on economic and military life support, has gained infamous international recognition as a safe haven for organised crime developing and thriving in the immediate vicinity of the EU.[379] For nearly a quarter of a century, on-going conflict with Moldova, if presently only political, has permitted an exploittative and authoritarian elite of former KGB officials to build up on the politics of crime for consolidating their grip on power in that narrow strip upon the Dniestr river, thereby also shaping the ends and means of their protracted conflict with Moldova. Now also in broader connection with Donbas separatists – i.e. fellow paramilitary enforcers that, in a comparable way, have waged what appears to be *de facto* criminal insurgencies with the complicit support of Moscow to free themselves from the influence of the dysfunctional Ukrainian state, this *de facto* Russian enclave has developed as a major weapon trafficking hub under the thumb of criminal rings colluded with political entrepreneurs with deep and lasting links to Russian figures. Central to all concerns, intelligence reports have repeatedly linked Tiraspol authorities with attempts to sell black market

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[374] As may be *mutatis mutandis* the case of Pakistan in Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Baluchistan

[375] WENGER, Andreas, ORTTUNG, Robert, and PEROVIC, Jeronim (eds.), *Russian Business Power: The Role of Russian Business in Foreign and Security Relations*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 103, 107.

[376] See http://www.businessinsider.com/the-chechen-militia-sparking-fighting-in-ukraine-2014-5?IR=T

[377] CURTIS *et al.* (2009), *op. cit.,* p. 23.

[378] The region is home to a few hundred thousand residents, most of them ethnic Russians and Ukrainians. It secured de-facto independence from Moldova in 1992, when local separatists, backed by Russian military units, beat back the Moldovan army. Since then, the territory's survival has depended on the presence of Russian "peacekeeping" troops and on Kremlin subsidies. Moscow traditionally has provided over 70 per cent of Transniestria's budget, ac-cording to common estimates. Now, as Russia wrestles with its own economic woes against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis, the Russian government's ability to underwrite Transniestria – along with other client entities, such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia – is coming under increasing pressure. Russian budgetary cuts already have been announced. Many believe that Russia has no choice but to decrease its pay-outs to the breakaways. For recent update of Russia's support to Transniestrian "statehood", see "Can Russia Afford Transniestria?" *Eurasianet Country Report* 18 February 2015, accessed at http://www.eurasianet.org/node/72146.

[379] For a more complete look at the criminalisation of Transnistria and an excellent overview of global illicit trade, see GLENNY, Misha, *McMafia: A Journey through the Global Criminal Underworld*, New York, 2008.

Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles and "disappeared" WMD-related material. In a 2012 investigation that caused quite a stir, the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reported for that over the five past years, authorities along the Moldovan-Ukrainian border had carried out 10 interdictions of radioactive materials and interrupted 587 illicit weapons shipments.[380]

Along with the Transniestrian case that will be discussed in greater details later on, other emblematic cases such as the decade-long disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia's breakaway, now *de facto* Russian-controlled republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, also in relation to Russia's structurally unstable North Caucasus territories (federal subjects) of Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria,[381] which all meet the classification criteria as strategic environments heavily shaped by the shadow economy of smuggling and trafficking, and where crime, as an important shaping element of local social culture, has long been playing a critical role in the political structure of the society and the state itself, all testify to the critical role taken on by its politics, and indeed by the political economy of crime, in shaping the ends and means of protracted "frozen" conflicts in the Caucasus/Black Sea Region. Beneath and beyond the inescapable influence of Russia as a protector state enjoying overwhelming regional clout and diverse and historical leverage on local actors, any "comprehensive approach" aimed at comprehending the underlying autonomous dynamics of those conflicts has to incorporate local contexts and patterns of violence that permeates the involvement of organized crime and trafficking rings into local politics and the capture of "state" functions in the specific geographic territories of the overall conveyor-belt they operate. Within the constellation of authority in the Caucasus/Black Sea region's complex polities, the co-option of political power by criminal forces entangled within secessionist ethno-nationalist movements in breakaway territories backed by Russia becomes essential to understanding the protracted conditions of those local conflicts. Thereby incorporating ways local TOCs entrepreneurs and experts in violence relate means to ends allows to appreciate how the involvement of criminal operatives in politics, and indeed the local politics of crime, actually provide dramatic economic incentives for "freezing" those instrumentalised conflicts and undermining eventual peace agreements. Backed by Russia, some of these forces, such as those of Kremlin-appointed Chechen potentate Ramzan Kadyrov, may largely spread outward from the borderlands they operate (as it has been showed, for instance, with notable field effects in Ukraine's rebel-controlled areas of Donbas).[382]

Also, considering the underlined importance of the politics of crime in shaping the ends and means of some conflicts, and thus the importance of taking fully into account the critical role played by its illicit proceeds in their underlying resources dimension and the practical ways non-state or pseudo-state actors actually relate means to ends in their strategic calculations, many interfactional violence essentially appear to be, in fact, resource struggles for access and control, with the resources in dispute being not only the illicit commodities being exploited and traded to secure financing, but also the physical trafficking hubs through which the illicit goods must pass. Thus, as is the case for various commodities moving through the geographic conveyor-belts on their way into the supply chain of the illicit economy, the conveyor belt *itself* happens often to be a resource in dispute, and indeed one of the primary sources of violence and conflict around the

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[380] See *Enhancing Non-Proliferation Partnerships in the Black Sea Region*, A Minority Staff Report prepared for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate, 112th Congress First Session, September 27, 2011, 112-25, from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., accessed at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CPRT-112SPRT68115/html/CPRT-112SPRT68115.htm

[381] As a matter of fact, the ethno-political space of the North Caucasus indeed does not end at the state border of the Russian Federation.

[382] See, for instance, reporting by Shaun Walker for *The Guardian* (London): "'We like partisan warfare: Chechens fighting in Ukraine - on both sides" (24 July 2015), accessed at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/24/chechens-fighting-in-ukraine-on-both-sides

world. With regard to the fact, irrespective of the commodities concerned, control over the conduct (or part thereof) can dramatically alter the relative balance of power among illicit groups and networks active on a given territory, such a potential for violence and conflict is hardly surprising, and all the more so when one considers the lucrative nature of controlling the actual physiccal space of specific geographic or functional segments of the conveyor belt. And yet, also because of the growing hybridisation of networks involved in the struggle for access and control as well as that of the crime-terror/crime-insurgency interaction spectrum in methods and tactics, these conflicts appear to be increasingly fuzzy in nature and content.

## 6. The Conflictualisation of the Political-Criminal Nexus in Greater Central Eurasia

In the underground world of illicit trafficking and organised crime, both the actors and the territories, or parts of the conveyor belts they control, are constantly in flux, meaning that tracking them in a meaningful way is difficult at best and seldom done well, especially in contexts as opaque and secretive as the Central Asian republics. As both there and elsewhere in the world organised crime is highly adaptive by nature, criminal forms of its manifestation are continually improving and changing depending on the conditions and opportunities that emerge on the ground. We noted how, in poppy infested areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, for example, insurgent and criminal groups have been developing multiple types of relationships continually evolving with the strategic calculations of the groups. In such strategic environments, where the politics of crime is often defining the means and ends of politics *tout court*, alliances and divisions of labour around narcotics production and the drug trade oscillate across the state/non-state divide between non-aggression pacts, coexistence in common areas, separate spheres of influence, divisions of labour, or even temporary military alliances to confront another non-state group or the security forces. We saw that while the groups that overlap in different networks are not necessarily allies, and in fact occasionally are enemies, they often can and indeed do make tactical and even strategic alliances, although most end when they are no longer mutually beneficial or the balance of power shifts among them. The violent events that occurred in the summer 2010 in Southern Kyrgyzstan, and in the summer 2012 in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Region, at the border with Afghanistan, yet in the autumn 2015 all over again, are good illustrations of what happens when criminal rings break existing alliances and overthrow the existing order, depending on the advantages of a specific time, place, and operation. In those two cases, both strategic hubs on the Afghan narcotics northern conveyor-belt,[383] "political violence" are also to be understood, at their very roots, as criminal mafia-like clans' infighting struggles around racketeering profits and criminal proceeds from the Afghan narcotics trade, with the resources in dispute being not only the illicit merchandises being transported South to North across porous borders, but the physical hubs through which the illicit goods must pass. To be sure, opportunity structures are pro-

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[383] Afghanistan is by far the biggest supplier of opium and heroin accounting for roughly 8000 metric tons per year, or about 90 per cent of the world supply. At least 15 per cent of the production is trafficked along the northern route through Central Asia. The Kyrgyz city of Osh, which the UN calls a "regional hub of drug trafficking", is a key link in the northern drug route from Afghanistan. Some lucrative routes for transit of Afghan heroin through Kyrgyz and Tajik territory are: 1) Badakhshan (Afghanistan) - Gorny Badakhshan (Tajikistan) - Osh (Kyrgyzstan) - Sumgait (Azerbaijan) - Bosnia - Croatia - Western Europe; 2) Badakhshan (Afghanistan) – Gorny Badakhshan (Tajikistan) - Osh, Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) - Russia - Estonia - Sweden - the U.S.; 3) Badakhshan (Afghanistan) - Gorny Badakhshan (Tajikistan) - Osh, Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) - Russia - Shulyai (Latvia) – Europe. The drug trafficking routes that go through the Tajik-Kyrgyz border and reach Russia are not easy to track because they spread to smaller channels passing via several Russian cities. Then the routes meet in Moscow and head further to Europe. Corruption on the state borders makes tracking of those routes difficult.

vided in the two impoverished Central Asian republics for both regional organised crime rings and political insurgent groups to thrive, and convergence around the drug trade.
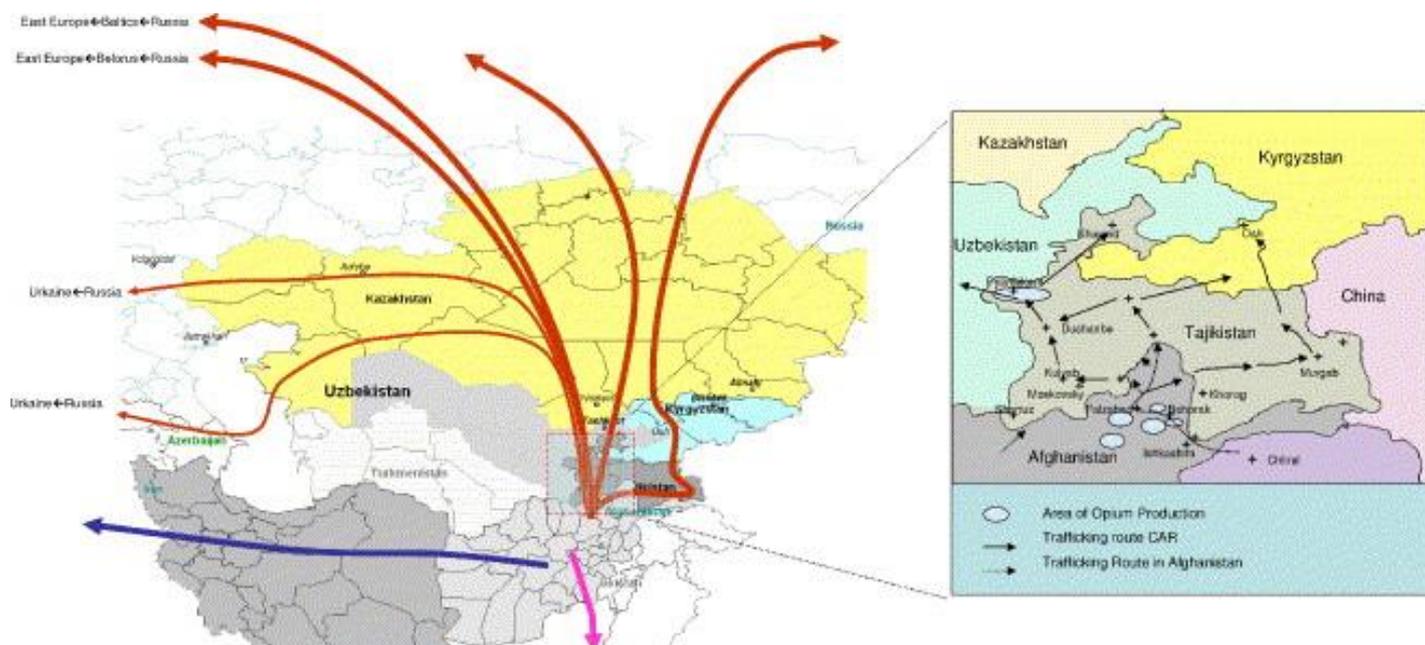


With the growth of general criminality, corruption, poverty and unemployment across the whole region in the new era of independence, organised crime appears to have taken a more concrete form in Central Asia over the past 20 years. Non-transparent privatisation and division of property in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union created good ground for the growth of criminal activity as large-scale frauds and thefts have flourished. As in the 1990s, individual "entrepreneurs" from the region (and the Caucasus alike) notoriously benefited from those favourrable conditions to establish and develop narcotics delivery networks generally terminating with "final" sellers in Moscow or St. Petersburg,[384] while also expanding markets at home, the number of identified trafficking groups in the Central Asian republics themselves already was increasing in the late 1990s, when Kyrgyzstan reported 64 groups and Kazakh authorities identified 125 groups moving drugs in Central Asia.[385] If any accurate data may seldom be available on such matters, Kyrgyzstan (and Kazakhstan) generally provides more information than the other Central Asian republics, where the situation is even more opaque. Along with neighbouring Tajikistan, for which it serves as a natural outlet northward, the Kyrgyz Republic has become among ethnopolitical conflicts, uprisings, economic troubles and chronic political instability over the past decade a primary centre of all aspects of the narcotics industry in Central Asia: manufacture, sale, and drug trafficking.[386] Kyrgyzstan's location adjacent to major routes across the Tajik mountains from Afghanistan has combined with loose central state control and ineffectual domestic smuggling controls to attract figures from what a regional news information platform characterised in

[384] "Police Seize Wholesale Supply of Heroin", *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* [Moscow], 29 April 2002, quoted in MAKARENKO, Tamara, "Traffickers Turn from Balkan Conduit to 'Northern' Route", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 13, No. 8 (August 2003), accessed at www.cornellcaspian.com.

[385] OLCOTT, Martha Brill, and UDALOVA, Natalia, "Drug Trafficking on the Great Silk Road: The Security Environment in Central Asia," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace *Working Papers*, No. 11 (March 2005), p. 18

[386] MAKARENKO, Tamara, "Kyrgyzstan and the Global Narcotics Trade", *Eurasia Insight*, Issue 8 December 2004, accessed at www.eurasianet.org

2007 as "*a transnational organisation uniting an unprecedentedly wide circle of members connected within the globalised mafia clans of the world narcotics system.*" Says the report: "*These are no half-literate Tajik-Afghan drug runners, but professionals who have passed through a probation period in the mafia clans of the world narcotics system* […].">[387] Although a variety of non Kyrgyzstani Mafiosi obviously are taking advantage of Kyrgyzstan's vulnerability, the specific place of local crime operators – whatever their ethnic background (Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Chechen, Russian...) – in the complex of illegal trafficking operations is not to be underestimated. In the second half of the 2000s, the curtailed accessibility of Uzbek routes,[388] together with pressures from a large reserve supply of heroin in Afghanistan, ineffectual smuggling controls along the Afghan-Tajik borders, and on-going corruption, factional conflicts and uncertainty among Kyrgyz authorities, spurred a significant increase in the volume of narcotics moving through Kyrgyzstan, thus a dramatic surge in illegitimate funding flowing in and profits by criminal agents there. As a result, local links of the criminal conveyor belt from Afghanistan into Russia became a resource in dispute, and one of the primary sources of violence in the country. In weak states such as the Kyrgyz Republic, the impact of struggles for criminal control of strategic conveyor-belt territories and the capture of state functions within, eventually leading to an alteration of the relative power balance among different criminal groups, can take a radical turn at the scale of a whole society.

Let us now have a closer look at what made it so dramatic in terms of field effects on state and human security in June 2010 in Osh Region, Southern Kyrgyzstan. That borderland territory of Central Asia's shattered Fergana Valley is long known for its position as a regional hub from which Afghan narcotics and all sorts of illicit commodities are dispatched regionally and conveyed further north to extra-regional markets.[389] Beyond the headlines, the sequential unfolding of a political crisis started early April 2010 in the capital, Bishkek, when a few sporadic grassroots protests mushroomed into a regime change movement that eventually toppled the corrupt regime of then ruling President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, were to revealed how resource struggles for access and control among competing clandestine networks could indeed transform into a major driver in triggering and spreading violence when, just two months later, during the rule of a weak interim government, historical rivalries among the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities erupted on a scale of violence unseen since the late Soviet period.[390] Against the backdrop of dramatically

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[387] HOWARD, Russell D., and TRAUGHBER, Colleen M., "The Routes of Terrorism and Trafficking from Central Asia to Western Europe", in *Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2007), p. 4

[388] BURNASHEV, Rustam, "Terrorist Routes in Central Asia: Trafficking Drugs, Humans, and Weapons", in *Connections* (2007), *op. cit*., 68.

[389] MAKARENKO (2004), *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

[390] After the toppling of President Bakiyev on 7 April 2010, Kyrgyzstan's interim government, headed by Roza Otunbayeva, had a fragile hold on security in Kyrgyzstan, especially in the southern regions. Since the power vacuum that resulted from of the political troubles that succeeded in overthrowing Bakiyev, groups of supporters of the toppled leader took over several government buildings in the Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken Provinces on 13 May 2010. Government forces retook the buildings within a day, allegedly with the help of Uzbek community leaders from these provinces. On the night of June 9-10, a fight broke out between Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth at a casino near the city of Osh. Many accounts of those fighting between groups of young Uzbeks and Kyrgyz eventually spilled over into mass killings the next morning. ICG reports that a large group of young Uzbeks started rioting in the center of Osh and attacked the Kyrgyz. Kyrgyz groups retaliated by attacking Uzbek neighborhoods. The aggressive mobs were well-organized and often led by special units of gunmen. Over the following days the fight turned increasingly violent and spread across the Osh Province and into the city and province of Jalal-Abad. The level of violence overwhelmed government security forces. There were dozens of reported murders and rapes, and groups of people looted and destroyed businesses and homes in various cities, towns, and neighborhoods across the two provinces. For background reports of the June 2010 events, see Harris Mylonas and Scott Radnitz, "Stopping Ethnic Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan", *Nationalities Blog*, 22 June 2011; available at http://nationalities.wordpress.com/2010/06/22/stopping-ethnic-pogroms-in-kyrgyzstan/; for full media coverage see in Reuters AlertNet: http://reliefweb.int/node/357824 (as last accessed on 13 November 2015).

weakened state power and the overthrow of the existing order at all levels of the national government administrative hierarchy, the control over the actual physical space of the criminal conveyor belt in the south, and notably the trafficking hub of Osh, turned itself to be an overriding source of violence. As local authority figures had to reconsolidate their alliances in order to be able to govern, some mafia-related political/identity entrepreneurs colluding with criminal and drug-trafficking rings could seized the opportunity of reversing allegiances for breaking free building upon the instrumentalisation of latent ethnic tensions. Ultimately, it is estimated that at least eight hundred people were killed in the city and many more were injured or fled.[391]

It is hard to draw general conclusions about the real causes of ethnic conflict. It is also hard to measure the role of the drug industry and transnational or local crime. Although the link is clearly there, it is murky, and its "cause and effect" characteristics are very ambiguous.

The conflict that erupted in the southern section of the small Central Asian Republic in June 2010 is generally explained as driven by external factors, Islamist radicals exploiting socio-economic grievances, and the extreme politicisation of ethnicity and identity indeed.[392] And yet, beyond convenient "totalising" ethnicising explanations,[393] several among the most savvy observers of the region, such as Madeleine Reeves and Anna Matveeva, the June 2010 anti-Uzbek "pogroms" in Osh and the region have to be first and foremost related to the activities of criminal groups, economic "mafias" closely tied with politics and business, and to the disbalance created after the ousting of President Kurmanbek Bakiev in the high-ranking power structures of the republic.[394] There are indeed serious reasons to believe that the Osh tragedy was the episode of a big criminal "fight" where the target was local businessmen' property, both licit and illicit, under the cover of facilitating the incitement of latent ethnic hatred instrumentalised by mafia-related political entrepreneurs. In the summer of 2010, in southern Kyrgyzstan, ethnicity certainly mattered, but only in consequential ways. This should be the

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[391] The clashes left hundreds of people dead. Most of the infrastructure in and around Kyrgyzstan's "southern capital" Osh was destroyed, businesses were looted, and hundreds of thousands of refugees were forced to flee to neighboring Uzbekistan or to other regions of the country. Some 400,000 ethnic Uzbeks are estimated to have fled to Uzbekistan. The conflict occurred in the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions where 44 percent of Kyrgyzstan's population lives. According to the official death toll, the June riots left over 390 people dead, while the actual total was likely to be ten times more.

[392] For complementary account of perspectives on causes of violence in Osh, see BOND, Andrew, and KOCH, Nathalie, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: A Political Geographic Perspective", *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 51/4 (2010), pp. 531-62.

[393] For a well-grounded counter-narrative of those all-ethnic explanations, see REEVES, Madeleine, "The ethnicisation of violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan", *Central Asian News – Analytics*, 25 June 2010, Ferghana.ru Information Agency; available at http://enews.fergananews.com/articles/2644 (as last accessed on 28 February 2014)

[394] The first official comment on the event was given by acting governor of the Jalal-Abad Oblast, Bektur Asanov, who explained the death of Mirsidikov as the result of "fights in the criminal circles", also admitting that criminal structures had become more active in southern Kyrgyzstan. Whatever the precise reasons were, this murder was given political background, when acting governor Asanov said that "Bakiev's team lost its criminal leader." This issue of the redistribution of wealth reasoned by change of political power was raised by the experience of two previous revolutions in Kyrgyzstan, which shows that the shift of political power in Kyrgyzstan inevitably leads to rebalance of power in criminal world, closely tied with politics and business. The mafia bosses play critically important role, providing services to various political forces. Therefore, the political figures have to "pay bills" on time. Relevant to this issue, see for instance [Anonymous] "Southern Kyrgyzstan: May the criminal fights lead to ethnic conflicts?", *Central Asian News*, 6 May 2010, Ferghana.ru Information Agency; available at http://enews.fergana news.com/articles/2630 (as last accessed on 28 February 2014). See also, SHERMATOYA, Sanobar, "Kyrgyz South and Uzbek issue", *Central Asian News Analytics*, 9 June 2010, Ferghana.ru Information Agency; available at http:// enews.fergananews.com/articles/2638 (as last accessed on 28 February 2014).

beginning of the explanation, not the end-point. At the very least, the role of organised crime in the outbreak of ethnic violence should not be overlooked. In its resolution on the situation in Kyrgyzstan (B7-0423/2010, 5 July 2010), the European Parliament specifically requested for an impartial, international investigation to be quickly lead in order to shed light on the atrocities committed against the Uzbek minorities fleeing South Kyrgyzstan, stating: "*In the light of nume-rous horrific testimonies, and that their authors and those responsible are sought and brought to justice*", and called for these investigations "*to shed any light on the accusations of collusion between the family of former President Bakiyev and the drug mafia groups in order to destabilise the country*."[395] Up until now, this call has gone unheeded.

While the causes of the conflict are still disputed to date, both Kyrgyz officials and the international community are linking violence to the overthrow of President Bakiyev. Whereas according to the results of the investigation of the Kyrgyz Republic's National Security Service into the 11-14 June events the clashes were instigated by clan members of ousted President Bakiyev in collusion with Islamic radicals, northern Tajik militants and the Taliban, for the International Crisis Group and most international agencies reporting: "*Even though the government blamed outsiders for the violence, including a variety of Islamic groups (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Islamic Jihad Union, the Taliban, etc.), the pogroms involved remnants of the Bakiyev political machine, prominent mainstream politicians and organised crime groups, especially those involved in the narcotics trade.*"[396]

Against the backdrop of this line of argument lays out the fact that the Kyrgyzstani administration under the Bakiyev's presidency was notoriously corrupt and utterly profit-oriented; the economy was largely under the direct control of the president's family, and therefore, it was often hard to determine a clear boundary between the state economy and the shadow economy since most major economic "deals" were made under "legal cover." It is apparent, however, that with the Tulip Revolution in 2005 that brought Bakiyev to power, Kyrgyzstan stepped up the process of criminalisation of both state leadership and society, characterised by massive money laundering, "merging" of state institutions with local criminality, and the murders of several parliamenttarians due to various drug- and crime-related issues.[397]

A weak state and corruption in Kyrgyzstan during the past years made drug trafficking and criminal activities easier. In the meantime the general economic situation deteriorated, dragging people into extreme poverty. The increasingly nationalistic mood featuring the failed post-independence identity-building politics in conjunction with a growing income gap, the criminallisation of governance, and popular grievances against the authorities worsened the already tense and explosive situation. Researchers Leijonmarck and Asyrankulova highlight how Kyrgyzstan's unstable political situation following the April 2010 revolution and the ensuing power crisis was obviously a convenient framework for regional and local criminal groups to challenge the stability in the South and the authority of the interim government. Although there is no concrete evidence of this, it has been speculated by several prominent regional experts that regional drug

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[395] European Parliament, Resolution on the Situation in Kyrgyzstan RC-B7-0419/2010, 5 July 2010; accessed at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+B7-2010-0423+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=hr

[396] See International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Progroms in Kyrgyzstan", *Asia Report No 193*, 23 Aug 2010, p. 7; http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/kyrgyzstan/193-the-pogroms-inkyrgyzstan. aspx

[397] For complementary account of the criminalization of both state leadership and society in Kyrgyzstan under Bakiyev's presidency, see LEIJONMARCK, Erik, and ASYRANKULOVA, Camilla, "The Role of Organised Crime and Drug Trafficking in Kyrgyzstan's Ethnic Crisis", The Institute for Security and Development Policy, Stockholm, Policy Brief No 39, 13 October 2010. Full text available at http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/4508~v~The_Role_of_Organized_Crime_and_Drug_Trafficking_in_Kyrgyzstans_Ethnic_Crisis.pdf

smugglers used the rioting as an opportunity to transport large amounts of drugs through the border.[398] It is believed that drug and crime warlords have an interest in creating political and social instability where corrupt and weak state institutions are in control. In other words, regional and local mafia could potentially benefit from a semi-autonomous, semi-criminal anarchic land.

Even though the fusion of political and criminal forces preceded the rule of Bakiyev, the problems grew worse during his rule. Researchers Andrew Bond and Natalie Koch observe that organised crime was an issue also under the country's first president Askar Akayev, but the regime change in March 2005 (that brought up Bakiyev into power) marked a dramatic shift in state-crime relations. It was at that time that local criminal groups infiltrated Kyrgyzstan's political establishment on an unprecedented scale.[399] Erkin Mamkulov, a government official quoted by the two U.S. scholars at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, stresses that the Bakiyev family clan used to control local criminality and drug smuggling businesses: "*It is quite fair to say that unrest, pogroms and killings - destabilisation in the country is convenient for those who support anarchy, including local drug lords. That is why during the latest ethnic clashes it could definitely be possible that the Bakiyevs' used all their means including their connections with drug lords.*" Moreover, the current government has been claiming that Islamists were directly involved in destabilising Southern Kyrgyzstan. They also stated that Bakiyev's relatives sponsored their [Islamists] activities during several days of mass killings in and around Osh.[400]

That being so, it can be said that several interlinking factors played a role in the outbreak of violence. Behind the conflict certainly lies the interplay between external and domestic factors as well as the link between regional/local organised crime and the corrupt family politics of President Bakiyev. To link crime to the conflict while dismissing other factors may not give the whole picture, but it can provide insight into the problem both on the domestic and regional levels. It also demonstrates that the politics of crime can take a violent political form, especially when the agendas of political or identity entrepreneurs and specialists in crime converged towards the overthrow of an existing regime. It then becomes evident that criminalised state structures coexisting with powerful transnational and local organised crime rings dramatically increase the risk that an uneasy situation will escalate into a serious conflict.

From a perspective of risk governance, the underlying premise of this proposition concurs with the critical distinction that must be made in terms of their respective "call effect" on criminal activity between countries where the state has little or no power in certain areas and may be fighting to assert that control, and countries where the government, in fact, has a virtual monopoly on power and the use of force, but turns the state into a functioning criminal enterprise vested by informally colluding state and non-state organised interests – may they be factional, sector-based, institutional or criminal/clandestine. Based on that understanding, it offers a prism highlighting the mutually-beneficial relationship of protection and profit that may exist between formal state power and the informal organised interests of shadow power networks that are organically linked to the state, and yet work in collusion/combination with organised crime networks or non-state armed groups within the dynamics of the wider criminalisation of state structures, i.e. the expan-

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[398] LEIJONMARCK and ASYRANKULOVA (2010), *ibid*

[399] As reported by Bond and Koch, the new president Kurmanbek Bakiyev and members of his family soon established control over locally organized crime networks and main drug-trafficking routes through southern Kyrgyzstan. It is especially commendable that when Bakiyev was in power he dismantled the UNODC-backed Drug Control Agency (DCA) within the Internal Ministry of Kyrgyzstan in October 2009. This move can only be explained by strong state-crime cooperation and attempts to broaden the room for smuggling and corruption. Since his downfall in April 2010, the amount of drugs seizures has been increasing with each passing year. According to the latest reports, more than four tons of drugs were seized in early September 2015 alone.

[400] BOND & KOCH (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 537-38.

sion of a *"political-criminal nexus"* therein,[401] and the growing threat it poses to international security. Far from a merely theoretical matter, this distinction is especially useful in practice when it comes to understanding the critical role of such political-criminal nexus in pre-, in-, and post-conflict situations, also as a strategic challenge to the international community's available tools and processes for stabilising fragile or conflict-ridden states, marked by the fragmentation of these clandestine powers and competition between rival criminalised factions from political allies, state influence and/or economic power. This is well the case of Pakistan, where pre-election campaigns in 2008 and 2013 have been marked by extreme violence and targeted political assassinations, and was definitely so in Kyrgyzstan with the 2010 events. Then, with regards for the on-going crisis situation in post-Taliban Afghanistan, relevant parallels can also be drawn with the crowding-in of organised crime and its collusion with various armed groups and self-serving factions within fragile foreign-supported government structures in the wake of stabilisation or peace operations and predatory networks diverting logistical/procurement models in operational context. As "criminalised" state structures are being built up, and eventually consolidated, within those processes, their role in "getting things done" and striking deals with "real" political leaders, may they be mandated by the state or challenging its control and legitimacy, becomes essential to understanding the effective drivers and conditions of the criminalisation of governance in fragile, conflict-ridden, or post conflict countries. It goes to the very heart of the relationship between crime groups and the state.

## 7. On the Unrecognised Importance of the "Parallel State", and the Reshaping of the State-TOC/terrorism Landscape

If any, the impact of criminal control of conveyor-belt territory, and the capture of critical state functions within, has been especially visible in states that are close to collapse or have already failed, including many outside of Central and South Asia indeed, making them apt candidates for complementary study. Among the most notable of all such cases certainly are countries in West Africa such as Guinea Bissau, Guinea (Conakry), Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone – all integral parts of the historical diamond and contraband routes crisscrossing apace through the region, and now part of the trans-continental "cocaine highway" between Latin America and Western Europe.[402] In the cases of West African nations, there are largely traditional "weak state" scenarios playing out, with different groups attacking different vulnerabilities in the state structure for specific needs, rather than taking over the state and turning it into a functioning criminal en-

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[401] Seen from the perspective of criminal involvement in political and state life, few countries can claim to be entirely free of this nexus. But from the perspective of governance, important variations in the local, regional and national forms of these evolutionary spectrums of criminal-political interaction must be observed as to the influence this criminal activity has on the very structure and functioning of the state. See GODSON, Roy, *Menace to Society: Political-Criminal Collaboration around the World*, National Strategy Information Centre, 2003. See also, SHAW, Mark, "Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organised Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan", in BUDDENBERG, Doris, and BYRD, William A. (eds.), *Afghanistan's Drug Industry: Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy*, UNODC & World Bank, 2006; and ANDREAS, Peter, "The Political Economy of War and Peace in Bosnia", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Spring 2004).

[402] A March 2008 UNODC Threat Assessment alerted about the rapidly escalating amount of South American cocaine transiting through West Africa: *"Poor countries like Guinea Bissau […] are unable to control their coasts or air-space. Police are almost helpless against well-equipped and well-connected traffickers. Drug seizures are growing dramatically – at least 46 tons of cocaine have been seized en route to Europe via West Africa since 2005. Prior to that time, the entire continent combined rarely seized a ton. But most of these seizures occurred by chance. Prosecutors and judges lack the evidence or the will to bring to justice powerful criminals with powerful friends."*

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terprise at their service. Notwithstanding all differences between the concatenations of two fundamentally contrasting situations in their respective geographies, histories, polities and cultures, somewhat of a similar scenario seems already well underway – while not as visible (yet) – in several parts of the Greater Central Eurasian macro-region, as the same forces, eventually backed by surrounding states, continue to grow in financial strength, territorial control, and political alliances at the crossroads of the heroine highway from Afghanistan and Southwest Asia to the Black Sea Region, Russia, and Western Europe.

Notwithstanding the Afghan experience of which some critical aspects in relation to the subject matter are to be discussed later on, criminal and drug-trafficking rings from and within the broader Central Eurasian region have been steadily growing in financial strength, territorial control and political alliances over the past two decades, be it through deepening linkages to political leaderships, collusion with self-serving factions within the state apparatus, regional players and/or outsiders specialised in violence (insurgent/terrorist groups), and the multiple networks that exploit them. Now, in states like Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, yet also in Ukraine, parts of Russia or Georgia, criminal groups have acquired high level skills in the use of force that pose serious challenges for states. In worst cases, organised crime and/or clandestine networks with criminal capacities or expertise in the use of violence have found in place all the conditions and supports needed to allow them insinuating into the political process through fraud, corruption, collusion or coercion, thereby leading to increased levels of predation and violence.[403] In a number of cases, these organised networks may also have been let in a position to become alternate providers of governance, security and livelihoods to win popular support.[404]

Over the past two decades, criminal penetration of the state has deepened in many parts of the world; leading to co-option in some states, breakdowns in governance and the persistence of internal war in others. Variances and invariants: it is the analysis, in relation to their effects on international security and global security governance, of the driving forces and enabling conditions underlying this process of creeping criminal takeover of the state in areas of limited or dysfunctional governance that makes the importance of the subject matter discussed in this section.

If the discussion above highlights the increasing involvement of non-state violent actors in organised crime, the same is true for governments in the region. Everywhere, the phenomenon has its roots in the same problem: the rapid growth of organised crime, led by drug trafficking, in an environment of heavily weakened state authority due to the pitfalls in post-communist transition, warfare, or a combination of both. All states of the region have seen the unveiling of corruption scandals and the involvement of state officials in crime. While this evidence is fractional, the similarities that exist make the trend clear: an alarming increase of criminal infiltration of state authority, which has been exacerbated by the stagnation of political reform in the region. In a number of states, the development nexus among mafia-like transnational criminal rings and elements of government – including the judiciary, intelligence services and security sectors, and the economy, has dramatically hampered prospects for stability, prosperity and democratic governance. In the states of former Soviet Central Asia, a rapid process of infiltration of state authorities has taken place from the early 1990s onwards. This process has been taking place across the region, though clear variation among the regional countries can be observed. The stronger, larger countries with a more varied economy, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, have experienced this problem but at a level that is unlikely to risk taking over the entire state bureaucracy. In Kazakhstan, the oil wealth of the country implies that even if criminal connections to government exist, the relative value of the drug trade is much lower compared to the total economy of the country; the

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[403] CORNELL, Svante E., "The Narcotics Threat in Greater Central Asia: From Crime-Terror Nexus to State Infiltration?" *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2008, pp. 44-51

[404] DOORNBOS, M., "State Collapse and Civil Conflict", in BURNELL, P. & RANDALL, V. (eds) (2008), *Politics in the Developing World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: Oxford, pp. 178-180.

incentive to involve in the drug trade is hence lower. Likewise in Uzbekistan, the country's economy is more varied and provides other opportunities than the drug trade. That said, both countries have seen an increasing criminalisation especially of lower and middle level bureaucracy, especially in the countryside.[405] Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan appear to be the states most directly affected by state infiltration in the region.[406] In these two small, poor and remote countries close to Afghanistan's borders, the economic and political influence of the drug trade have been strongly felt, as seen in the previous section in light of the 2010 events in Kyrgyzstan. In both cases, cohesion in the government camp is weak, and individual leading figures as well as entire groups appear to be financed by the drug trade from Afghanistan. The divisions within the ruling elites themselves increase the need for financial resources on the part of informal structures.[407]

Though the presence of the state (as opposed to its absence) is ordinarily considered to be a positive situation as such, it however can be considered beneficial or positive admittedly only if it meets the needs of its people and fulfils a number of functions (defending national borders, ensuring law and order, providing education, health services, sanitation etc.). By contrast, if the state is present and holds a virtual monopoly on power and the use of force on its national territory, yet is seen by its subjects as corrupt, oppressive and exclusionary in effect, as is the case in many parts of the developing world, and overwhelmingly so in today's Central and South Asia indeed, then its presence may yield little or no benefit for enhancing legitimacy and creating state capacity.[408] In fact, as explained above, where the state is strongest but least accountable for abuses, people may often come to prefer non-state actors to exercise authority.

In many cases, the criminalisation of a state is entailed by clandestine political repression and an absence of effective oversight.[409] With the growth of fraud, corruption and domestic repression in many states across the developing world, and most states in Central/South Asia are indeed cases in point in this regard, along with the development of an economy of plunder and the privatisation of state institutions, the state itself may become a vehicle for and/or acting as a sponsor or a participant in criminal activities. Government leaders and their security agencies availed themselves of the opportunities for theft and trafficking provided by the extra-legal spaces in which they operated, or simply delegated repression and other political tasks to established criminal networks (as appears to have been the case of the Belgrade mafia under the rule of former Yugoslav President Milošević.[410]) Alternatively, regimes founded on extensive state intervention may have turned toward black markets as a means to compensate for the difficulties in running

[405] CORNELL, Svante, "The Narcotics Threat in Greater Central Asia: From Crime-Terror Nexus to State Infiltration?" *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2008, p. 41

[406] MARAT, Erika, "The Crime-State Nexus in Central Asia: State Weakness, Organised Crime, and Corruption in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan", Silk Road Paper, October 2009, pp. 45-50

[407] International Crisis Group, "Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation", *Asia Briefing*, 19 May 2011, pp. 3-4; accessed at www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2757&l=1

[408] The phenomenological concepts of positive and negative sovereignty developed by Robert H. Jackson to examine the role of the state in specific spheres of its governing capabilities are particularly helpful as they give a useful lens to examine the role of the state in specific parts of its national territory. See JACKSON, Robert H., *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (New York Cambridge University Press, 1990). Jackson defines negative sovereignty as freedom from outside interference, the ability of a sovereign state to act independently, both in its external relations and internally, toward its people. Positive sovereignty, in turn, is the acquisition and enjoyment of capacities, not merely immunities. In Jackson's definition, it presupposes "*capabilities which enable governments to be their own masters*" (p. 29). The absence of either type of sovereignty can lead to the collapse of or absence of state control.

[409] BAYART, J.F., ELLIS, S., and HIBOU, B., *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, Oxford: James Currey, 1999

[410] DZIEDZIC, M., ROZEN, L., and WILLIAMS, P., "Lawless Rule Versus Rule of Law in the Balkans", *Special Report 97*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002, p. 3

planned economies, or to circumvent economic sanctions in wartime. The dismantling of comprehensive structures of state economic planning since the early 1990s has provided political elites and black-marketers with an arsenal of arbitrary residual control mechanisms that they proceeded to use for illicit enrichment. The spectacular earnings of Russia's post-Soviet oligarchs can be traced back to the continuity of state price controls over certain raw materials that were essential to fast expanding export markets (such as oil, gas and metals), while privileged access to low exchange rates, cheap credit and state contracts were notable features of the post-Yeltsin "re-nationalisation" of Russia's economy under Vladimir Putin.[411]

Throughout modern history, the precise combination of state action, repressive apparatus and criminal co-option has varied hugely according to national context and governing ideology,[412] but the emergence of a political-criminal "nexus" has been accelerated in all cases by the increased opportunities afforded by global economic integration, and the resulting intensification in transnational commercial linkages.[413] In the 1990s, post-Soviet states, particularly Russia and the Central Asian Republics, witnessed an extraordinary merger of government officials, intelligence operatives, oligarchs and violent entrepreneurs, which together exploited and stripped state assets for export markets; the new Balkan states, notably Serbia and Kosovo, have been governed by political elites acting in league with transnational mafia networks; sub-Saharan Africa has also suffered "state criminalisation" in the shape of an entrepreneurial political elite taking advantage of new global trading opportunities in commodities, both licit and illicit;[414] and large parts of Latin America suffer acute corruption, as well as collusion between international narco-traffickers and government officials or security forces.[415] Since in any polity whatsoever, including in democratic contexts, individual operators always have the possibility to connect with criminal and clandestine networks, dynamics of state criminalisation as such, from a perspective of criminal involvement in political and state life and indeed risk governance, must now be distinguished from common understandings of what "corruption" actually means.

Corruption certainly is the most ubiquitous criminal activity within states, but this is far from signifying that corrupt states are criminalised entities: countries like China, Kazakhstan or India may indeed be plagued by corruption at most levels of its officialdom, yet it is not governed according to a criminal conspiracy of private accumulation. At most, this sort of state hosts what one commentator, with regard to pre-1970s Soviet Union, labels "*occupationally specific corruption*", often opportunistic in nature and lacking coordination by a "*ruling commission.*"[416] In short, such a state can embrace strategic development objectives and implement policy that have no underlying criminal intent, yet is unable to control the distortions arising from the self-interested actions of individual officials. In historical contexts where the notion of social capital has led to distorted attitudes toward the use of public office for personal enrichment, or even systematic illegality, these actions may even be tolerated, yet institutionalised as a mean to co-opt rival

[411] GLENNY, M., *McMafia Crime Without Frontiers*, London: Bodley Head, 2008, p. 71

[412] TILLY, Charles, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 35

[413] The fusion between "fragile states", new opportunities for transnational crime opened up by globalisation and new communication technologies is the subject of several works. See, for example: NAIM, M. (2006), *Illicit*, New York: Anchor Books; BAYART, J.F., ELLIS, S., and HIBOU, B. (1999), *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, Oxford: James Currey; GROS, J.G., "Trouble in Paradise: Crime and Collapsed States in the Age of Globalisation", in *British Journal of Criminology*, n° 43, pp. 63-80, Winter 2003

[414] BAYART, J.-F., « Le Crime transnational et la formation de l'État », in *Politique Africaine*, n° 93, March 2004.

[415] International Crisis Group (2008), Latin American Drugs (Vol. I): *Losing the Fight*, Brussels: ICG.

[416] NAYLOR, R. T., *Wages of Crime*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, pp. 38-9

political leaders or powerful state agencies, without thereby coming to define the objectives of government policy.[417]

Unlike opportunistic or occupational corruption, the criminal, violence-prone activities that permeate and influence over the structure and the functioning of institutional polities displaying various stages of *state* criminal behaviour (i.e. criminal involvement into political and state life) are coordinated, systematic, and indeed essential to understanding the incentives for and constraints on governance.[418] Yet, the factional, sector-based or institutional interests of the clandestine and/or informal power structure that are being served throughout that criminal involvement in political life are not necessarily predatory, for they do not seek to supplement the state's territorial presence.[419] Nor are they completely symbiotic neither, for the leaders of the state in question can bitterly opposed to criminal and/or terrorist activities.[420] Rather, evidence available suggests that the relationship between state leadership and criminalised interests in homonymous, so-said "parallel" states often involves tacit signals and strategic inaction by political leaders, in which these leaders' consolidation in power – as Stewart Patrick puts it – is "bought" from *de facto* powers at the expense of perpetuating state weakness.[421] On the one hand, this type of criminalised *polity* may underpin a sustainable political equilibrium, in which rulers can retain power for several years, but only via an "accommodation"[422] (or "bargain") with the clandestine power structure. Yet, on the other hand, the stability of this arrangement is structurally threatened by an increase in violence and fragmentation in the clandestine underworld of criminal groups connected to the state. As seen with the case of Kyrgyzstan above.

In essence, the characterisation of this sub-set of fragile polities delineated on the basis of the drivers and effects the influence of criminal activity has on the structure and functioning of the state is quite similar to that of a "captured state", as described by Phil Williams,[423] but nonetheless requires an important differentiating qualification with regards to the circumstances and conditions institutional capture by organised interests with criminal capacities may occur. As noted above in connection with the blanks identified in Rotberg's 4-tier categorisation – strong, weak, failed, and collapsed states,[424] this construct of a criminalised "parallel" statehood differs in important ways from the traditional look at "weak" or "failed" states, which assumes a government that is not exercising a positive presence and fulfilling certain basic functions is not a functioning state. In fact, as stated earlier, certain "weak" states can be highly efficient at the functions they choose to perform, particularly if they *choose* to participate in an on-going criminal enterprise. *By choice*, their weakness then only exists in the fields of positive state function, but not in other important areas. With the growth of corruption and the privatisation of state institutions, the state itself may then become – on its own will, if one may say – a vehicle for and/or acting as a sponsor or a participant in criminal and/or subversive activities, either directly, or "in parallel", through clandestine powers that are organically linked to its formal structure, and yet serve their own factional, sector-based or institutional interests *in collusion with* outsiders who specialise in

[417] MIGDAL, J. S., *State in Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 62

[418] PATRICK (2011), *op. cit.*, pp. 78-81

[419] SHELLEY, PICARELLI *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 23

[420] BRISCOE (2008), *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

[421] WILLIAMS (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 34-37

[422] MIGDAL (2001), *op. cit.*, p. 65

[423] See LAHNEMAN, Bill, and LEWIS, Matt, "Summary of Proceedings: Organised Crime and the Corruption of State Institutions", The Inn and Conference Centre, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 18 November 2002, available at http://www.cissm.umd.edu/papers/files/organizedcrime.pdf.

[424] ROTBERG, Robert I., "Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators," *Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, January 2003.

crime or violence.[425] "Captured states", for their part, are taken *hostage* by criminal organisations and clandestine networks, often through intimidation and threats, giving the criminal enterprise access to some parts of the state apparatus. Tajikistan would be an example: the government lacks control of roughly one third of its territorial periphery, with criminal and drug trafficking rings enjoying local power and quasi-free access to the border with Afghanistan; but the central government is not under siege. In such weak and captured state, certain nodes of governmental authority, whether local or central, have been seized by criminal organisations, which, in turn, are the primary beneficiaries of the proceeds from criminal activity.[426]

The term "parallel state" is now being used with ever greater frequency to describe the existence in a growing number of countries around the world of such a clandestine nexus between formal political leadership, self-serving factions within the state apparatus, organised crime and/or experts in political violence (e.g. armed paramilitary/terrorist groups, insurgent/militant organisations, regional powerbroker/warlord chiefdoms etc.).[427] Essentially, it accounts for the development of working relationships not only between organised criminals and non-state armed groups regarded as with political objectives, but also with government officials or state-related organised interests with criminal capacities or expertise in the use of violence – intelligence services and retired military officers in Pakistan, ex-*mujahideen* warlords/regional brokers in Afghanistan, Russia's pro-Kremlin neo-*kaza'ki* paramilitary leaders and Kadyrov's Chechnya ruling mafia, Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps "Alumni" (*Sepāh-e Pāsdārān*), to name few prime examples of this – that are able to use their organic links with the formal state to protect and expand their interests in combination with organised crime networks and/or armed paramilitary groups eventually acting by means of terrorism and insurgency. In the broadest terms, the nature of such "parallel" arrangements is to distort the application of official government policy by protecting and promoting the interests of organised networks that enjoy deep and lasting links to the state, along with franchised entrepreneurs of crime and violence.

This provisional characterisation of a category of such "parallel states", with various intermediate stages of criminal involvement in political and state life and of influence this criminal activity has on the structure and functioning of the state, adds up some critical elements of understanding of the conditions of governance, and their broad-ranging effects on international security indeed, to Patrick's characterisation of "*weak-but-functional*" states, in which the influence of hidden powers within the clandestine nexus tied up in the arrangements that underpin their conditions of governance extends over all critical state structures such as the judiciary, the military, and intelligence sectors. While it may initially appear doubtful that there exists any structural political singularity to so-designated clandestine or hidden powers beyond the fact that they are positioned in a large domain of social violence, stretching between the explicit state backing of the use of force (as would be the case, for example, of military mobilisation in wartime) and the purely criminal, non-state use of violence (as in common crime or gang warfare). In the words of Charles Tilly, "*within the purview of most historical governments, multiple parties have exercised some control over violent means with varying degrees of authorisation by government, and their relations to governments have shifted rapidly.*"[428] While accepting that the evidence provided as to its workings is in many cases circumstantial and context-based, it is argued that the conceptual dis-

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[425] Thesis developed by Ivan Briscoe in: "The Proliferation of the Parallel State", FRIDE Working Paper 71, October 2008, 28p. (definition p. 6)

[426] WILLIAMS (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 34

[427] BRICOE (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 6

[428] TILY, C. (2003), *the Politics of collective violence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 19. The examples of such "parties" listed by Tilly includes "pirates, privateers, paramilitaries, bandits, mercenaries, mafiosi, militias, posses, guerrilla forces, vigilante groups, company police, and bodyguards."

tinctiveness of the criminalised, "parallel state" from other recognised forms of fragile statehood, which is due in large part to the specific and acute problems it poses to international security as for the combination of transnational threats related and emanating to and from it, lies precisely in the existence of such hidden powers laying bares the structures of the state, which they undermine, corrode or capture for their own benefit, and for political leaders that lack stable institutional channels of power.[429] In essence, the conditions of governance of such a state proceed along the breadth and pervasiveness of obscure transactional dynamics of an institutional arrangement within which organized interests with criminal capacities or expertise in the use of violence – intelligence services in Pakistan, Afghanistan's bloated military, Kadyrov's paramilitaries in Chechnya, to name some vivid examples in the region of interest – are able to use their organic links with the formal state to protect and expand their activities.

The underlying premise of this conceptualisation of criminalised state structures allows to draw a critical distinction in effect between countries where the state, which is weak and captured, has little or no power in certain areas and may be fighting to assert its control (as in Afghanistan), and countries where the government, in fact, has a virtual monopoly on power and the use of force, but either 1) agrees upon institutional political-criminal, "parallel" arrangements within which organised interests with criminal capacities or expertise in the use of violence are able to use their organic links with the formal state to protect and expand their activities or factional interests (as in Pakistan, or in Algeria for instance, yet also in Russia to some extent), or 2) turns the state into a functioning criminal enterprise catering essentially to the needs and interests of its leadership or a political cause, and is the primary beneficiary of proceeds from the criminal activity (as in Ukraine's rebel-controlled areas of Donbas, Moldova's breakaway republic of Transniestria, or Russia's Chechnya for instance.) Whether examples of the benefits of a criminal "state" can be seen across the globe, the above discussed case of "Europe's Black Hole" *aka* the breakaway republic of Transnistria is especially emblematic as a weapons trafficking centre.

In the first case, which we delineate here after Stewart Patrick and Ivan Briscoe on the basis of the distinctive features of the criminalised "parallel" state, of which the essence is to be found in its combination of formal political authority with an informal power structure serving narrow institutional interests in combination with organised crime networks or armed proxies, the nature of the "bargain" with clandestine powers is complex and context-dependent. In many cases, it serves as a concession to institutional interests that have been strengthened and criminalised by a legacy of conflict and extraordinary or extra-legal powers, the call effects of regime survival and protective geo-strategy (i.e. to underpin an ideological vision or grand-strategic goals), extraordinary or extra-legal powers, but weak public services, and a collusive economic elite. Although the stratagems adopted to attain these ends may be sophisticated and overlaid with an adornment of democratic procedure, the fundamental objective of state policy is the entrenchment of neo-patrimonial rule.[430] Then, according to national context and governing ideology, this political-criminal, "parallel" arrangement between formal political leadership, self-serving factions within the state apparatus, organised crime and/or experts in violence, instead of (yet often in supplement to[431]) personalising and privatising the ends of government action in the best interests of

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[429] BRICOE (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 8

[430] Thus the government of Azerbaijan channels extraordinary privileges to a narrow metropolitan elite, the "oil nomenklatura", through opaque state budgets and privatization schemes: according to the IMF, 17 per cent of Baku's spending between 2002 and 2007 went "unexplained." Uzbekistan regime has likewise engaged in the exploitation and repression of the country's periphery, including army-led counter-non-insurgent-unrest in the Fergana Valley.

[431] Parallel states also often tend to be rooted in crime-prone political cultures that have been characterised by elite control and neo-patrimonial governance, making combinations and overlaps of the two forms of institutionnal capture a frequent occurrence indeed. Yet despite this important provision, the conceptual distinction between neo-patrimonial regimes and parallel states remain valid in principle.

an entrenched central elite, operates at one so as to subvert policy not as much through direct influence on the decision-making process, as through the *porosity* of existing political, judicial and security structures, of which critical levels are *de facto* control by clandestine power networks. In contrast with other varieties of predatory institutional frameworks, the origins of these political-criminal networks that "crowd in" power structures are generally found in bloated military and intelligence sectors operating in historically weak state, "low-intensity democracy"[432] environments marked by the existence of one strong institution (usually the military and/or the intelligence) at a time of increasing opportunities afforded by global economic integration, and the resulting intensification in transnational commercial linkages, and/or heightened international security concern.[433] Whether further study of this phenomenon should help to distinguish more clearly the common causes of these states as well their principal variants, with some tending more towards the entrenchment of criminality (as in Afghanistan, Tajikistan or Ukraine), while others, such as that in Pakistan, aspire to a permanent political status, the principal manifestations of these "parallel state" dynamics within which some criminalised forms of transactional mechanism are being established between political rulers and shadow power structures are as follows: judicial incapacity, political protection and security force inaction vis-à-vis "unofficial" targeted assassinations and all forms of political and criminal violence,[434] all of which epitomize the withdrawal of the state from its obligations, and the weakening of public authority and the rule of law.

Given the overlap between parallel states, neo-patrimonial regimes and other forms of political-criminal nexus, as well as the manifest difficulties in acquiring evidence about clandestine and violent organisations governed by pacts of silence, no simple clear-cut list can be provided as of states distinctly delineated with regard to other leading variants of criminalised and/or captive governance. On basis of the description above, it would be fair to regard in the region here of primary concern,[435] current-day Afghanistan and Pakistan as prominent examples of this, as well as most of post-Soviet republics, notably in Central Asia (and the four median republics of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in particular, but Kazakhstan is not devoid of these dynamics), yet also Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine under ex-President Viktor Yanukovych (to present day?), as cases in which clandestine power structures that have emerged from the innards of the state, and which are organically linked to it, have "captured" public resources and limited the incentives of state leaders to meet basic objectives of security, welfare and growth.

In practice, "capture" has occurred when the state apparatus begins to function in the interest of criminal syndicates and/or criminal/terrorist franchises vying for diversifying their criminal portfolios.[436] Crime penetration of the state usually centres on one or more of three critical functions: judiciary (to ensure impunity), police, border control and customs (to ensure safe passage of persons and goods), and legislature (to codify the structures necessary to criminal organisations, such as ban on extradition, weak asset forfeiture laws etc.) Over time, this leads to a

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[432] We owe this expression to D. Markey, in "A False Choice in Pakistan" (2007), *Foreign Affairs* 86: 4, 85-102.

[433] The fusion between "fragile states", new opportunities for transnational crime opened up by globalization and new communication technologies is the subject of several works. See, for example: NAIM, M. (2006), *Illicit*, New York: Anchor Books; BAYART, J.F., ELLIS, S. & HIBOU, B. (1999), *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, Oxford: James Currey; GROS, J.G., "Trouble in Paradise: Crime and Collapsed States in the Age of Globalisation," *British Journal of Criminology*, nº 43, pp. 63-80, Winter 2003.

[434] BRISCOE (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 14

[435] It must be made clear, however, that manifestations of this phenomenon can be found well beyond the Central Eurasian macro-region, as for the cases (not limitative) of Guinea-Bissau, Guinea (Conakry) and Nigeria in West Africa, Guatemala and El Salvador in Central America, certain Balkan countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Albania or the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia.

[436] WILLIAMS (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 34-37

significant piecemeal hollowing out of the state from within.[437] Then, a later variation of captive institutional framework is that of the state's further, and eventually all-out, criminalisation, whether one counts on the integration of power figures at the top of its functional hierarchy into criminal enterprises and the use and abuse of state facilities and administrative resources, or when a functioning state essentially turns over or franchises out part of its territory to non-state armed groups to carry out their own agenda with the blessing and protection of the central government or a regional power.[438] Here, the point of the matter therefore is not as much that of a configuration where certain nodes of governmental authority, whether local or central, have been seized, or "taken hostage", by organised crime (TOC) organisations or any other franchises that, in turn, emerge as the primary beneficiaries of the proceeds from the criminal activity, but that of the state itself, which, as an entity, turns to be part of the criminal enterprise, either acting as a TOC partner or an important component of a TOC network. The transition to such a more comprehensive variant of criminalised governance, sometimes referred to as "mafia state", bears thus witness to the vertical integration of official crime and political control.[439] Whereas endemic corruption is branded by criminologists as a parasitic activity, this stage represents a symbiosis of crime and government, and is regarded as one of the principal threats to effective statehood, notably due to its effects on the provision of public goods, which tends to be minimal and volatile, and to the possibility that all or a part of the state's territory will be converted into a hub and or a safe haven for transnational crime and/or insurgent and/or terrorist networks.[440]

Despite the alarms it raises, vertical political control of criminal activity is quite a rare phenomenon. Whereas Post-Soviet Russia in the 1990s, with regards to the scope and breadth of the state involvement in transnational criminal enterprises at the time, is often named as a prime example of this, due to the extent of the plunder in the post-communist privatisation process, central control by President Yeltsin was by far limited: collusion and symbiosis was concentrated at the regional and local level between political entrepreneurs, mafia bosses and former intelligence operatives, who together managed to steer the redeployment of state resources.[441] Likewise, war-torn Balkans in the 1990s bore witness to political arrangements that approached but did not reach full mafia statehood – Milošević's Serbia exploited the security services, organised crime, monetary policy and army spending for the regime self-interested ends – without ever reaching a sustainable equilibrium.[442] Other often cited cases, such as Nigeria under the Sani Abacha dictatorship, Myanmar of the Burmese military junta, North Korea, and Columbia or Argentina in the mid-1990s, have featured a significant imbrication of criminal actors with high-level state officialdom, yet it is uncertain whether any of them have reached stable mafia-led governance, or *pax*

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[437] "Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in Central Asia", New York: UN Office on Drugs and Crime, October 2008, p. 49

[438] This latter aspect is the core thesis developed by Douglas Farah in *Transnational Organised Crime, Terrorism, and Criminalised States in Latin America: An Emerging Tier-One National Security Priority*, Strategic Studies Institute Monograph, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, August 2012. Yet reflecting a somewhat partisan view, the author notably argues that "*the model of states franchising out their territory to non-state actors, are growing in Latin America through the sponsorship of the 'Bolivarian Revolution'* (led by Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, including Evo Morales of Bolivia, Rafael Correa of Ecuador, and Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua) *of non-state armed groups.* […] *The principal activity providing the revenues is cocaine trafficking, and the most important* (but not sole) *recipient of state sponsorship is FARC.*" (p. 37)

[439] GLENNY, M. (2008), *op. cit.*, pp. 42-46

[440] For the latest thinking on the organized crime/terrorist link, see COCKAYNE, J., "Transnational Organised Crime: Multilateral Responses to a Rising Threat", International Peace Academy, 2007, pp. 9-10.

[441] NAYLOR, R.T., *Wages of Crime*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 39

[442] DZIEDZIC, M., ROZEN, L., and WILLIAMS , P., "Lawless Rule Versus Rule of Law in the Balkans", p. 3

*mafiosa*.[443] In itself, and despite the alarming nature of accounts pointing towards a global criminal takeover of the state, symbiosis may be nothing but a political paradigm whose lack of workable tools for public legitimation and absence of cohesiveness between its two separate factions (government and criminals) render it chronically fragile.[444] In the case of Milošević, for instance, Glenny observes (yet one could perfectly write so about today's Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine or any of the five post-Soviet Central Asian republics) that "*a mobbed-up country like Serbia is inherently unstable. Huge discrepancies between rich and poor become extremely visible; inefficiencies plague the economy; corruption becomes endemic.*"[445]

Admittedly, whilst protection in not uncommon and indeed few countries in the developing world can claim to be entirely free of this clandestine political-criminal nexus (yet cases are also be found in Northern, "developed" countries as well, especially albeit not solely in the FSU, Balkans etc.), few states, however, are wholly criminalised to the extent that head-ends TOC groups are vertically integrated into functional state structures. Most in this category actually operate along a continuum. Based on the thesis propounded by CSIS Fellow Douglas Farah,[446] one may indeed array the degree of state control of, or participation in criminal activity (or conversely the degree of influence this criminal activity has on the structure and functioning of the state) along an incremental spectrum of criminalisation (see figure below). At the one end are those "*strong but criminalised*" states, with the state itself acting as a partner or an important component of a criminal-terrorist and/or insurgent franchise. Here, Farah's basic postulate is that of a regime which is "*strongly functional*", "*but in a limited sense only*", as it caters primarily to the needs and interests of the leadership or a political cause, and is the primary beneficiary of proceeds from the criminal activity.[447] Such activity is directed from the top down. The senior leadership is aware of and involved – either actively or through passive acquiescence – on behalf of the state in transnational criminal enterprises, and where levers of state power are functionally incorporated into the operational structure of one or more TOC groups or terrorist/insurgent subsidiaries (e.g. Iran's Revolutionary Guards in *Hezbollah*.)[448] Ultimately, a wholly criminalised state relies on the integration of its very leadership into the criminal enterprise. Again, elements of TOC and/or terrorist/insurgent subsidiary being used as instruments of statecraft can be seen.

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[443] The expression is borrowed from Claire Sterling in her book *Crime Without Frontiers* (Little, Brown & Company, 1994) – the formation of a transnational alliance allowing criminals to work together peacefully in the post-Cold War world, an arrangement regulated by business-like meetings to coordinate mutually profitable ventures.

[444] See NAYLOR (2004), *op. cit.*, chapter 1.

[445] GLENNY, M. (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 50

[446] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.*, pp. 28-37.

[447] And Douglas Farah to define the case of Charles Taylor's Liberia, where *Hezbollah* and *al Qaeda* operated without threat of interference in the blood diamond trade (for details of Taylor's activities, see FARAH, D., *Blood from Stones: The Secret Financial Network of Terror*, New York: Broadway Books, 2004), and the government of Suriname in the 1980s, early 1990s under Desi Bouterse, "*a convicted drug trafficker with strong ties to the FARC*", as archetypical examples of the criminalised state (Farah, 2012: 36). This is also his view to argue that the model of the so-called "Bolivarian state" in Latin America, particularly Chávez's Venezuela, meet the criteria of highly criminalized states due to "*the significant involvement of high-level officials in the cocaine trade, including senior military and police officials, senior government officials, and elements of the state apparatus itself. While they have not reached the same level of vertical integration in the criminal enterprise as Taylor's in Liberia, or Bouterse's regime in Suriname, the criminal function is at the service of both a broader Bolivarian political project and for personal enrichment of Bolivarian elites.*" (Farah, 2012: 37-8). Based on that line of argument, one could argue, *mutatis mutandis*, that states such as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, or Russia's Chechen Republic, may easily fall into that category, then in relation to heroin trade.

[448] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 39

| Weak State with vulnerable borders, weak institutions, pockets of TOC territorial control | Fragile State, with little control over national territory, but where the state has little TOC activity | Criminalised State, where a strong government directly participate in TOC activity, benefits from it, and embeds criminals with state organs |
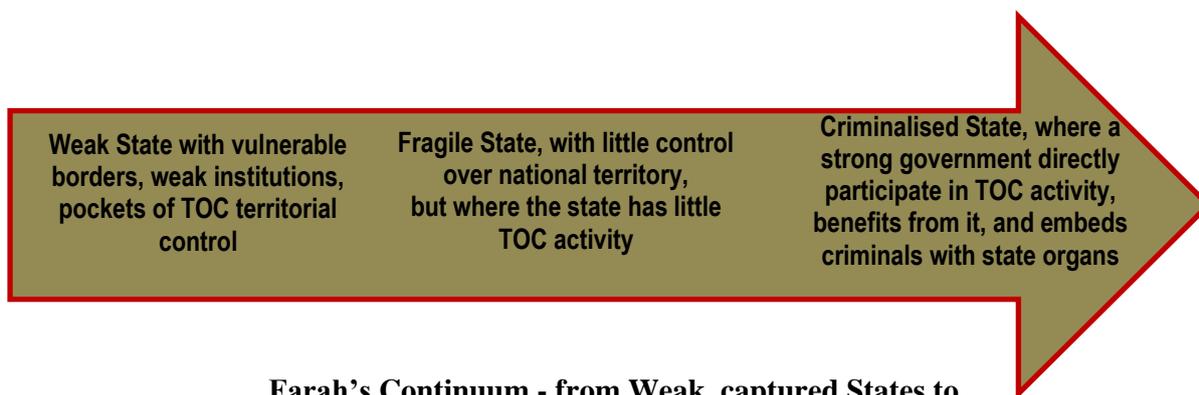
**Farah's Continuum - from Weak, captured States to Strong, wholly criminalised States**

As we already underlined in the introduction, the patterns of insecurity at hand become all the more dangerous when hybrids of criminal-terrorist/insurgent, and state and non-state franchises, combining state actors/agencies and traditional TOCs and terrorist/insurgent groups (or pseudo-state actors), acting as proxies for the regime (or criminalised state structures within) that sponsors them (e.g. *Hezbollah* and Iran, the Taliban and Pakistan's ISIS, Russia and neo-*Kozacy* paramilitary in Uk-raine, certain Gulf States and "*al-Qaedist*" takfiri/jihadist militants – and ISIL/*Dā'esh*? etc.), become instruments of statecraft for a protector state whose the senior leadership (or powerful elements within the parallel state therein) endorses irregular warfare and the use of insurgent or terrorist means as legitimated tactics, or gets directly involved into transnational criminal patterns to underpin an ideological vision or grand-strategic goals.

As the state relationships consolidate within the political-criminal nexus, both in terms of linkage density and access to administrative resources, the recombinant criminal-terrorist/insurgent conducts become more rooted and thus more dangerous.[449] Rather than being pursued by state law enforcement and intelligence services in an effort to impede their activities (on the contrary, they may support and facilitate them), TOC groups (and perhaps terrorist/insurgent groups) are able to operate in a more stable, secure environment, something that most businesses, both licit and illicit, crave for. Rather than operating on the margins of the state or seeking to co-opt small pieces of the state machinery, clandestine networks of specialists in crime and violence in this construct operate in concert with the state on multiple levels. Within that stable environment, a host of new options open, from the illicit trade of weapons, to easy use of banking structures, national airlines and military aircrafts to move large quantities of unregistered goods etc.

Then, at the other end of the continuum, are "*weak and captured states*": states where certain nodes of governmental authorities, whether local or central, have been seized or captured by criminal elements, but the state, as an entity, is not part of the enterprise. Penetration of the state usually centres on one or more of three functions: judiciary (to ensure impunity), border control and customs (to ensure the safe passage of persons and goods), and legislature (to codify the structures necessary to criminal organizations, such as a ban on extradition, weak asset for-

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[449] The possibility of clandestine criminal networks of proliferators facilitating the transfer of WMD for terrorists is very troubling indeed, but assumes that TOC groups and terrorists are in confrontation with states and their multiple law enforcement and intelligence entities. With the emergence of criminalized states, we face the prospect of TOC networks facilitating such transfers under the explicit or implicit protection of one or more states, thus greatly increasing the chances of success. Parts of this conduct are already being developed in South Asia. See HASSAN KHAN, F., and BURKE, Emily, "Tackling Nuclear Terrorism in South Asia", in *PRISM* Vol. 5, No1 (2014), pp. 81-99.

feitture laws etc.). It also is more local in its focus, rather than national.[450] Typically, organised crime elements aim at dislodging the state from local territory, rather than assuming the role of the state in overall political authority across the country. As we saw, many contemporary criminal organisations/groups today employ violence on a terroristic level to discredit the state and destroy its authority over strategically vital territory, while many terrorist groups and insurgencies today engage in criminal activity to finance operations, whether local or worldwide. Some criminal enterprises likewise are headed by political entrepreneurs seeking political influence and prestige.

As Charles Tilly has demonstrated, in many ways, the genesis of the modern state is in those particular "violent political entrepreneurs" whom we tend to call warlords. In the modern world, whether Somali pirate-kings, Afghan commanders or Chechen clan chieftains, they often seem to be atavistic throwbacks, albeit bearing cellphones and brandishing Kalashnikovs. In most cases they are predatory and destructive, but what distinguishes them from mere bandits, giving them a greater chance for longevity and public support, is that they often provide minimal levels of public good in the process: security, food, employment. Thus, they may seem to acquire some of the attributes of statehood and – when the "real" state is unwilling or unable to provide the same services – even a degree of legitimacy.[451] Of course, in practice the protector is nothing of the sort. Instead, the warlord is an exploiter who provides the least possible assistance to those depending on him while seeking to maintain the conditions of emergency and perceived threat that make him seem the least-worse option, especially if they are able to draw on community solidarities and myths. Afghan warlords and gangsters alike tap common traditions of rebellion and clan custom, for example, while Taliban, Islamist rebels and "narco-terrorists" in guerrilla-run territories legitimise themselves as much through providing social assistance and a distinctive cultural narrative as through their religious rhetoric. However, the distinction, we argued, is blurred in practice, and insurgent movements running criminal enclaves, such as Islamist rebels in Dagestan or Georgia's Pankisi Gorge or Balouch rebels in western Pakistan, are often divided over the priority that should be given to revolutionary ideals over the generation of steady income.[452] Conversely, the defining features of the political economy of warlordism include the fragmentation of a national territory into sub-states, each run by a political-military command that is able to amass resources and provide basic social services - security and welfare - through its use of enclave economies firmly attached to the international economic system (diamonds in West Africa, cocaine in Colombia, opium in Afghanistan.) Criminal groups and their institutional interests certainly stand to gain from a basic provision of security, infrastructure and social welfare, as the experience of numerous warlords has shown – most spectacularly Ismaïl Khan's fiefdom in Herat, Western Afghanistan.[453] Yet it would also seem that these organisations' capacity to corrupt officials, move freely over the national territory, retain pockets of local support and evade judicial persecution all depend on the careful perpetuation of state weakness. In certain cases, warlordism has undoubtedly become a stable system of governance, although much depends on the warlord's ability to mobilise ethnic or community sentiment and deliver a modest quantity of public goods. What most distinguishes it from a parasitic or symbiotic political-criminal nexus is its essentially non-Weberian character.[454] Warlords contest control over territory

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[450] FARAH (2012), *op. cit.,* p. 37

[451] MARTEN, Kimberly, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective", in *International Security* (2006-7); accessed at http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/isec.2007.31.3.41. Kimberly Marten's foundational piece placing warlords in an historical perspective and demonstrating why it is dangerous for established states to deal with them – even in the short term – or to ignore them.

[452] NAYLOR (2004), *op. cit.*, p. 82

[453] BIRÒ, D. (2007), "The (Un)bearable Lightness of… Violence", INEF Report 89, Duisburg, Institute for Development and Peace, 2007, pp. 36-37

[454] MARTEN (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 61

with a central state that is often ineffective or absent; should they eventually come to occupy the central institutions, then it is arguable whether this represents a symbiosis with state institutions or the elimination of a competitor, and the consequent collapse of the state.[455] Furthermore, it seems unlikely that the current generation of warlords – which is largely dependent on international illicit trading links with territorial enclaves for its resources rather than the impoverished home market – is disposed to engaging in a process of domestic state-building akin to that played by organised crime in early modern Europe, according to the celebrated argument made by Tilly.[456] In this respect, they more closely resemble the class of "roving bandits" described by Mancur Olson, who, in contrast to "stationary bandits", have no interest in stimulating the production and welfare of the people they terrorise.[457]

In the broad middle range between these two extremes, more criminalised polities include participation in criminal activity, at varying degrees and scales, eventually in line with those of TOC elements and/or paramilitary groupings, by state officials, including military and police officials, and elements of the state apparatus itself, some (most often) acting out of personal interest, others in the interest of financing the services or the ideology of the state, e.g. an overriding design or a grand strategy of projecting instability beyond state borders. In certain cases, such certain states appear to allow their "stateless" areas, or those of their weaker neighbours, to be "franchised out" to these groups in order for the non-state actors to both fund their activities and spread unrest throughout the region.

Thus, a critical variant of this category occurs when a state (or powerful "parallel state" elements within) turns over, or franchises out, part(s) of its territory to non-state armed groups, to carry out their own agenda, which hence also somewhat appears to become its own, with the blessing and protection of the central government or of a supportive power.[458] Both state and non-state actors share in the proceeds from criminal activity and/or the political gains thus generated. Such illicit forces within criminalised states have also been using tactical operations centres as a means of pursuing their view of statecraft. Along with evidenced elements of support for the Kashmiri insurgency,[459] Pakistan's long-alleged (and now soundly evidenced) protection of several Afghan insurgent groups, also notoriously engaged in criminal activities related to narcotics production and trade, and the so-called "sanctuaries" from which they have long been operating unhindered on Pakistani soil, chiefly the so-called "*Quetta Shura*" or ("Kandahari") Taliban and their associated networks, in particular the Haqqani Network (HQN) and *Hezb-e Islami*, is per-

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[455] See BIRÒ (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 38-40, for a summary of this debate.

[456] TILLY, Charles, "War making and state making as organised crime", in EVANS, P. B., RUESCHEMEYER, D., and SKOCPOL, T. (eds), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. For a contrast between the historical and current relations between war and state-making, see CLAPHAM, C., "The Challenge to the State in a Globalised World", *Development and Change* (2002), 33(5), pp. 786-787.

[457] "*In a world of roving banditry there is little or no incentive for anyone to produce or accumulate anything that may be stolen and, thus, little for bandits to steal*". OLSON, M., (1993), "Dictatorship, Democracy and Development", in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3, 1993, p. 568

[458] This latter aspect is the core thesis developed by Douglas Farah in *Transnational Organised Crime, Terrorism, and Criminalised States in Latin America: An Emerging Tier-One National Security Priority*, Strategic Studies Institute Monograph, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, August 2012. Yet reflecting a somewhat partisan view, the author notably argues that "*the model of states franchising out their territory to non-state actors, are growing in Latin America through the sponsorship of the 'Bolivarian Revolution'* (led by Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, including Evo Morales of Bolivia, Rafael Correa of Ecuador, and Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua) *of non-state armed groups*. […] *The principal activity providing the revenues is cocaine trafficking, and the most important* (but not sole) *recipient of state sponsorship is FARC.*" (p. 37)

[459] SCHOFIELD, Victoria, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* (2nd revised ed.), London, I.B.Tauris, 2002, 157p.

haps the clearest example of this model in the region, given the well-established relationship of (at least) some elements of Pakistan's senior military establishment and the intelligence services with the leadership of these groups.[460] These issues have led to considerable tensions within Pakistan, between its leadership(s) and the "international community" (especially with Washington and other major Western contributors to the war effort in Afghanistan), and between Islamabad and the Government of Afghanistan, of which the national security forces are daily fighting against Taliban and HQN insurgents that, yet, can easily cross the border with Pakistan and return whenever it is safer.[461] Meanwhile, however, the direction of the responsibility vector does not appear one-way only, as it is indeed noteworthy Islamabad also has repeatedly asked Kabul to arrest (or kill) Fazal Hayat (aka "Mullah Fazlullah", born 1974)[462] – then designated leader of its own Taliban insurgent movement (*Teḥrīk-ī-Ṭālibān Pākistān*), now a rather loose umbrella of allying/competing factions whose men are known to operate across the Afghani-Pakistani Pashtun heartland from Eastern Afghanistan throughout the Durand Line into their tactical operations centres in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where the Pakistani armed forces and their local paramilitary component, the Frontier Corps, since 2012 have been carrying out on-going (selective) counter-insurgency operations against (certain) militants hiding and seeking throughout the porous Afghani-Pakistani border.

Now, whether Kabul is effectively playing an ambivalent role in Pakistan's actual struggle for defeating its own Taliban-led insurgency, it is common knowledge that parts the Pakistani leadership, at least some powerful elements within its military apparatus and Intelligence community (mostly the Inter-services Intelligence Directorate, ISI), has long been encouraging and supporting (and most certainly still does, to some extent)[463] the operations of the Taliban and other Islamist insurgent groups in the territory of its neighbour Afghanistan in order to weaken and subordinate the Afghan government and to challenge the very existence of a viable sovereign Afghan state, thereby portraying Afghanistan as an unreliable partner. In Pakistan, this behaviour is grounded in the political thinking of parts of the military-intelligence community and some elements in the political establishment who, over decades, have seen Afghanistan as the country's "strategic depth" in its conflict with the "hereditary" foe, India.

### Pakistan, the ISI, and the Taliban – The "Franchising model"

Pakistan has long been home to international terrorists – including *al Qaeda* and the masterminds of 09.11 – as well as the Taliban and numerous other Islamist militant groups. Militants are a fundamental component of the country's foreign policy, and Pakistan's army and intelligence organisations have developed – to use prominent Pakistan's specialist Christine C. Fair – "*a virtual zoo of Islamist militants of varying creeds to conduct operations in India and Afghanistan.*"[464] Coupled with Pakistan's history of nuclear proliferation, this makes for a toxic cocktail

[460] For detailed account on those links, see ABOU ZAHAB, Mariam, and ROY, Olivier (2004). *Islamist networks: the Afghan-Pakistan Connection*. New York: Columbia University Press (in association with the *Centre d'études et de recherches internationales*, Paris), 2004, pp. 13-16

[461] See recent reports on continuing ISI support for the Taliban that, according to U.S. officials, includes "money, military supplies and strategic planning guidance." MAZZETTI, Mark, and SCHMITT, Eric, "Afghan Strikes by Taliban Get Pakistan Help, US Aides Say", *The New York Times* 26March 2009.

[462] See, for instance, KASHIF, Imran, "Pakistan to contact Afghanistan for arrest of Mullah Fazlullah", 21 July 2014; accessed at http://arynews.tv/en/pakistan-to-contact-afghanistan-for-arrest-of-mullah-fazlullah-shahid/

[463] See OSMAN, Borhan, "The Murree Process: Divisive peace talks further complicated by Mullah Omar's death", *Afghanistan Analyst Network*, 5 August 2015; accessed at https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/publication/aan-thematic-dossier/thematic-dossier-x-peace-talks-and-reconciliation/

[464] FAIR, Christine, *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 17

of concern. As we argue in the following lines, Pakistan's role as major handler of Western and Arab supplies to the *mujahideen* in the 1970s-80s indirectly gave Islamabad the green light to try to establish a client government in Kabul. For that purpose, it has been manipulating a succession of armed insurgencies, among them the current Taliban-led one. Although the "strategic depth" theory has officially been given up by Pakistan national government authorities, some in Islamabad and Rawalpindi still consider the Taliban a strategic asset. The unresolved border issue and the resulting potential for Afghan irredentist claims to Pashtun and Baluch areas of Pakistan certainly contribute to preserving this mind-set.

With the awareness and support – either active or through passive acquiescence – of high-level senior officials within Pakistan's military and political establishments acting in the defence of what they consider to be the nation's strategic interests, the Taliban and numerous other Islamist militant groups have been enabled to use tactical operations centres on Pakistani soil as a means of pursuing their view of statecraft, and incidentally serving the vision of Pakistani leaders regarding their neighbours. As Fair details in her most recent book, *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War*, Pakistan has long used militants to achieve both foreign and domestic objectives.[465]

From 1947 onwards, the Pakistani army became expert at sending non-state armed actors as well as military personal disguised as non-state actors to infiltrate India and Afghanistan.[466] Over time, Pakistan's militant proxies became a mainstay of Pakistani policy in India and Afghanistan. Pakistan called their proxy fighters *mujahideen* or "holy warriors" to lend these militants religious legitimacy and galvanise popular support for their actions. This all started with the first war between Pakistan and India over Kashmir (1947-49). Over the following decades, as Pakistan's military and civilian leaders remained committed to the "two-nation theory",[467] and believed that Kashmir, the only Muslim majority territory in the Raj, should have gone to Pakistan,[468] they continued to support sabotage and terrorist activities in Kashmir, thereby waging a sanguinary proxy war over the disputed region. It has nurtured dozens of militant groups and tens of thousands of fighters in hopes of forcing India to concede the remaining part it controls. Meanwhile, as far as from the 1950s onward, Pakistan began inserting dissident Islamists associated with a Pakistan-based Islamist organisation known as *Jamaat-e-Islami* (JeI) into Afghanistan. In 1974, Pakistan's civilian autocratic leader, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, set up a cell within the country's intelligence agency (ISI) to begin managing ad hoc dissident forces in Afghanistan. One year prior, in 1973, Sardar Mohammed Daoud Khan had ousted his cousin King Zahir Shah and made himself the president of Afghanistan. He cracked down on his Islamist opponents who, in turn, fled into Pakistan and Iran. Bhutto instructed the ISI to begin organising an Islamist resistance/ insurgency into manageable groups.[469]

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[465] *Ibid.*, pp. 67-85

[466] That being so, one can perfectly argue that Vladimir Putin's Russia has emulated Pakistan's proven tactics in Eastern Ukraine.

[467] In the 1940s, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (born 1913), leader of the All-India Muslim League and the *Baba-i-Qaum* – the "Founding Father of the Pakistani Nation" – floated this "two-nation theory", which held that Muslims of the Indian sub-continent could not live with dignity and equality within a Hindu-majority domination, to argue for greater autonomy of Muslim-majority areas and even equal representation in a national parliament of a unified India. Ultimately, the two-nation theory became the basis for an independent and sovereign state, Pakistan, which was to be the homeland for South Asia's Muslims.

[468] FAIR (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 8

[469] SHAHRANI, M. Nazif, "Afghanistan: state and society in retrospect", in ANDERSON, Ewan, and DUPREE Nancy Hatch (eds.), *The Cultural Basis of Afghan Nationalism*, Pinter Publishers, London, 1990, pp. 41-49.

When General Zia ul-Haq seized the reins of power in 1977, he continued this policy, and began pressing the United States for support as the Soviet Union became more aggressive in Afghanistan. However, President Carter demurred. In Washington, the Carter's administration distrusted Zia and was more concerned about Pakistan's efforts to obtain a nuclear weapon. Carter's administration even sanctioned Pakistan in April 1979 for progress made in enrichment. The move complicated American efforts to work with Pakistan after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, as all security assistance required a waiver of sanctions. When Carter finally came around to Zia, the Pakistani leader then dismissed his offer as "peanuts" and awaited a republican victory in the 1980 U.S. presidential election.[470] And he was right to wait; Ronald Reagan quickly took up Zia's cause. By 1982, American and Saudi money was flowing freely into Pakistan even though American assistance still officially required a waiver of those 1979 sanctions. As is well known, the ISI worked with the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to develop the *mujahideen* to oust the Soviets from Afghanistan. By this time, the *Jamaat-e-Islami* (JeI) had become important in fostering the rapid growth of political Islam in Afghanistan during periods of Soviet-sponsored secularisation, but when the Soviets at last withdrew, the Americans could no longer overlook Pakistan's nuclear proliferation. In 1990, Pakistan found itself again under the sanctions that had been held in abbeyance during the so-called "anti-Soviet *jihad*" in Afghanistan. While the United States, along with defeated Soviets, withdrew from the region, Pakistan continued to support a menagerie of militant Islamist groups in Afghanistan in hopes of securing a pro-Pakistan, Islamist regime in Kabul.[471] Pakistan put its full force behind a violent Pashtun Islamist warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who struggled with his main rival, Ahmad Shah Massud, an ethnic Tajik military commander from the Panjshir Valley of Afghanistan. During that whole period, the various madrasahs and mosques that Pakistan had cultivated – with American and Saudi assistance – to sustain the production of *mujahideen* continued to be a locus of Islamist activities. Here, the Taliban movement was born. The Taliban began launching offensives in Afghanistan in response to the rapacity and greed evidenced by former Afghan *mujahideen* leaders/warlords, who seemed determined to fight to the last Afghan for personal gains. Initially, Afghans welcomed the Taliban as they swept through.[472] However, as the Taliban consolidated power, they also incorporated many of the same warlords reviled by Afghans. In 1994, Pakistan, under Benazir Bhutto, shifted its support from Hekmatyar and threw its weight, money, and military supplies and trainers behind the Taliban. By 1998, the Taliban had seized control over most of Afghanistan. Under the Taliban's watch, Pakistan then relocated several Kashmiri training camps in Afghanistan, and the country continued to be a source of battle-hardened fighters for operations in Kashmir.

Throughout the 1990s decade, numerous Pakistani militant groups flocked to Taliban ruled Afghanistan with ISI tutelage to support the militant movement as it fought to control the country. Groups that were once distinct began collaboration and sharing networks. Notably, many of these groups shared the Afghan Taliban's commitment to Deobandi, one of five main interpretative traditions of Islam in Pakistan, and its most puritanical version indeed. Along with anti-Shia organisations *Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan* (SSP), *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (LeJ), *Harkat-ul-jihad-e-Islami* (HuJI) and *Harkat-ul-Mujahideen* (HuM) helped the Taliban consolidate their hold over Afghanistan in the 1990s and, through this association with the Taliban, also forged ties with Osama ben Laden's al-Qaeda.[473] Ten years later, when the Americans invaded Afghanistan

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[470] FAIR (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 31

[471] *Ibid.*, p. 37

[472] MALEY, William, "Afghanistan: an historical and geographical appraisal", in *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 92, No. 880, December 2010, p. 24

[473] Osama ben Laden's ties to this region decade. During the anti-Soviet jihad, he was a financier and facilitator, making numerous trips to Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 1196, he returned to Afghanistan where he would stay until 2001. Even though Mullah Omar, the leader of the Afghan Taliban, specifically requested that ben Laden

on 7 October 2001, ben Laden, the Taliban leadership and their militant Deobandi collaborators fled to Pakistan's tribal areas abutting Afghanistan. Many of the numerous deadly attacks that have taken place in Pakistan since then have been imagined by *al Qaeda*, but executed by its Deobandi "subcontractors", such as LeJ.[474]

Whilst there is disagreement over the importance that should be given to Islamist terrorist organisations as opposed to sub-state actors in Pakistan – above all the ISI – in promoting high levels of political violence, and particularly in carrying out Benazir Bhutto's assassination in December 2007,[475] few experts, however, would dispute the intimate links forged between the ISI and Islamist fundamentalists established during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, or the military's astonishing political and economic power in Pakistan (only comparable in the region with that of Iran's Revolutionary Guards). The Pakistan military's sense of political and economic prerogative derives in large part from the violent nature of the country's creation through partition, leading to the recurrence of Indo-Pak wars in 1965 and 1971 (followed by skirmishes in Kashmir in the 1990s), as well as to the country's front-line role as a U.S. ally in the Cold War, and now in counter-terrorist geo-strategy. Aside from its 33 years in power in the guise of authoritarian regimes since 1947, the Pakistan military has become a mighty corporate player, with investments in numerous businesses (totalling around 4 billion euros according to one recent estimate), and a growing presence as a feudal landlord.[476] This power and wealth is not concealed from public view, and thus is hardly a clandestine phenomenon. Yet the shadow or "parallel" activities of this militarised state are notable in two key respects. Firstly, there is the well-grounded suspicion[477] that the Pakistan army and the ISI has systematically plotted against civilian governments, supported opposition parties, engaged in targeted assassinations, carried out coups and rigged elections whenever it sees fit. This obviously represents a major constraint on civilian governments in their efforts to honour political commitments; Benazir Bhutto's foreign policy was surely impeded by a lack of knowledge about Pakistan's nuclear programme until information was received on the subject from Washington.[478] Furthermore, the ever growing economic power of military institutions clearly gives the ISI a powerful interest in retaining political power even when it is obliged to restore democratic civilian rule.[479]

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keep a low profile, in 1998, ben Laden masterminded the attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania from Afghanistan. This provoked American retaliatory cruise missile strikes on *al Qaeda* camps in Afghanistan. While the U.S. strikes failed to kill any *al Qaeda* members of consequences, they did slay several Pakistani militants associated HuJI and HuM. And *al Qaeda* allies such as *Jaish-e-Mohammed* (JeM, another Deobandi group derived from HuJI and HuM) conducted numerous attacks in India. In December 2001, while the U.S.-led anti-Taliban campaign was roaring in Afghanistan, JeM militants assailed India's parliament in New Delhi, then bringing India and Pakistan to the brink of war.

[474] FAIR (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 72

[475] See the contrasts between the analyses of former U.S. defence and intelligence official Bruce Riedel ("Terrorism in Pakistan", 29/01/2008, published by Brookings Institution), who argues that *al Qaeda* killed Bhutto ("*their objective is to destabilise the Pakistani state, to break up to secular political parties, to break up the army so that Pakistan becomes a politically failing state in which the Islamists in time can come to power*"), with the opinions offered by Pakistan expert Stephen Cohen. According to Cohen, "*there are so many suspects that we may never know who was responsible. What we do know is that there is a large 'alumni association' of former intelligence operatives, tolerated by the army and the intelligence services – or perhaps simply beyond their reach.*" Both published on www.brookings.edu.

[476] SIDDIQA, A. (2007), *Military Inc. Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, London: Pluto Press, p. 236.

[477] Amply reflected in opinion polls following Bhutto's assassination, see for instance "Militants Escape Control of Pakistan, Officials Say", *The New York Times*, 15 January 2008; accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/15/world/asia/15isi.html?_r=0

[478] MARKEY, D. (2007), "A False Choice in Pakistan", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86: no. 4.

[479] This argument is central to the argument sustained by SIDDIQA, *op. cit*. See pp. 52-54, and chapter 6.

Secondly, the military's control of extra-legal spaces and strategic alliances through its involvement in Kashmiri separatism, Afghan insurgency and counterterrorism, has confused the boundaries of state policy and military institutional prerogative. The ISI's secretive links with Taliban groups, Kashmiri separatists and Islamist radicals are notorious, and all of them have been used at one time or other as part of a broader anti-Indian military strategy. Yet these alliances have also given rise to criminal activity (notably transnational arms and opium trading),[480] and to a murky underworld of tactical cooperation whose aim is to favour the interests not of official state policy, but of military strategy – and increasingly, it would seem, of factions within the military. Convincing evidence now exists of the ISI's involvement in the recruitment and training of Islamist radicals for terrorist attacks against civilians in Mumbai in 1993,[481] while U.S. officials appear convinced that the service's hand was instrumental in the successive attacks conducted on the Indian embassy in Kabul (7 July 2008, 8 October 2009, 26 February 2010) as well as on the Indian consulate in Herat (23 May 2014) and in Mazar-i-Sharif (3 January 2016.), one day after that on Pathankot Air Force base, India, on 2 January 2016.[482]

One important aspect of this parallel state power is the Pakistani military's insistence on exclusive control over the border areas with Afghanistan. Across the North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Tribal Areas, the Pakistani army engages in a complex and opaque two-pronged campaign. From late 2001 onward, Pakistan's Tribal Areas have become a safe haven for a mix of regional and international terrorists. Pakistan's militant groups provided logistical support, including passports, safe houses, and transport for the fleeing terrorists. The Pakistanis, then working along with the Americans, captured several members of *al-Qaeda*'s senior leadership in Pakistan. By 2003, *al-Qaeda* had denounced Pakistan's then-military dictator and self-styled president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, as a "traitor." Later, in 2004, *al-Qaeda* incited Pakistanis to topple Musharraf's government. Finally, in 2007, ben Laden declared war on Musharraf's Pakistan.[483] Today, Pakistan still remains in the sight of *al-Qaeda* for its operations against local TTP Taliban, which have long been close to the terrorist organisation.[484] Meanwhile, several attacks conducted in recent years and months have demonstrated the continued ability of *al-Qaeda* and other related militant groups to infiltrate Pakistan's security services.[485] While apparent efforts to fight Islamist militants and the Taliban on its national territory are used to justify major aid flows from the United States (at least $10 billion since 2001), we believe the ISI seeks to preserve the support of Pashtun tribal leaders and maintain a captive population of Afghan Taliban so as to defend the country's weak territorial integrity, ensure its sway over political development in neighbouring Afghanistan, and serve its own economic and strategic interests. Arguably it has ever fostered local terrorist networks so as to attract more funds from Washington for the "war on terror." Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's strident defence of the Pakistani military's prerogative in these border areas perhaps is one vivid sign of a parallel state "bargain", not unlike

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[480] NAYLOR, R. T. (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 290-291.

[481] GLENNY, M. (2008), *McMafia Crime without Frontiers*, London: Bodley Head, Chapter 7.

[482] "Pakistani Aided Attack in Kabul, U.S. Officials Say", *The New York Times*, 1 August 2008; accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/01/world/asia/01pstan.html

[483] FAIR, Christine, "U.S.-Pakistan Relations: Ten Years after 9/11", in MALLORY, Charles K., and KRAUSE, Joachim (eds.), *Sustainable Strategies for Afghanistan and the Region After 2014*, Aspen European Strategy Forum, The Aspen Institute, Berlin, January 2012, p. 26

[484] FAIR, Christine, "Is Pakistan in ISIS' Crosshairs?", in *Boston Review*, 16 October 2014; accessible online at http://bostonreview.net/world/c-christine-fair-isis-pakistan-militant-foreign-policy

[485] FAIR (2014), "Is Pakistan in ISIS' Crosshairs?", *op. cit.*

the informal deals made with the military by the country's civilian rulers.[486] His defence of the military's extra-institutional power could be seen as preserving its continuing support for his political leadership, which had been seriously depleted by increasing pressure for counter-terrorist results from the United States.[487]

An important consequence of these multiple, crosscutting political and economic relationships between intelligence operatives, army officers, political leaders, militants and organised criminals is fragmentation. It is precisely this process that has appeared to be underway in Pakistan, and can partly be held to account for high levels of political violence prior to elections. On one hand, militants are said to have become disaffected and radicalised in the wake of changes to military and intelligence strategy.[488] On the other, the military itself is reportedly split over the merits of ties to Islamism, with some more junior officers favouring maintenance of these links as a strategic asset for the future, while others fear they have created an uncontrollable armed menace.[489] The result is a high degree of volatility and violence in which new Taliban-style militia appear to have been acting with the support of some dissident factions of the state.

Pakistan has long played with fire with little appreciation of the deleterious consequences of underpinning its statecraft equilibrium via an "accommodation" with the clandestine power structure uniting its intelligence services, radical militant groups and networks, and criminal organisations. Tens of thousands of Pakistanis have been killed by the erstwhile proxies of their country's "parallel state." Now, this arrangement is being fatally shattered by a dramatic increase of violence at home and fragmentation in the underground world of Islamist militancy closely or remotely connected to the state. As it occurs, the South Asian nation is now becoming the terrain over which two terrible international terrorist groups – *al Qaeda* and ISIL/*Dā'esh*) are fighting.[490]

Even though *al Qaeda* has enjoyed a long presence in Pakistan and Afghanistan, ISIL/*Dā'esh* has quickly captured the imagination of Muslims in the subcontinent over the past two/three years. *Dā'esh* flags and materials have appeared in Kashmir, Peshawar, and parts of Balochistan.[491] By many accounts, which cannot be independently verified, hundreds of Pakistani fighters – if not more – have already made their way to Syria and Iraq. In fact, Pakistanis began going to Iraq and Syria before *Dā'esh* crystallised as a group, though it is not discernable whether they went to fight with *Dā'esh*, *al Qaeda* in Iraq, *Jabhat Fatah al-Sham* (al-Nosra Front), or simply to fight the pro-Shia Iraqi government or the Syrian Alawite regime. Saudi Arabia has long argued for increased support to the Syrian armed opposition against Bashar al-Assad. During the tenure of former President Asif Zar-

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[486] "*If the American troops came into the mountains, they would curse the day they came here*." Quote from Musharraf in "Pakistan is Know I Can be Tough", *Newsweek* 12/01/2008. U.S. government officials revealed in September 2008 that the United States has started to mount cross-border attacks from Afghanistan on terrorist targets without requesting prior permission from the Pakistani authorities.

[487] It is important to note that Musharraf had stepped down as head of the military in November 2007 before resigning as president in August 2008. His replacement as army chief is General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, who served as head of the ISI from 2004 to 2007.

[488] One indication came late in 2007, with two bomb attacks on buses carrying employees of the ISI. See "Militants Escape Control of Pakistan, Officials Say", *The New York Times* 15 January 2008. See also account of splits in the Islamist movement in SCHMIDLE, N., "Next-Gen Taliban", *The New York Times Magazine*, 6 January 2008.

[489] "The military's younger generation […] appears more sympathetic to Islamist causes and more hostile to Indian than is Musharraf. Pakistani officers in their 30s do not believe that the U.S. wants a long-lasting relationship with Pakistan." In HAMMER, J. (2007), "After Musharraf", *Atlantic Monthly*, October 2007 edition

[490] FAIR (2014), "Is Pakistan in ISIS' Crosshairs?", *op. cit.*

[491] *Idem*

dari, Pakistan and Saudi ties had cooled. When Nawaz Sharif became the Prime Minister, Saudi Arabia sought to recoup lost ground owing to Sharif's long-standing ties with the Kingdom. Thus, in March 2014 Pakistan government announced that Saudi Arabia "gifted" Pakistan U.S. $1.5 billion. Pakistani commentators quipped that Saudi Arabia had purchased Pakistani support for its regional and sectarian policies and speculated that the cash was "*part of a behind-the-scenes deal for Pakistan to provide weapons for Syrian insurgent fighters.*"[492] Pakistan's sectarian militants are also perfect cannon fodder for Saudi Arabia's covert war in Syria.

This way, the country has been sucked into yet another proxy war, this time in Syria and Iraq. While many of its sectarian fighters will never return home, those that do so will be able to wage even bloodier sectarian at-tacks at home. Their co-location with an international coterie of radical militants who share their sectarian agenda will add further ideological ballast to their cause. An exodus of Pakistan's Shia killers to Iraq or Syria may give Pakistan's minorities some temporary respite. The Pakistani state can facilitate their passage passively by doing nothing to stop them from leaving or enabling their departure. But more than that, the ISIL/*Dā'esh* could use its marginal degree of control over these militants to actively facilitate it by providing documents and transport networks. Pakistan only has one way to re-secure itself and the security of its citizens: abandon Islamist militancy as a tool of foreign policy everywhere and commit Pakistan's "parallel state" to removing the myriad militant groups operating in and from its national territory. Unfortunately, there is virtually no chance of that happening. Where geopolitical security considerations are as paramount as in a country like Pakistan, the search for solutions can only be found into policies and actions that are liable for undermining the feasibility and continuity of the key transmission mechanism of the parallel state within: regular transactions between political leaders and clandestine organisations, mediated by the constant threat of violence and sabotage by the latter. In saying this, it must be recognized that any effort to broker a change in those clandestine structures that are, following the argument of this research work, among the very pedestals of the Pakistani state, is sure to face possibly insurmountable difficulties. Pakistan is likely to remain a source of terrorism in and beyond South Asia. And to make matters grimmer, there is very little that the international community can do to help Pakistan save it from itself.

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[492] *Idem*

# Policy Lessons from Afghanistan: Implications of the Political-Criminal Nexus for Operations and Future Armed Conflicts

As the Afghan conflict evolved over a long decade of U.S./NATO-led military intervention and international assistance to the country's securitization and reconstruction, it became vividly apparent that few of the many challenges faced in Afghanistan have been as complex and insidious as the pervasiveness of organised crime in local settings, notably in relation to narcotics production and trade, and the resilience of the Taliban as an armed insurgency. Altogether, corruption and the wealth from proceeds of OC have undermined efforts to build and strengthen Afghan institutions, consolidate security gains, achieve political progress, encourage economic growth, and set conditions for enduring stability. These problems, however, are not unique to the Afghan intervention. Conflicts elsewhere in recent decades have revealed that states engaged in or emerging from insurgencies and civil wars – especially those in which institutions are weak, rule of law is minimal, and substantial international resources have been injected with inadequate oversight – are particularly susceptible to the proliferation of corruption and organised crime.[493]

The Afghan experience is rich with lessons for any military and foreign policy establishment, and all the more so for those, such as Belgium, which have been contributing to the international effort in stabilising and securitising the Central Asian nation, as it also considers the likely nature of future operations. Although, in Afghanistan, U.S. and other internationally operating armed forces did eventually begin to adapt by using police methods to the symbiotic interaction between insurgent and criminal groups in methods and tactics that was experienced in the field, classical counterinsurgency thinking and stabilisation programmes and tools have proved to be somewhat powerless to influence a situation in which criminals, insurgents, individuals in power positions, and the population are organised around a profitable illicit economy. In this case, the links amongst them – the crime-terror/insurgency nexus and the broader criminal-political nexus – are much more multifarious and difficult to thwart in such historical contexts (as in Afghanistan) where crime has long been an important shaping element of social culture and plays a critical role in the political structure of the state. By exposing the ways insurgents and criminals intrinsically interrelate in the field, and how far local configurations of the environment may actually impact counterinsurgency efforts, the Afghan experience certainly teaches us some valuable lessons about the impact counterinsurgency tactics can have in a strategic environment where crime is so deeply entrenched. This chapter intends to unveil some of those. In the years ahead, European and Atlantic armed forces, as active members of the international community, may be compelled all over again to assist or intervene in weak or failed states experiencing protracted instability or rebuilding after years of violence. This requires to develop and improve our adaptation capabilities to strategic environments where organised crime as a method for various actors or parts of society is common or comes with the control of specific geographical territories,

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[493] BOONSTRA, Jos, LARUELLE, Marlène, and PEYROUSE, Sébastien, *The Impact of the 2014 ISAF Withdrawal from Afghanistan on the Central Asian Region*, Study for the Policy Department of the Directorate-General for External Policies of the European Union, EXPO/B/AFET/2013-17, European Parliament, Strasbourg-Brussels, January 2014, p .8.

so that it could also be a way of supporting effective mandate implementation and the sustainability of achievements.

Against the backdrop of the commensurate challenges posed by structural obstacles encountered in building up a new socio-political order in Afghanistan as a conditionality for security against the adverse conditions of war, this chapter starts with outlining the nature, roots causes, and extent of the problems of corruption, narcotics production and organised crime embedded within the conflicting dynamics of Afghanistan's moral and political economy of war. It will do so by locating those enduring problems at the juncture of Afghanistan's crime-terror and political-criminal "nexus." We will highlight the recombining dynamics of the threats posed by corruption and organised crime to the viability of the Afghan state and the broader international community's security, notably discussing the knock-on effects they had on the ISAF mission during its past decade of operations, and those they are now equally posing to its on-going follow-up. Then, we will discuss the tools and measures, and their quantitative effects, the intervening international community has taken to address that threat and mitigate its effects. We will conclude with a review of some implications of the Afghan experience for future operations.

## 1. On the Nature, Root Causes and Extent of Corruption and Organised Crime in Afghanistan: Knock-on Effects on the Political Economy of in-Conflict State-Building

Amidst high rates of insecurity nationwide, Afghanistan witnesses today world-record-levels of corruption and expandable problems of governance related to underdeveloped capacities, nepotism, the predatory behaviours of large segments of the elite, and the singular criminalisation of many state and non-state actors. The Central Asian nation endures the worrying pervasiveness of an untamed culture of violence reflected in a weak state thriving for enforcing law and order and for disciplining its own officials and citizens. Considered altogether, and in their inextricable relationship to ubiquitous problems of small arms proliferation and illicit trafficking reflected in the share of opium production and smuggling in the Afghan economy, these issues must be treated as cross-breeding phenomena that not only present an enduring tier-one threat to the viability of the Afghan state, and the security and living standards of its poverty-stricken population, but also threatens the interests of all those nations that have consistently supported the decade-long international stabilisation effort in the country. *"Nowhere is the convergence of transnational threats more apparent than in Afghanistan and Central/southwest Asia."*[494] In view of the density of flows of money, narcotics, weapons, and other resources across Afghanistan's criminal networks on which international eyes have expanded visibility throughout the past decade of intervention, it became clear indeed that there is a significant transnational dimension of corruption and organised crime in/from Afghanistan.

Corruption, at first, undermines the legitimacy, effectiveness, and cohesion of the Afghan government; it alienates elements of the population and generates popular discontent from which insurgent, and singularly the Taliban, draw strength. It deters investment, encourages the diver-

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[494] The White House, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organised Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security*, Washington D.C., July 2011. This statement, however, dates back from July 2011, i.e. few months after the military intervention in Libya, and before its dramatic field effects became apparent through subsequent state fragmentation, arm proliferation and the inter-factional civil war that followed. Then, France-led military intervention in Mali from March 2013, resulting from terror group AQMI taking control in the North, and the territorialisation of the self-proclaimed "caliphate" by terrorist group ISIL across the Syrian-Iraqi border, which do not allow anymore to speak about any kind of exclusivity for Afghanistan and Central Asia when considering such a convergence of transnational threats.

sion of international assistance, and prevents the growth of a strong licit economy (facilitating instead the illicit one), thus perpetuating Afghan dependence on international assistance. Critically, it enables criminal networks to permeate state institutions and functions; and it facilitates the narcotics trade and other transnational threats emerging from Afghanistan. For years, corruption and organised crime have presented a significant, yet long understated threat to the success of the ISAF mission. Now, it also directly compromises the final outcome of its *Resolute Support* follow-up, as the capacity of security institutions weakened by crime to sustain on the long haul the transfer of security responsibilities is frequently doubted. Long-term objectives pursued by the intervening international community in Afghanistan – including the elimination and prevention of transnational terrorist "safe-havens" – remain heavily dependent upon the strengthening of the Afghan state and the hardening of its institutions against corruption and organised criminality.

The current scale of corruption in Afghanistan should not be seen, though it is often suggested so, as an intrinsic cultural phenomenon, but rather, as Barnett Rubin underlined, as a "historical aberration."[495] It today exists at unprecedented levels in Afghanistan as a result of the effects of three decades of war, chronically weak governance and rule of law institutions, the erosion of traditional Afghan social norms and structures fractured by decade-long intra- and inter-communal conflicts, and in more recent years, a fragile war economy sustained by a massive infusion of international aid, security assistance, and the booming narcotics trade.

In 2014, last year of the ISAF mandate, it was estimated that 6,400 tons of opium were produced in Afghanistan, harvested from about 224.000 poppy-cultivated hectares; a post-2001 record.[496] At the point we stand today, predictions that U.S. and broader international military presence in Afghanistan would curb the opium trade have proved, to say the least, short sighted. In fact, the illicit trade of narcotics has only increased since the beginning of the post-9/11 war in Afghanistan. Sad reflection on the reality, the Taliban appear to have been more effective in discouraging opium production; the Taliban's 2002 opium ban actually reduced Afghanistan's yield of opium from 70 per cent to 10 per cent.[497] Since the end of the Taliban's reign, and the concomitant opening of a long decade of U.S. and NATO-led military intervention and international assistance to the "stabilisation" and "reconstruction" of Afghanistan, however, that trend has reversed, to the extent that the country today is the producing base of more than 90 per cent of heroin traded worldwide. Although the share of opiates in Afghanistan's economy, all other factors being equal, has proportionally decreased in recent years, notably because of the dramatic growth observed in other sectors and important fluctuations in the opium production itself, opiates still account for a very sizeable share of the Afghan economy and an important component of the country's balance of payments. Exports of opiates are substantially greater than exports of licit products. In 2015, exports of Afghan opiates were estimated at US$ 3 billion; all other exports,

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[495] RUBIN (2006), *op. cit.,* p. 14

[496] UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2014, p. 1

[497] From the beginning, the Taliban had a complex attitude to drugs. On the one hand, the Taliban from the beginning of its power stated its opposition to drugs on principal, religious grounds; while continuing to accept, and indeed to tax, opium cultivation as they did any other crop. The Taliban are variously estimated to have made between $10 million and $50 million on the trade through taxes, and likely much more through individual commanders' involvement (Rashid, *Taliban*, p. 119; Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, 154). In the absence of a functioning economy, the opium trade was by far the most significant economic activity in Afghanistan and the largest income source of the Taliban government, together with taxes on the transit trade. Yet Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar in 2000 issued a religious edict that forced the eradication of opium on all territories controlled by the Taliban. It was swiftly implemented, and the *United Nations International Drug Control Programme* (UNDCP) and American officials concluded that over 97 percent of opium under Taliban-controlled areas had been eradicated. See MAKARENKO, Tamara, "Crime, Terror, and the Central Asian Drug Trade", *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer 2002), p. 3.

US$ 2.2 billion.[498] As most large cash transactions involving drugs take place outside Afghanistan's borders, the economic effects of the drug trade on consumers can be measured primarily through imports of goods rather than financial flows.[499] Be that as it may, drug financing of imports directly shows up in the form of trade deficits. Since it was placed under global protectorate in 2001, Afghanistan has been running very substantial trade deficits. Whilst most of these deficits have been financed by foreign assistance, earnings from the narcotics production and trade remain a critically important source of import finance, and a prime source a corruption *within* the country indeed. In contrast to their role in financing imports, earnings from narcotics do not appear to be a significant source of capital exports out of Afghanistan.[500] Publicised interviews with government personnel in Kabul involved in monitoring financial flows out of Afghanistan revealed that most of transfers were from Afghan revenues associated with foreign activities in the country, be those payments for purchases of imported goods, or earnings from construction contracts or foreign assistance projects, not earnings from illicit drugs.[501] Funds transferred into Afghanistan from narcotics exports are a small share of total revenues from narcotics; and are used to pay growers and smaller scale traders. Payments for larger traffickers are generally made outside the country.[502] Although poppy growing remains an important source of income for many farmers, especially in the south, most of the money made in Afghanistan's narcotics sector is on the processing and trading side. For 2013, Martin and Symansky calculated that farmers received twenty-one per cent of the value added from narcotics.[503] The remaining four fifths accrues to the much-smaller group of criminal elements engaged in processing, transport, trafficking, and providing political protection and security, and to the economic powerbrokers, corrupt government officials, and insurgents who take their own cut.

We have discussed the extent to which money from illicit businesses plays in funding and resourcing insurgent and terrorist activity on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. This includes the much-discussed drug money raised by levies on poppy cultivation, opiate production and trafficking, of which, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), U.S.$ 200 to 300 million per year flow to the Taliban (in the sole Afghan case), bearing in mind that the Afghan drug exports were valued at $3.4 billion for 2014.[504] Far from all drug profits, however, are being used to finance Taliban & Co military/terrorist operations, as much of it is privately appropriated. Afghanistan's drug "cartels" and criminal patronage networks involved either directly in the drug industry or providing political protection pocket much larger shares of

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[498] International Monetary Fund, 2015

[499] CRANE, Keith, "The NATO Drawdown: Implications for Afghanistan and Pakistan", in Sustainable Strategies for Afghanistan and the Region After 2014, Aspen European Strategy Forum, 15 December 2011, p. 35

[500] The Afghan government does not restrict exports of capital; individuals or institutions that wish to take currency out of the country only have to register the amount. In 2010, the Afghan authorities officially reported roughly US$ 1.7 billion in bulk cash transfers out of Afghanistan through Kabul International Airport, or roughly US$ 5 million per day, primarily by Afghan *hawala*s or money transfer agencies. Most of this cash was being carried to Dubai. See CRANE (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 35

[501] *Idem*

[502] *Ibid.*, p. 37

[503] Calculated from statistics on GDP from the IMF; Martin and Symansky, *op. cit.*, p. 29. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC): in 2013 Afghan traffickers – often linked to state structures – made an estimated US$ 2.2 billion in profits from the production of and trafficking in narcotics, while Taliban and other insurgent groups made US$ 155 million. UNODC, *World Drug Report 2013,* Vienna, 2013, p. 83. Be that as it may, some ten per cent of narcotics revenue would have gone to insurgent groups that year, whereas up to seventy per cent would have gone to distributors and criminal networks.

[504] UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2014, p. 7

criminal profits than the Taliban.[505] Along with those aforementioned armed opposition/insurgent/terrorist groups known for being actively involved in drug smuggling activities, state-related criminal patronage networks, their members and clienteles (cf. Afghanistan's political-criminal "nexus"), profit immensely from facilitating, protecting, and participating in the narcotics trade. In addition, we saw there have been increasing amounts of "dirty" money to finance terrorism and other criminal enterprises obtained through abductions, which have taken the character of an "industry" in Afghanistan in the past few years, with "on-demand" and commissioned kidnappings carried out by criminal gangs who, then, sell their victims on to their "customers" amongst the Taliban.[506] Some of these gangs are part of the drug business at the same time and enjoy political protection by regional power-brokers within Kabul institutions.[507] Opium profits do not only resource (directly or indirectly) insurgent groups, they also and mostly supply criminal monies with which corrupt payments are made. Criminal networks responsible for most threatening forms of corruption in Afghanistan are indeed to be associated with powerbrokers that have consolidated power over the last fifty years of war. The phenomenal wealth accumulated by some powerful political actors in the post-2001 era attests to this only too blatantly.

Back to the aftermath of overthrowing the Taliban regime in late 2001, and the subsequent international consensus that set up the political process for what was then foreseen to be the "post-war reconstruction" of the country, Afghanistan's new exogeneously promoted "national" government authorities were called on steering a fragmented society, which had been socially and politically deeply disrupted by more than twenty years of internal and often internationalised armed conflicts,[508] with no working state infrastructures and endogenous resources mobilisation mechanisms. Besieged on every side by security threats, it needed to establish its own political authority and credibility, unite the nation, restore law and order, rebuild state infrastructures, and satisfy the social and economic aspirations of its people, all while managing a plethora of supporting international stakeholders, from whom essential support did not come without its own challenges relating to ownership and sovereignty. Simply put, the task was tremendous.

While the U.S.-led "*Provisional Arrangements on the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions in Afghanistan*" (*aka* the 5 December 2001 "Bonn Agreement") already had substantial democratic deficits,[509] the heavy U.S. and international footprint in Afghanistan's

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[505] BUDDENBERG, Doris, and BYRD, William (eds.), *Afghanistan: Drug Industry: Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy*, Washington, D.C.: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank, 2014, p. 13

[506] Phenomenon notably highlighted by AAN's Director Thomas Ruttig in: *The Other Side. Dimensions of the Afghan Insurgency: Causes, Actors, and Approaches to 'Talks'*, The Afghanistan Analysts Network, July 2011, p. 21; available at http://www.afghanistan-analysts.net/uploads/200907%20AAN%20Report%20Ruttig%_20-%20The%20Other%20Side.PDF See PETERS, Gretchen, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bank-rolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda*, Thomas Dunne Books, New York, 2009.

[507] MALEY (2010), *op. cit*., p. 61

[508] Afghanistan, in Michael Barry's terms, may be better thought at as an "amalgam of micro-societies", based on either ethnic, linguistic, sectarian, or geographic alliances, or in some instances on the role of a dominant personality or lineage. The last three decades of conflict have disrupted many of these micro-societies. In some areas, the organic structures that maintained law and order have broken down; in others, micro-societies have suffered from penetration by *al Qaeda* and the Taliban, or from narcotics traffickers and criminals; and in still others, the delicate balances of power that existed for decades have shifted to a fragmented structure.

[509] The Bonn Agreement, which set up the road map of a new political architecture for what was then foreseen to be the "post-war reconstruction" of Afghanistan, was reached under UN chairmanship (and U.S. dominance) by representatives of several exile groups and ex-*mujahideen* armed factions based in the north and the east whose militiamen had been used as ground forces to oust the Taliban regime within the framework of the U.S.-led intervention Operation Enduring Free, but not the Taliban, and with few significant Pashtun tribal leaders present.

*political* sector from the onset of the state-building process severely tainted the actual outcome of that process.[510] Early 2002, the blocking by the U.S. of the expansion of ISAF throughout the country beyond the capital Kabul constrained the new Afghan leader *ad interim* to offer power positions in provinces to "unelected governors" (in reality, warlords/strongmen commanding feud armed groups) who might otherwise have become spoilers. Allowed to run for the 2005 parliamentary elections, those "commanders" finally added political legitimacy to their military and economic power, obtained first through U.S. financial support for their participation in the fight against *al Qaeda* and the Taliban, then through their expansion into the drug trade and, from there, into legitimate economic activity. In 2006, the UN spoke of 1,200 to 2,000 Illegal Armed Groups (IAGs) in Afghanistan, with 120-200,000 members, and over 3.5 million weapons in circulation throughout the country.[511] As a result, in 2007 a coalition of representatives of all former warring parties in parliament – from communists to *mujahideen* and even ex-Taliban – passed a self-amnesty for all past war crimes. In 2010, around five hundred high-ranking members of the Afghan state administration still belonged to the UN unofficial GOLIAG category (Government Officials Linked to Illegal Armed Groups); that is 1.2 such persons per district, on average.[512] Thus, the ability of warlord-strongmen to shape the outcome of the Bonn Agreement, and in particular that of the Emergency *Loya Jirga* that endorsed Hamid Karzai as leader of Afghanistan's Interim Administration in June 2002, has had long-term deleterious effects on the state-building process,[513] not simply, as Lucy Edwards observed, because it enabled them to claim political legitimisation by the international community,[514] but it also enabled them to influence key appointments both regionally and at central government level, and to affect the composition and outcome of the constitutional drafting process.[515] The corollary of this has been an extreme form of centralised government that protects the vested interests of a narrow elite group of warlord-strongmen, i.e. a neo-patrimonial oligarchy made of a variety of hybrid politico-military-criminal patronage networks within which President Karzai mastered the art of maintaining fragile alliances based on mutual interdependence and the systemic guarantee that everyone reaps political benefit as well as economic profits from the power cartel. Against this backdrop, the most serious and destabilising forms of corruption are reinforced by the fact they are carried out by patronage networks

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[510] FIELDS, Mark, AHMED, Ramsha, "A Review of the Bonn Conference and Application to the Road Ahead in Afghanistan", INSS Strategic Perspectives, No 8, National Defence University, Washington, November 2011, p. 17.

[511] "Around 1,000 of the 2,838 candidates for the 2005 parliamentary elections were suspected of links to IAGs and 255 were included on a so-called 'UN yellow list' but finally only 11 were disqualified for IAG links – all small fry and no major commanders. 82 of the 249 MPs elected in 2005 had been commanders of armed groups; eighty per cent of all MPs maintained links to IAGs, according to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)." See JOHNSON, Thomas, "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban's Transition: The State of State Building after the War", *Central Asian Survey*, March-June 2006, p. 25.

[512] RUTTIG (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 149

[513] This is commonly shared view among Afghanistan scholars. See, for instance, SEDRA, Mark, "Consolidating an Elusive Peace: Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan", in BRYDEN, Alan, and HANGGI, Heiner (ed.), *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2004), pp. 25-26; RUBIN, Barnett R., *Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy*, Council on Foreign Relations Special Report No. 12 (Washington D. C., March 2006), pp. 5-6; MORGAN EDWARDS, Lucy, "State-building in Afghanistan: A Case Showing the Limits", *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 92, No. 880, December 2010, p. 971-3; JOHNSON (2006), *op. cit.*, pp. 23-4; RUTTIG *et al.*, "The International Community's Engagement in Afghanistan beyond 2014", AAN Discussion Paper 03/2011, December 2011, pp. 18-21

[514] MORGAN EDWARD (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 978.

[515] MALEY, William, "Governance", in: DANSPECKGRUBER, Wolfgang (ed.), *Working Toward Peace and Prosperity in Afghanistan*, Liechtenstein Colloquium Report Volume 5, Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University, 2011, p. 58.

operating with political protection across Afghanistan's public and private in a context of fragile statehood, where internal accountability and oversight mechanisms of many critical institutions are subject to intimidation and coercion.[516] Facts in evidence are known by all those familiar with Afghan affairs, and indeed have been exposed by some prime Afghan stakeholders themselves.

"*In this government*" [cf. Hamid Karzai Administration], explained Afghan National Security Advisor Rangin Dafdar in an interview to *Wall Street Journal* dated December 2010, "*we have mafia networks.*" These networks "*begin with the financial banking system, with corruption networks, with reconstruction and security firms and also with drugs and the Taliban; they are in Parliament and they are in government.*"[517] These criminal networks, whose certain kingpins' names are notoriously known to be capable of impacting on the course of Afghan politics (*Qadir*, *Tarakhel* etc.),[518] are engaged in the capture and subversion of critical state functions and institutions in a system where power is derived by positions and loyalty, and not accountability. Significantly fuelled by the breakdown of civic trust during the past decades of conflict, the strength of this system of alternative rules has led to the formation of family-based political machines, where licit and illicit funds raised by some members can support the political careers of others. Amid international oversight and support, portions of Afghan ministries today function not as professional bureaucracies focused on public administration, but as vertically integrated patronage networks, elements of which engage in and facilitate a range of illicit activities in relation to organised crime or being part thereof.[519] Enabled to operate with relative impunity outside and inside of government – consistently avoiding meaningful investigations and prosecution – by exerting influence within law enforcement, investigative, and judicial institutions across the Afghan government, these powerful actors engage in illicit enterprises and pursue narrow, self-interested agendas that degrade security, weaken governance, hinder economic development, and undermine the rule of law. Seeking to control key state assets and institutions, they divert customs revenue at airports and border crossing points, expropriate government and private land, steal international security and development assistance disbursed to the Afghan government, and abuse public and private financial institutions at the expense of the country's sustainable economic development. In 2012 the World Bank ranked Afghanistan's borders as the fourth hardest in the world to cross *for* (licit) *trade purposes* (but not for narcotics, weapons, or insurgents…), therefore creating a significant obstacle to regional economic integration.[520] Furthermore, the permeation of corruption within critical institutions of the Afghan state, and the criminal capture of its essential functions at border crossing points, international airports, and inland customs depots, not only robs the state of revenue, inhibits economic growth, impedes capacity-development efforts, it also undermines its security and sovereignty. By enabling the trafficking of narcotics, precursor chemicals, and weapons, while facilitating insurgents' freedom of movement, it leaves the country and its neighbours vulnerable to transnational threats.

Rather than an intrinsic cultural phenomenon, the scale of corruption in today's Afghanistan is thus also to be closely related to the political settlement endorsed by the international community in the post-2001 era, as various regionally and ethnically aligned patronage networks have been enabled to pursue political as well as criminal agendas, consolidating power and maximising their position relative to other networks. Networks/interest groups with the greatest degree of

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[516] GIUSTOZZI, Antonio (2009) *Empires of Mud: Wars and Warlords in Afghanistan*, London: C. Hurst & Company, p. 87-8

[517] Afghan National Security Advisor Rangin Dadfar quoted in ROSENBERG, Matthew, "Malign Afghan Targeted", *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 December 2010.

[518] *Idem*

[519] MALEY (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 62

[520] The World Bank, *Doing Business 2012*, Washington D.C

influence in the Afghan government and its critical institutions have their roots in the *mujahideen* commander's networks and political parties that emerged in the conflicts which torn the country apart in the 1980 and 1990s, such as the powerful *Hizb-e Islami*. With the Bonn Agreement in 2001, some key figures in these networks, upon whom President Karzai, initially lacking an Afghan-grounded political base, chose to rely to eliminate or weaken others who could potentially threaten his control of the periphery,[521] acquired senior positions within Afghanistan's newly formed national government. These figures in turn distributed power among their allies, clients and affiliates, and the purchase of government posts became widespread.[522] With this "commoditisation of political power"[523] came the development within key ministries of cohesive patronage networks, elements of which became engaged in illicit activities. Today these networks dominate Afghanistan's political space and the economy. They are key stakeholders in perpetuating political instability and state weakness, as the continued fragility of Afghanistan's institutions provides them with freedom of action and impunity. Kingpin figures of these networks are not very different from the commanders of the 1980s, since their resources mostly provide from areas where they are dominant; there, they take a percentage of any external resources coming from the state or from outside economic operators,[524] yet also drawing on locally produced wealth may it be licit or illicit. By controlling border transit and checkpoints, and exacting customs and tolls, these strongmen gain personal revenue from legal or illegal cross border trade but do not use such resources for public good and state budget. In addition, they often pick up their share of foreign aid.[525] Because there has long been little control over aid outside of Kabul, due in part to poor security conditions and difficulties in implementing accountable, decentralised auditing procedures, money coming from international donors could easily be redirected to finance local strongmen, as it did also benefit to the Taliban itself. Notwithstanding, international actors, notably profligate American donors, focused on narrow counter-terrorism objectives and awash with money, all too often have "inadvertently" empowered profoundly unsavoury figures at the expense of others with real local clout, in a manner that has been at cross-purposes to the overall state-building effort endeavoured in the country. This problem surfaced very early in the post-2001 era, with the notable return to power of figures such as warlord Gul Agha Sherzai Beg (*aka* "The Bulldozer"), who was to become, despite his dark past of human rights abuser and notorious involvement in opium trafficking, *the* key player in Washington's strategy to eliminate the Taliban in its Kandahar stronghold, and a major political powerbroker instrumental in keeping Hamid Karzai in office in the 2000s.[526] Even in less feverish times, new actors have emerged in symbiotic relations with foreign actors. Until his assassination by one of his bodyguards on 12 July 2011, President Karzai's younger paternal half-brother, Ahmed Walid, notoriously flourished in Kandahar despite pervasive suspicions about the nature of his activities involving heroin trade.[527] Along with other evidence from the field, late reports from Uruzgan province indicated that, in late 2000s, "*the most powerful man in* [this region of southern Afghanistan] [was] *not the provincial governor, nor the police chief, nor even the commander of the Afghan army.* […] *It is Matiyullah Khan, the*

[521] MORGAN EDWARD (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 976

[522] MALEY (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 62

[523] LISTER, Sarah, "Understanding State-building and Local Government in Afghanistan", Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics (LSE), Working Paper No. 14, London, 2007, p. 8, available at http://www 2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/Publications/phase2 papers.aspx.

[524] MORGAN EDWARD (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 978

[525] LISETER (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 15

[526] An on-the-ground witness, Sarah Chayes, has written a well-documented account of Sherzai's warlord behaviour following the U.S. invasion. See CHAYES, *The Punishment of Virtue*, New York: Penguin Press, 2006.

[527] See RISEN, James, "Reports link Karzai's brother to heroin trade", *The New York Times*, 4 October 2008, at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/04/world/asia/04iht-05afghan.16689186.html?pagewanted=all&_ r=0.

*head of a private army who earned millions of dollars guarding NATO supply convoys and fighting insurgents alongside U.S. Special Forces.*"[528] Frequently referred to for its suspected involvement in narcotics trade, this influential non-state powerbroker organised there a powerful private army and captured state authority in its region of influence, not only to protect his wealth and material riches, both from licit and criminal sources, but also to project his personal status and social power vis-à-vis other, eventually more legitimate local authority figures that have been *de facto* marginalised by the shift in balance of power sparked by the strongman's engagement alongside international/U.S. forces. This resulted in an unprecedented surge of the Taliban-led insurgency in Uruzgan that eventually led in hasting Dutch ISAF combat troops withdrawal from the extremely volatile province in late summer 2010. Matiyullah Khan's case is a fine illustration of the detrimental side effects of any decision to actively backing one local strongman while leaving many others feeling marginalised, and this is a sentiment from which the Taliban have been standing to benefit for years given the complexity of Afghan social structure. Having left that issue unaddressed far too long illustrates a misunderstanding of the ways non-state actors relate means to ends in Afghan context.

Few analysts have identified the causal links between predatory governance, the criminalisation of Afghanistan's emerging "parallel state", and the strength of the Taliban-led insurgency. In a Carnegie Endowment report dated 2007 Gilles Dorronsoro noted the causal connection between the Taliban's resurgence in southern provinces from 2004 and the blatant abuse of power by supported government officials, security forces, and their networks of affiliates there.[529] In this connection, Thomas Ruttig importantly argued that the "*surge of the insurgency*" from 2005-06 onwards must be rather seen as "*a symptom* [than] *the cause of the set of deep crises in Afghan society that* [underlie the] *current conflict situation*", and that, in many respects, have been "*aggravated instead of alleviated by the flawed intervention of* [the international community.]"[530] If any, the weakness of the post-2001 state-building approach surfaced the most in the sphere of local government. Here, the "*de facto* [cf. "parallel"] *state has often been populated not so much by legitimate local rulers as by a motley mix of nominees of Kabul and other adventurers who have exploited the unique environment of the post-2001 era to accumulate money and power.*"[531] Whereas by pursuing an active policy of co-optation, alliance-making and grand bargaining, former President Hamid Karzai somewhat successfully worked to rally a substantial number of local commanders and warlords to his side (e.g. by helping them get elected, or giving them governmental posts), that strategy ultimately proved to be unsustainable, to the extent that Afghan state structures remained fundamentally weak and crowded out by criminal interests. Furthermore, the marginalisation of sometimes locally legitimate leaderships to the advantage of others favoured by the centre has produced further political fragmentation.[532] This critical issue of the margina-

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[528] FILKINS, Dexter, "With US Aid, Warlord Builds Afghan Empire", *International New York Times*, 5 April 2010, accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/06/world/asia/06warlords.html?pagewanted=all.

[529] GIUSTOZZI, Antonio, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); GOPAL, Anand, "The Battle for Afghanistan: Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar", New America Foundation, November 2010; COGLAN, Tom, "The Taliban in Helmand: An Oral History", in GIUSTOZZI, Antonio (ed.), *Decoding the New Taliban* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[530] RUTTIG, "Afghanistan between Democratisation and Civil War" (2012), *op. cit.*, in Charles King Mallory IV & Joachim Krause (eds.), *Sustainable Strategies for Afghanistan and the Region After 2014* (Conference Papers), Aspen European Strategy Forum, The Aspen Institute, Berlin, January 2012, p. 149

[531] MALEY, William, "Afghanistan: an historical and geographical appraisal", *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 92, No. 880, December 2010, p. 17.

[532] There are today few regional leaders who can control any significant territory: Ismail Khan (Herat Province), Ustad Ata (Jawzjan Province), Abdul Rashid Dostum (Faryab Province), and Ustad Rabbani (Badakhshan Province) are among the most famous of this small group.

lisation of local authority figures, especially those based in traditional Pashtun tribal structures, has contaminated the reputation of the new state, and encouraged major problems of nepotism and maladministration that, whilst already rooted in the foundations of governance and the historical process of state formation in Afghanistan, have found further resonance in the over centralised model of state-building endorsed by the international community in the post-2001 era. In many respects, William Malley commented: *"The insecurity of the repressive Taliban regime and the 1994-2001 factional war was replaced by another predatory regime, dominated by returning warlords, aggravated by the resurgent insurgency […] and trust in the newly-created institutions was undermined. […] In this process* [from around 2005-2006 onwards] *even the Karzai camp, which had initially followed a reform agenda, started behaving like the older factions, thwarting hopes for better governance and meaningful reforms."*[533] Consequential to a rule-of-law framework that remained pathetically weak in Afghanistan, the impressive guarantees of rights set out in the Constitution exist only on paper for most Afghans. Widespread corruption and bribery are major contributors to this problem. By undermining popular confidence in the legitimacy, effectiveness, and long-term durability of the government, the infiltration of state institutions by criminal patronage networks has consolidated exclusionary political economies that alienated key elements of the population and generated popular discontent from which the insurgency drawn strength. Although this is not the sole recruiting basis of the insurgency, the Taliban has also been extensively recruiting from disaffected segments of the population and those who have suffered injustice and abuse at the hands of corrupt and criminal actors.

Meanwhile weakening the country's critical institutions in (re)building, corruption and the untamed criminalisation of governance practices and processes have played a major role in fomenting and sustaining instability and insurgent/terrorist violence over the past decade in Afghanistan. As noted above, likewise insurgencies and terrorist groups, criminal organisations dedicated to trafficking in drugs, kidnapping, protection racketeering, organised robbery etc., benefit from withering social conditions, security vacuum, and an absence of state authority. By and large, the actions contribute to the conditions in which insurgency thrives, and *vice versa*. In Afghanistan, inbred activities carried out by various non-state players in the framework of both endeavours (criminal and insurgent/terrorist), whatever they categorisation may be, have promoted a state of disorder which has worked against the legitimacy of the U.S./NATO-led international coalition and the "Democratic Peace" project it pursued in Afghanistan in partnership with a broad range of international stakeholders and supported Afghan authorities. Without any question, the Taliban and other insurgent groups have largely been main protagonists in the almost linear deterioration of the security situation in most parts of the country between 2002 and 2012, as a result of which access for international as well as national, for governmental as well as non-governmental reconstruction actors has been shrinking. But, as Thomas Ruttig importantly underlines: *"The surge of the insurgency is more a symptom than the cause of a set of deep crises in Afghan society that underlie the current conflict situation"* and which have been, in many respects, *"aggravated instead of alleviated by the flawed intervention of the international community."*[534]

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[533] MALEY, William, "Governance", in DANSPECKGRUBER, Wolfgang (ed.), *Working Toward Peace and Prosperity in Afghanistan*, Liechtenstein Colloquium Report Volume 5, Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University, 2011, p. 53.

[534] RUTTIG (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 149.

## 2. Puzzles and Pitfalls of In-conflict State-building in Afghanistan

Over the past fifteen years of "international", i.e. Western, intervention in Afghanistan, the U.S., NATO and ISAF contributing nations, the UN, and international donors at large, have pursued a broad range of in-conflict capacity-building and technical assistance initiatives that, generically, have sought to build effective and legitimate Afghan institutions, both civilian and military, to advance the stabilisation and democratisation of the supported Afghan government. Now, trigger-happy critics and armchair quarterbacks are quick to disparage the efforts made to transform Afghanistan; and those have been considerable and multifaceted indeed. Some of those initiatives have *inter alia* included training and advisory programmes for Afghanistan's elite counter-narcotics and investigative units, along with initiatives to develop Afghan judicial and rule of law institutions at the national, provincial, and district levels. International development agencies have implemented technical assistance programmes across the Afghan government, and considerable resources and attention have been dedicated by NATO/ISAF to the task of recruiting, training, equipping, and professionalising the Afghan national security forces (ANSF). Acknowledgedly, and we will further elaborate on this point, these efforts certainly erred through poor co-ordination by a multitude of international stakeholders with various operational practices. Co-ordinating that multitude of stakeholders and issues certainly came with its own challenges. Notwithstanding, media reporting and recurring academic comments almost exclusively focus on failed efforts, and there is no shortage of evidence supporting them indeed, and propose unequivocally gloomy conclusions about the outcome of the international (ISAF) intervention. Some of the testimony rings true, and that is fair enough. Granted, as those lines are being written, it must be clear that, although some important steps forward have been enacted with international assistance over the past de-cade in Afghanistan – and they should not be downplayed – including in the education and health sectors, infrastructures, and human rights, particularly for women, the ambitious U.S.-led internationalised project of democratisation of Afghanistan has faltered. In the wake of completing, late 2014, the implementation of the "Transition" strategy blueprint, i.e. the hand-over of security and political responsibilities (hence indirectly admitting that Afghan sovereignty so far existed on paper only) to the Afghan authorities, now steered by President Ashraf Ghani and "Chief Executive" Abdullah Abdullah, the U.S. administration, thereby setting up the dominant approach in al-lied capitals, has narrowed mission goals so as to leave behind a modicum of security and a "*minimally effective*" Afghan state hopefully guaranteed by robust native military and police structures that should prevent *al Qaeda* and other terrorist groups from operating with impunity. Against the backdrop of what appears to be a form of collective renunciation, the sharply downsized presence of international troops once committed to an ambition counterinsurgency programme aimed at defeating the Taliban by "winning the hearts and minds" of the Afghan population, whether it actually made possible to establish such a state that is not to be a safe haven for international terrorists all over again, has not resolved the issue of a state that remains structurally unable to project its presence beyond major urban centres into rural areas, neither its vulnerability to organised crime, nor the opportunity structures it provides for criminal groups, rogue political entrepreneurs, and their mutually reinforcing interactions to develop.

A major problem with externally imposed state-building projects, Ahmed Yakub observes, is the detrimental difficulty of their agents to understand the complexities of the local context in which they operate and to acquire the proper skill sets to be able to navigate local settings.[535] Whereas the necessity to engage with local communities and their leaders came to be recognised essential within the patterns of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, the resulting tendency of

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[535] YAQUB (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 34.

foreign actors to overlook the complexity of local power structures, out of their difficulty to grasp what constitutes their legitimacy locally, in people's "hearts and minds", has led to gross under-estimation of the inextricable link between capacity and legitimacy.[536] As General Petraeus himself declared in a September 2010 interview to the *New York Times*: "*We* [U.S.] *have never had the granular understanding of local circumstances in Afghanistan* that we achieved over time in Iraq (sic.) [emphasis added]."[537] As "counterinsurgents" and other savvy international "state-builders" hardly could be cognisant enough of Afghanistan's local complexities, it proved very challenging, to say the least, if not impossible, to re-establish appropriate institutionalised channels between the local societies in which operations were taking place and the weak central authorities that foreign interveners were mandated to assist. In his note on "*Building effective, legitimate and resilient state institutions*", Kevin Clements observes that "*unless there is a close connection to deep sources of individual and collective identities and belonging, externally imposed or supported systems will never generate that 'taken for granted' trust and legitimacy that exists between state and people in the West.*" Instead, they will result in deteriorating governance. Amongst salient indicators are declining security, abuses of power, corruption, crime proliferation, and failure to serve the public.[538] Thus, in such circumstances as in Afghanistan, designing intervention strategies capable of generating high levels of political legitimacy is a conundrum that cannot be resolved by focusing on capacity-building only; legitimacy matters as much.

Blueprints for stabilisation or peace operations often try to identify "best practices" without asking for whom they are best. As "interveners" (or "global actors") often fail to understand what really constitutes indigenous social and political order in regions of fragility, the danger is great of "*relying on local champions of a rational-legal approach to reform" in advancing an exogenous state model.*"[539] Much of the problem for those involved in such complex in-/post-conflict operations, i.e. their weakness in local situations,[540] lays in the fact that, whilst having often advantages in terms of resources, they often find themselves outmanoeuvred by local counterparts. Essentially, this has to do with the fact that policies are defined far away, in donors' capitals; and by the time they reach the personnel representing them in base camp, those policies bear little resemblance to ground realities: "*The personnel in metropolitan headquarters or in base camps do not possess knowledge of local power structures, and as a result, perceive the space of the intervention as being void of any power structures.*"[541]

While actors can learn from experience how to better achieve their goals, every step in a process of internationally sponsored state-building generates political conflict over resource allo-

[536] COOKMAN, Colin, and WADHAMS, Caroline, *Governance in Afghanistan: Looking Ahead to What We Leave Behind*, Centre for American Progress, May 2010, p. 7, at http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/05/pdf/afghangovernance.pdf

[537] BARNES, Julian E., "Petraeus: U.S. Lacks Afghan Tribal Knowledge", *The New York Times*, 2 September 2010, accessed at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704206804.html

[538] CLEMENTS, Kevin P., "Note on building effective, legitimate and resilient state institutions", Headline Seminar on Deteriorating Governance, presented at the World Bank, Washington D.C., April 2009, p. 4, at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLICUS/Resources/Notes_Clements_Institution_Building_HS_Apr8_09.pdf

[539] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *The State's Legitimacy in Fragile Situations: Unpacking Complexity*, Conflict and Fragility Series, OECD, Paris, 2010, p. 54.

[540] MENKHAUS Ken, "Governance without government in Somalia: spoilers, state-building, and the politics of coping", in *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2007, pp. 74-86. , pp. 74-86.

[541] SCHLICTE, Klaus, and VEIT, Alex, "Coupled Arenas: Why State-building is so Difficult", Research Group Micro-politics for Armed Groups, Humboldt University, Berlin, Working Papers Micro-politics No. 3, 2007, p. 26.

cation and distribution. In a previous *Security and Strategy* volume,[542] we discussed how the puzzles and pitfalls faced by the intervening "international community" (itself a euphemism because there never was a fundamental unity of purpose and actions among international actors in Afghanistan) in attempting to stabilise/transform the Central Asian nation illustrate how the state-building paradigm that has been worked out by international stakeholders – with the Afghans more in the passenger seat than in the driver's one for more than a the long decade of intervention – accounts for a case showing the limits of its implementation under the adverse conditions of war. It certainly testifies to the limits of both classical COIN-framed stabilisation programmes and social engineering experiences aimed at transposing the ideal-type of the Western-like nation-state and extending the so-called "Democratic Peace" to the Global South. Furthermore, it also shows how daunting can be, in Cora Goldstein's terms, "*the challenges associated with attempting to democratise a reluctant population by force*."[543] Thereabouts, the professor of political science at California State University writes for the U.S. Army War College:

> "*Small wars aimed at regime change* [such as the initial OEF campaign in Afghanistan] *do not create the conditions for executing such ambitious agendas as nation/state-building. The decapitation of the regime's leaders or the transient defeat of a guerrilla movement does not necessarily lead to popular support for a program of radical change inspired by the victors. A military occupation following a war with limited violence will exacerbate nationalism, sectarianism, and militarism, passions that fuel resentment and the violent rejection of a foreign agenda. In Afghanistan, the presence of the Western allies, and their attempt to impose ideas of governance, first generated scepticism, then political resistance, and finally the emergence of a full-fledged insurgency. International forces became involved in a counter-insurgency operation that inevitably led to human rights violations and unacceptable excesses. This resulted in the consequent loss of the moral high ground that supposedly inspired the original occupation, and led to the collapse of the agenda* [of making Afghanistan a functional democracy]."[544]

Internationally operating stakeholders involved in the Afghanistan mission have attempted to use foreign resources of the same type as those identified by Charles Tilly in other, more "classical" processes of state formation, in order to build "outside-in" an Afghan state acceptable by those who saw its failure as a threat to international security. In order to foster its own security, the "international community" (i.e. the U.S., initially) gave itself a "responsibility to rebuild" and to pacify the "ungoverned" Afghan space. In this connection, Martin Kipping compared the case of the Soviet state-building/counterinsurgency intervention in Afghanistan with the contemporary one by western allied nations. He concludes that like the USSR back in the 1980s, the West has been further militarising its intervention in response to a failure characterised by an inability to project the state beyond major urban centres into rural areas.[545] Now, imagine the lives that could have been saved, and the suffering avoided if, after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the democratic world had had the presence of mind to crowd-in before the country spiralled down into the chaos that created the vicious circle affording Taliban support to *al Qaeda*. Now, as those lines are being written, the outcome achieved over a long decade of internatio-

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[542] "Lost in Transition? State of the Conflict, Sovereignty, and post-2014 Prospects in Afghanistan", *Security and Strategy*, Vol. 116, September 2013, Royal higher Institute for Defence, Brussels

[543] GOLDSTEIN, Cora Sol, "The Afghanistan Experience: Democratisation by Force", in *Parameters*, Carlisle Barracks, PA, United States, Vol. XLII No. 3, Autumn 2012, p. 24

[544] *Ibid.*, p. 31

[545] KIPPING, Martin, "Two Interventions: Comparing Soviet and U.S.-led State-building in Afghanistan", The Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), Thematic Report, January 2010, available at http://aanafghanistan.com/uploads/AAN_Two_Interventions.pdf

nal intervention in Afghanistan does not necessarily lend credence to the idea that this costly and lengthy intervention has effectively built peace and stability for the long haul. At some fifteen years on, it has yet to be proved that the end state of a minimally effective state that is not (again) a safe haven for "extremists" and international terrorists has been achieved.

In much of the security policy debate over Afghanistan, the focus has often been limited to the Taliban constellation and its linkages to international terrorism. While concern about "extremism" and "terrorism" in Afghanistan is warranted, such focus, however, has long eclipsed large parts of the networks and actors that enable the spread of insecurity, lawlessness, and crime – including by other non-state armed actors and state actors themselves. Amongst all spoilers of peace and stability in the Central Asian nation, the pervasiveness of corruption and the deep infiltration of the country's institutions by organised crime networks rank most prominently, especially as one considers the corrosive effects it has had on the core business of stabilisation operations, i.e. the "(re)building" of a sustainable and legitimate Afghan government and the human development of the country by large. Fuelled by the resurgence of the opium industry in the post-9/11 era, but also by the "side effects" and unintended consequences of operations – or accompanying measures – that created opportunities for criminal patronage networks, along with the international community's failure to establish a transitional judicial system capable of ensuring rule of law is meaningful and respected indeed, these spoilers will continue for many years to be among the greatest impediments to peace, stability and sustainable development in Afghanistan, as they have been fuelling the surge of the Taliban-led insurgency over the past decade. As generally observed in fragile, in-, and post-conflict states, illicit resource exploitation, corruption, and the proceeds from organised crime structurally undermine security by funding or resourcing armed groups and, at the same time, providing economic incentives for the continuation of conflict and the undermining of peace agreements. In Afghanistan and Greater Central Eurasia as a whole, the drug trade certainly is the most significant streams in this regard. Proceeds not only finance insurgents and other non-state armed groups, and notably their acquisition of illicit weapons, but have also become for certain of them an end in itself, providing incentives for the continued operations of all those that benefit from a mutually-reinforcing relationship of the drug economy with corruption and maladministration. Now, it has become somewhat of a cliché to point at those issues as endemic Afghan problems.

In response to raising awareness within Afghanistan's donor community of the need for sound counteraction, the Afghan government has been facing over years increasingly vocal critics and pressures from its plethora of international sponsors and partners. And in response to them, Afghan officials in Kabul have increasingly recognised the dire scale of the corruption problem within the country's institutions, and the grave threat it indeed poses to the security, stability, economic health and cohesion – shortly, the very survival – of the Afghan state. This has also been matter of concern for Afghan leaders about their country's international reputation and standing, acknowledging that corruption, organised crime, and the narcotics trade jeopardise the credibility of Afghan sovereignty. Urged on by international stakeholders themselves urged on by taxpayers' concerns over the inflating costs of the Afghan mission, the Kabul authorities eventually agreed, let without much of a choice, yet little means indeed, to endorse the counter-corruption agenda set by their foreign partners. At last, they did so by the power of words. Notwithstanding, there has been little inclination at the top of Afghanistan government under President Hamid Karzai to address those core issues in acts and deeds. For years, the Government of Afghanistan, and President Karzai as its acting head, who is often believed to have tolerated corruption himself as part of a complex political strategy,[546] has dragged its feets over fulfilling promises to effectively tame

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[546] KATZMAN, Kenneth, "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security and US Policy", CRS Report Prepared for Members and Committees of US Congress RL 30588, Congressional Research Service (CRS), Washington, 21 September 2012, p. 23 (http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30588.pdf).

corruption, as many Afghan leaders remained deterred by what they perceived were the excessive near-term political risks of harming powerful vested interests (their own sometimes included) by acting against criminal patronage networks. In Afghanistan's convoluted political environment, the development of elaborate networks of patron-client relations certainly allows to explain, yet partly, why anti-corruption action has seemed so difficult to pursue. Nonetheless, root causes are to be searched not only on the Afghan side, but on that of global actors as well.

To no one's surprise, "drip fed" states, such as Afghanistan, which are notoriously patronage-dependent and corrupt, often prove incapable of exercising adequate budgetary control responsibilities needed for ensuring donors' assistance spending effectively occurs *in* the country to the effective benefit of its development and the enhancement of the practical terms of ordinary people's everyday life (rather than sitting in some corrupt individuals' accounts in Dubai, Switzerland or elsewhere.) As political analyst Minna Järvenpää, former head of Analysis and Planning at UNAMA in Kabul, pointed out: "*It has to be recognised that of all the financial resources delivered to Afghanistan, only about 30 per cent actually made it to the country and the community, while some 70 per cent of this assistance, going through the hands of international contractors, never left international hands. […] As a matter of fact, much of these resources have flowed back to benefit those offering them, rather than benefit Afghanistan. This is not even talking about the average 15 to 25 per cent of contract value Taliban are used to take regularly as security bribes from Afghan and international contractors.*"[547] In Taliban finances, as it is known, income from "protection" money possibly matches that from taxing on drugs.[548] The substantial increase of aid money that flowed in with the US "civilian surge" from 2009 onwards is believed to have further contributed to Taliban finances. Be that as it may, an unintended consequence of pressures to spend development aid fast, and the need to supply international military bases scattered across the country, has been the consolidation of a criminalised war/aid economy in post-2001 Afghanistan (as it had already been, *mutatis mutandis*, albeit at a much lesser extent, during the Soviet occupation/state-building period.) Most critically, lavish Western contracts given to Afghans perceived to have helpful connections have supplied some of the monies with which corrupt payments can be made. It is precisely for this reason that some Afghans have accused international actors of corruption as well. As Yaqub underlined: "*Cross-breeding local patronage networks, the multiple international patronage networks at work, which sought to 'win hearts and minds' at*

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[547] JÄRVENPÄÄ (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 193. In direct relation to this observation, a German newspaper reported that "[i]n the cases of major projects [to be implemented in insurgent-dominated areas], contractors have to have the construction plans and bidding documents scrutinised by Taliban figures after which the amount of the charge is fixed." (GERMUND, "Steuergeld für Taliban" ("Tax money for Taliban"), *Der Spiegel*, 1 July 2011)

[548] Along with the major role played by money from illicit businesses, sums to cover the cost of Taliban operations (estimated at some $70 million per annum currently) are raised from diverse sources. Until recently most analysts believed that Taliban's "tax" collection was mainly designed to project the presence of their "government" while the amount collected was less important. There are strong indications, however, that this has to be revised. In the areas under Taliban influence, "taxes" (mostly religiously justified as *ushr* and *zakat*) are raised on property, business and trade profits in a rather systematic way from NGOs (urged to "register" with the Taliban if they want to work in areas under their control), private companies (including ISAF contractors), and individuals (also government employees), as well as from humanitarian goods delivered by UN agencies. As local commanders might levy their own "taxes", the degree of coverage varies from province to province. There also is a reported (albeit under-researched) involvement of *al Qaeda* and some Taliban figures in the international finance business. Money is reportedly laundered and channelled through the United Arab Emirates (and possibly other) banks, foreign stock ex-changes as well as the traditional *hawalla* system. Apart from Karachi, the UAE has the largest Pashtun diaspora with its extensive regional trade networks. Most of this money is collected privately and in mosques, also by officially appointed Taliban fundraisers. Valuable field-grounded information on Taliban finances may be found in PETERS, Gretchen, *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bank-rolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda* (Thomas Dunne Books: New York, 2009), RUTTIG, Thomas, *The Other Side. Dimensions of the Afghan Insurgency: Causes, Actors, and Approaches to 'Talks'* (Afghanistan Analysts Network, July 2011), GIUSTOZZI, Antonio, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

*local level, have often unwittingly shifted balances of power or reinforce dubious individuals in a manner that is at cross-purposes to the overall state-building efforts in Afghanistan.*"[549] The presence of international troops and the extortion and corruption that plagued the construction, transport and security contracts that came along have also fuelled the conflict. Competition for development projects between contractors, local bosses, villages, and tribes has been particularly intense as enormous sums were spent in the PRT sector with the troop surge and COIN-related activities.[550] Beyond common issues of allocation and participation, the on-going conflict has become a lucrative enterprise for the Afghan political elite, criminal agents and insurgent groups as well. With millions of dollars hanging in the balance for political power-brokers and insurgent commanders, one may argue there is little economic incentive to end the conflict or change the structures of power, as those designated "our allies" in promoting stability in Afghanistan actually have been (and sometimes still are) the main beneficiaries of security contracts.

Possibly rather more than some, counter-corruption efforts were to be (and *should* have been more indeed) primarily essential to strengthen Afghan institutions at first, then to consolidate gains in the wake of "Transition to Afghan lead" and the prospect of the ISAF mandate's end state. In the broader context of Afghanistan's "comprehensive" counterinsurgency campaign, the somewhat legitimate pressure for "*winning the hearts and minds*" of communities living in insurgent-dominated areas has often led aid implementers from various donor nations to forgo essential needs assessments and skip proper monitoring and evaluation exercises in the interest of time and to maintain high project "burn rates" as indicators of success.[551] Clearly, spending too much too fast is counterproductive,[552] when one shall recommend that "*aid money should only be committed when it can be spent in an effective and accountable manner.*"[553] This implies that project funding levels and timelines needed to be synched with implementation capabilities, including a thorough understanding of civilian access, movement, security restrictions, and expectations regarding physical presence. Yet technical assistance and capacity-building alone, absent measures to counter the influence of criminal patronage networks within state institutions, could do little to prevent the systemic diversion of international resources, the limited and selective provision of services, and the dysfunction now evident within large portions of Afghanistan's institutions. As Ruttig convincingly argued in relation to Lambach's thesis on the often conflicting cross-breeding between the practices and processes of global governance and the endogenous dynamics of local politics, a fundamental obstacle to the success of many capacity-building initiatives taken by international actors in Afghanistan has been a frequent "*failure to acknowledge the inherently political nature of institutional reform* [they have been pushing for through them]",[554] and to what one may add a corollary failure – at least equally damaging in our view – to grasp how the extent to wich the politics of crime had been shaping for years the ends and means of the Afghan

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[549] YAQUB (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 32

[550] JÄRVENPÄÄ (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 194

[551] In America's COIN semantic in Afghanistan, the term "*burn rate*" referred to a measurement of dollars spent during a specific time, usually monthly. Many considered a higher burn rate better than a lower burn rate and often mistakenly prioritized a high burn rate as a measurement of successful project implementation.

[552] As a good illustration of this, see for instance FISHSTEIN, Paul, and WILDER, Andrew, "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan," Feinstein International Centre, Tufts University, January 2012, p. 69

[553] *Idem*

[554] DEBIEL, Tobias, and LAMBACH, Daniel, "Global Governance Meets Local Politics: On Western Statebuilding and the Resilience of Hybrid Political Orders", paper presented at the *Global Conference of the International Peace Research Association* (IPRA) 2010, Sydney, Australia, 6-10 July 2010, p. 6, full text available at http://www.peace-building.de/files/td_dl_irpa-2010d.pdf

conflict(s) couldn't but fundamentally impact the conduct of stabilisation/state-building and counterinsurgency efforts, and understanding the ways such efforts are to be fundamentally impacted by the socio-cultural contexts in which they are implemented.

As we suggested in the introductory part of this research, in certain social context crime can play a central role in the political structure of the society, and of the state indeed. This is certainly the case of Afghanistan, where there exists an actual symbiosis between the drug trade and poli-tical power, may it be that available to the ruling oligarchy and its security forces or co-opted by local powerbrokers and insurgent groups in their regions of influence. In this drug/crime-saturated environment, criminal patronage networks entrenched in sponsored government authorities in Kabul and their relaying powerbrokers in provinces have been able to thwart many of the structural and administrative anti-corruption reforms advocated by international stakeholders from the early years of the state-building intervention, including merit-based hiring, pay and grade reform, and asset declaration policies for senior government officials.[555] Moreover, their king-pins have been actively suppressing or sought to co-opt junior, reform-minded officials who were receiving training from U.S. and European sponsors, as well as the experienced – but politically vulnerable – technocrats operating within the Afghan government's bureaucracies.

In the meantime, there has been what Acree qualified an "*extraordinary lack of unity among senior leaders* [within the supportive donor community] *in both Washington* [and in Brussels and European capitals as well] *and Kabul regarding the nature and content of the stabilisation effort*."[556] Albeit badly needed for civilian support to stabilization/securitization operations, this lack of unified effort among foreign donors/interveners, also confirmed by the acknowledged knowledge gap among senior civilian and military leaders about the programmes they claimed to control,[557] has posed virtually unsolvable challenges in the Afghanistan mission, despite the often repeated importance of the "unity of command" concept emphasised in Secretary Clinton's "whole-of-government" approach.[558] Fundamentally, this lack of integration and unity of effort in effect has led to misgivings that resulted in windows of opportunity wide open for corrupted/ting agents and organised crime to take the upper hand.

In Afghanistan, the international, U.S.-led military/counterinsurgency effort was thought to be accompanied by a stabilisation strategy aimed at coordinating Afghanistan's "rebuilt" ministries and agencies in an effort to "bring the state back." Yet, with each year passing – Ruttig argues – "*the international intervention in Afghanistan has been increasingly confronted with its in-built strategic contradictions and errors*."[559] Of all, this certainly applies to qualify the counter-narcotics aspect of the war, which proved largely vein in breaking the rural population's link with the drug economy through alternative development and humanitarian aid. From all its outcomes, indeed, the Western approach to Afghanistan's drug economy indeed appears to be amongst the most bizarre thereof.

At first sight, from the onset U.S. policy in Afghanistan has been aimed at eradicating the opium cultivation as soon as possible, which, it was argued, would have the additional effect of depriving the Taliban of their main source of income. However, the implementation of this policy

[555] MALEY, William, "Governance", in DANSPECKGRUBER, Wolfgang (ed.), *Working Toward Peace and Prosperity in Afghanistan*, Liechtenstein Colloquium Report Volume 5, Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, Princeton University, 2011, p. 54

[556] ACREE, John, "Stabilisation Success in Afghanistan. The Challenges Within", in *PRISM*, Vol 4, No 1, 2014, p. 106; available at http://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism_4-1/prism100-117_acree.pdf

[557] *Ibid.*, p. 108

[558] *Idem*

[559] RUTTIG (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 152

has been neither successful nor straightforward, and continued to be ineffective as the root causes of the drug economy in Afghanistan were not fundamentally addressed. "*The U.S. strategy* [has been] *based on an overly simplistic view, emphasising forced eradications of poppy fields on the ground (manual or mechanical eradications) or from the air (aerial spraying of chemical products). […] the basic premises of the U.S. forced eradication plan were: (a) Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is no longer associated with poverty: currently the poppy fields are concentrated in the richest southern provinces; and (b) Insurgents, motivated by greed or corruption, have turned orchards, wheat and vegetables fields into poppy fields.*"[560] Rubin and Sherman contested these premises and argued instead that political insecurity and social chaos in Afghanistan create conditions for the illicit drug industry and not vice versa.[561] Opium cultivation is undesirable, to say the least, but it is inevitable in a situation of dire poverty and insecurity. In Afghan setting, there is no other crop that provides the same benefits. In 2011, 131,000 hectares of opium generated 46 million labour days.[562] Afghan peasants are thus dedicated to poppy cultivation for economic reasons; it provides access not only to incomes but also to land, water, credit etc. Following the destruction of the public sector and employment opportunities, private and, in several cases, criminal groups have assigned themselves the task of providing public goods.[563]

The opium industry plays a central role in the Afghan economy as a whole. Martin and Symansky estimated that opiates would have generated about one third of Afghanistan's GDP, both licit and illicit, in 2014.[564] Their estimates encompass value-added from growing and harvesting opium poppies, from processing opium into morphine and heroin, from transport, and from bribes and other payments made to ensure security of transport, stocks, and processing facilities. Along with licit agriculture, growing and trafficking in opium and hashish is, and will certainly remain, important sources of income for many Afghans. In 2014, a joint study by UNODC and Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics estimated that 448,700 households in Afghanistan, six per cent of the total and ten per cent of rural households, farmed opium poppies.[565] Moreover, a large section of the population is involved in trafficking, trade, and others activities dependent on narcotics revenue.[566] The opium poppy features prominently in the cultural life of Afghan people. Historically, its cultivation was promoted by the traditional credit system (*salaam*) based on advance payment on a future crop. Moreover large landowners often rent land to sharecroppers and poor farmers through this system. Eradication plans therefore represent a serious threat to the economic stability of households as landowners require the debt payment even if the crop is eradica-

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[560] LIEVEN, Anatol, "Afghanistan: An unsuitable candidate for state building", in *Conflict, Security & Development* 7:3, 2010, pp. 112, 114.

[561] RUBIN, R. Barnett, and SHERMAN, J., *Counter-Narcotics to Stabilize Afghanistan: The False Promise of Crop Eradication*, Center on International Cooperation, New York University, 2008, pp. 50-56.

[562] MANSFIELD, David, and PAIN, Adam, *Alternative Livelihoods: Substance or Slogan?,* Briefing Paper, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), Kabul, 2012, p. 3

[563] RUBIN and SHERMAN (2008), op. cit., p. 33.

[564] Afghanistan licit GDP ran US$ 13 billion in 2014 (IMF). Building on Martin and Symansky, and taking UNODC estimates of opium production and data on opium prices, it can be estimated that illicit GDP from opiates ran US$ 4.4 billion in 2013. Cf. MARTIN, Edward, and SYMANSKY, Steven, "Macroeconomic Impact of the Drug Economy and Counter-Narcotics Efforts", in BUDDENBERG, Doris, and BYRD, William (eds.), *Afghanistan: Drug Industry: Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy*, Washington, D.C.: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank, 2014, p. 28

[565] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2014*, New York: United Nations, 2014

[566] *Ibid.*

ted. The risk burden is placed on the poor farmers.[567] From the point of view of Afghan peasants, eradicators of poppy cultivation are the main source of their insecurity. Thus, immediate opium eradication certainly poses a greater threat to human security than the existing drug economy.[568]

For most of the intervention period, forced eradications plans without providing alternative livelihoods opportunities to the people further worsened the precarious Afghan situation. The negative consequences of a repressive policy combined with crop eradications and opium ban affected the poorest part of the Afghan rural population that it kept converting to the social basis of the insurgency. In particular, iniquities on eradication process fuelled resentment and frustration among poor farmers and strengthened the position of those that could pay bribes and buy high protection. Crop destruction, moreover, did not conciliate with the *salaam* system, increasing the peasants' debt and also decreasing the possibility of their access to credit. The already dire economic condition of the majority of the Afghan people worsened further, hindering the sustainability of stabilisation/securitisation efforts.

Based on "classic" counterinsurgency doctrine, which allows the frontiers between insurgency and criminality to be totally permeable, thereby blurring that between counter-insurgency and counternarcotics, respected counter-insurgency expert David Killculen suggests that, in the Afghan case, the counter narcotics efforts must be conducted as part of the overall counter-insurgency campaign, especially when the areas of cultivation are closely associ-ated with Taliban presence, and the population is controlled by the insurgents or their criminal intermediaries. Improving counternarcotics efforts, he suggests, would also have a "knock-on effect of reducing corruption", which in turn would have a positive impact on the counter-insurgency and state-building.[569] This notwithstanding, these anticipated concatenations proved to be mere hopes faced with the difficulty to mobilise local support for counternarcotics efforts in the absence of real livelihood alternatives for large segments of a rural population dependent on poppy cultivation for survival. In practice, many of these Afghan folks proved to be much less "biddable" and responsive to the "hearts and minds" narratives than expected. While efforts to curb poppy production had been defined central to the post-2001 transformation/reconstruction of Afghanistan, and a lead nation, Great Britain, had been put in charge at the milestone 2001 Bonn Conference, the situation in the field has actually developed in such a way as to believe that UK troops in Helmand were finally instructed not to act against drug producers and traffickers.[570] The reasons: the farmers might join the insurgency when losing their livelihood, while many of the traffickers were allies in the fight against the Taliban. Their involvement in narcotics production, although known, was ignored. This was combined with a communication strategy describing the insurgents as the main profiteer from the drug economy – an assertion that became more and more untenable as officials in the Afghan administration and their relatives were increasingly pocketing shares of ever expanding drug revenues.

The, in practice, *in*-comprehensive approach to narcotics led to all kinds of haphazard mini-strategies carried out unilaterally by a broad array of actors: from Britain financing compensation for farmers to highly corrupt and parallel Afghan anti-narcotics commissions, which resulted in farmers not receiving money and resuming poppy growing on a larger scale but commis-

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[567] RUBIN and SHERMAN (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 36. They report how, after crop eradication, many families in Helmand, have had to sell their children (especially daughters) in order to pay their so-called "opium debts."

[568] MANSFIELD & PAIN (2012), op. cit., p. 9

[569] KILCULLEN, *Accidental Guerrilla* (London: Hurts&Co, 2009, pp. 63-65), quoted in DELGADO (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 6

[570] EVANS, Ryan, "Setting the Record Straight on Eradication in Helmand", *Kings of War Blog*, 23 May, 2012, http://kingsofwar.org.uk/2012/05/setting-the-record-straight-on-eradication-in-helmand/

sion members becoming rich,[571] through to the U.S. approach of spraying drug plantations, like in an Afghan repeat of eradication "Plan Colombia" (One U.S. ambassador to Kabul went under the moniker "Chemical Bill."[572]) that left rural Afghan farmers without a steady income and more vulnerable to the influence of Taliban groups and black market traders. Interdiction programs – that is, efforts to seize illegal drugs and prosecute traffickers – might seem like an intuitive approach to combating the drug trade, but these programmes have failed as spectacularly as crop eradication.[573] And as long as opium remains valuable, the crops that have been eradicated will always be replaced. Successful poppy eradication in one area simply drove opium production to another area — and drove up the price in the process. This phenomenon is called "the balloon effect", since squeezing a balloon in one spot simply causes it to expand in another. James Capra, Chief of Operations for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), has attempted to show progress in Afghanistan by pointing to increased narcotics seizure and conviction rates,[574] but, in reality, these are poor indicators of strategic success. Higher interdiction numbers merely reflect increased production rates, and the drugs seized by interdiction teams are just drops in the bucket compared to what leaves Afghanistan every day undetected. As the most unskilled and least effective couriers are caught, the most innovative and effective networks raise their prices and carry on. Higher risk premiums mean bigger profits, which are used to buy the loyalty of corrupt law enforcement and government officials who can ensure safe passage for future transports. The latest example is the UN's declaration of "drug free" provinces and the handing out of reward payments to their governors – while "drug free" is defined only in terms of the size of the poppy growing area and hashish cultivation and drug trafficking are completely neglected under this approach. (One of the "drug-free" provinces, Balkh, has become a major hashish growing area, while Afghanistan as a whole has regained its position as the world's largest producer of this drug.[575]) Granted, there is no silver-bullet solution to the narcotics production problem in Afghanistan, but one thing is clear: the Afghan case demonstrates some of the shortcomings of classical counterinsurgency *cum* counter-narcotics approaches in a strategic environment that is heavily shaped by the drug trade and dependent on the illegal economy it generates, as well as the difficulties of effectively winning the support (i.e. "the hearts and minds") of local communities whose livelihood depends on the cultivation of illicit crops (narcotics), which converts them to the social base of the insurgency.

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[571] ROSEN, Liana, and KATZMAN, Kenneth, *Afghanistan: Drug Trafficking and the 2014 Transition*, Congressional Research Service (CRS), 9 May 2014, p. 11; accessed at https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43540.pdf

[572] CHANDRASEKARAN, Rajiv, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*, New York: Bloomsburry, 2013, pp. 106-107

[573] ROSEN & KATZMAN (2014), *op. cit.,* p. 13

[574] See the *Statement of James L. Capra Chief of Operations Drug Enforcement Administration U.S. Department of Justice Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa U.S. House of Representatives For a Hearing Entitled "Future U.S. Counternarcotics Efforts in Afghanistan",* presented on 5 February 2014, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington D.C.; Stable URL http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA13/20140205/101709/HHRG-113-FA13-Wstate-CapraJ-20140205.pdf

[575] KRAUSE, Johan, and MALLORY, Charles, "Afghanistan: Between Democratization and Civil War", p. 149

## 3. Reviewing Attempts at Mainstreaming Counter-Crime/Corruption Efforts into ISAF Operations Planning and Afghan SSR

In our conceptual framework in relation to the provisional characterisation of a crime-operations "nexus", we discussed how criminal proceeds influence the presence of those involved to the detriment of state-building efforts. We saw they can affect the will for genuine reform among political elites, reduce the attractiveness of critical disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants, and undermine law and order enforcement if profiteers include members of the security services – a central dilemma for SSR-centric peace/stabilisation operations or other actors involved in capacity/state-building process. Relatedly, we unveiled how likewise insurgency and criminality overlap, peacekeeping/enforcement and stabilisation/counter-insurgency operations and organised crime intersect in a variety of ways – not only because they share the same operational environment, but also because they pursue diametrically opposed goals and often depend on the same actors for realising them. Though we made clear that neither peace-keeping/enforcement nor stabilisation/counterinsurgency operations, albeit already involved in countering crime, are primarily a crime-fighting tool, as it is also obvious that organised crime in fragile in/post-conflict states cannot be contained through capacity-building measures employed by stabilisation-as-state-building operations alone. However, if the overall aim is to sever links between insurgents and criminals and, at the same time, avoiding further destabilisation and limiting the space for transnational criminal groups in the intervention theatre, then complex stabilisation operations – with their security, peace-enforcement/counterinsurgency and state building tasks – play an important role in setting (or not) the conditions for the sustainability of achievements and creating checks and balances.

In some cases (as in Afghanistan), security and stability/state-building operations – or the international community overall – have employed fairly intrusive measures to counter the threat posed by organised crime and the corruption that accompanied it.[576] The legitimacy of such measures, which indeed constitute a deep intrusion into the politics and institutions of a sovereign state, is often contested. However, particularly when organised crime and corruption are prevalent within the supported governing and politically relevant elite, one may argue that considering such measure make sense. Placing particularly vulnerable sectors under international oversight for an interim period for example, can contribute to making states – and state institutions in particular – more resilient against organised crime.[577] At yet, amidst such heavy "political footprint" in Afghan affairs at peak of its intervention, the international community's responses to corruption and organised crime during conflict have long been decentralised and fragmented in Afghanistan.

Once eventually mindful of the threat posed to the mission outcome by the scale of corruption in the Afghan field, and of its mutually-reinforcing relationship to the narcotics trade, organised crime, and the Taliban insurgency, the U.S., ISAF/NATO and partners in the international law enforcement community came to realise the urgent necessity to expand their visibility on the flows of money, narcotics, weapons and other resources across Afghanistan's criminal networks.[578] As operations were already involved in countering crime in various ways, it only see-

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[576] This includes international oversight provided in the context of Liberia's Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP), or the deployment of international judges to Kosovo to guarantee the independence of the judiciary in cases of organised crime.

[577] BOER and BOSETTI (2015), *op. cit.,* p. 54.

[578] See for example *Commander of the Joint Chief of Staff Address to the Troops at ISAF HQ Afghanistan*, accessed at http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/transcripts/commander-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-address-to-the-troops-at-isaf-hq-kabul-afghanistan.html

med logical indeed to at least enable them to do so more effectively. Though limited, some of the initiatives that were taken haven represented significant and effective inputs into ISAF decision processes relevant to unified anti-corruption/crime efforts meant to strengthen the Afghan state. As a matter of peculiar interest, a dedicated task force – called "*Shafafiyat*" ("transparency" in Dari), which later evolved into the *Combined Joint Interagency Task Force - Afghanistan (CJIA TF-A)* – was set up in the summer of 2010 as the cornerstone of a more integrated oversight within ISAF, and its interagency and international partners, in order to "*reduce corruption such that it does not present a fatal threat to the viability of the Afghan state, and ensure that continued anti-corruption progress is assured;*"[579] That ambitious objective was arguably late to come. One might even argue too late. Yet, better late than never…

Upon its establishment, the CJIATF-A Task Force was set out, in in by-laws, in the spirit of "*fostering a common understanding of the corruption problem* [both among international stakeholders and with the Afghan partners] *as a basis for joint action and reform*", "*planning and implementing ISAF Counter Corruption, Counter Narcotics, Counter Threat Finance, and 'No Contracting with the Enemy' strategies*", and "*synchronizing the international military coalition's efforts with those of key interagency and international partners* […] *so as to deny resources to the nefarious actors and enhance transparency and accountability within the Afghan government and strengthen international confidence in its action* (sic.)"[580] At the processual level, a variety of structured forums were established,[581] in which relevant international stakeholders could share information, gain insights with donor nation missions, and engage with leaders from Afghan civil society, and senior officials across the Afghan government, with a view to developing and implementing "*integrated measures*" for reducing corruption and degrading criminal networks in their mutually-reinforcing relationships to the narcotics trade and the insurgency. To this end, in its co-ordination with its Afghan and international partners, *Shafafiyat* staffing, in the time since the task force was initially founded, sought to "[…] *persuade senior Afghan leaders that it* [was] *in their ultimate interests – and the interest of the Afghan state and its people – to address the problem with a degree of urgency.*"[582] Concurrently, it has supported and coordinated initiatives to "[…] *professionalize and insulate from political interference those institutions within the Afghan government that serve critical judicial, investigatory, and anti-corruption related functions*, […] *to ensure continuity of efforts in the years ahead.*"[583] In this connection, the

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[579] Upon its founding in August 2010, the interagency task force integrated the efforts of three existing structures engaged in anti-corruption activities: Task Force 2010, Task Force Spotlight (dealing exclusively with Private Security Companies, and as of 1 June 2011 subsumed within USFOR), and CJIATF-Nexus. While the former two have been integral in providing increased coordination and oversight of US and ISAF contracting processes and avoiding to the largest extent possible that international resources inadvertently strengthen criminal interests or insurgent groups, the latter analyses the intersection of criminal patronage networks, the narcotics trade, and the insurgency as a basis for Afghan and NATO-led law enforcement and military efforts. Based at ISAF Headquarters in Kabul, CJIATF-*Shafafiyat* today comprises of a joint, interagency staff of approximately 40 planners, analysts, action officers, and advisors. See http://www.isaf.nato.int/subordinate-commands/combined-joint-interagency-task-force-afghanistan/ index.php

[580] ISAF HQ, Kabul, CJIATF-*Shafafiyat*, *SIGAR Information Paper* (UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO), 19 June 2011; Stable URL: http://info.publicintelligence.net/ISAF-CJIATF.pdf

[581] Among those forums, notably is a bi-monthly Transparency and Accountability Working Group jointly hosted by the interagency task force and Afghanistan's Office of the National Security Council, which has been designed to promote unity of voice on matters of corruption and identify opportunities for collaboration. In the course of its early meetings, the working group's members, among whose are Representatives from various U.S. government agencies, key embassies, UNAMA, and others within ISAF and Afghan ministries, outlined a set of baseline recommendations applicable to ministries and agencies across the Afghan government, drawn from the reform directives and commitments announced by President Karzai at various multinational conferences.

[582] ISAF HQ, Kabul, CJIATF-*Shafafiyat*, *SIGAR Information Paper* (UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO)

[583] *Ibid.*

civil-military team within ISAF Headquarters in Kabul prioritized efforts to be made in partnership with organisations across ISAF/USFOR-A/NTM-A, interagency and international partners, and the Afghan government, on a series of broad functional areas where corruption and organised crime permeation were identified as posing the greatest threat to the viability of the Afghan state in critical areas of law-enforcement activities, i.e., the security ministries and the ANSF, the justice sector, custom and trade, counter-narcotics and local governance.

Against this backdrop, the first and foremost critical area was thus related to the corruption and crime permeation *vs.* accountability and responsiveness of Afghanistan security sector (SSR). Among all determining fields for the future of Afghanistan indeed, the problem of corruption came to be perceived as a particular dangerous within security ministries and the ANSF, as it threatened the combat effectiveness, cohesion, and popular legitimacy of the supported Afghan National Army (ANA) and police forces (ANP).[584] As part of counter-insurgency planning at first, then as the cornerstone of the "Transition" strategy agreed upon by Kabul and NATO allies, ISAF, especially through the efforts of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A), has massively supported the development of professional Afghan security forces purportedly designed to be managed by transparent and accountable security ministries. In the early 2010s, the build-up and stabilisation (quality, cohesiveness) of those local forces were defined as critical to any success in handing over responsibilities to the Afghans for establishing their own security. The need to balance, under the adverse conditions of war, Afghan SSR with the demands of fighting an on-going insurgency has revealed especially critical, and so have also been the pervasiveness of corruption and the influence of criminal patronage networks on the ANSF.

We saw how, for organised crime groups, the penetration by means of corruption of the security forces is a key strategy for conducting illegal activities with impunity. And, there is indeed in Afghanistan evidence of close linkages between members of the security forces and organised crime. Reported graft in the ANSF includes predatory behaviours against soldiers and the people, as well as selling assets provided by the government such as fuel, food, ammunition, and equipment. To large extent, corruption has been a natural outgrowth of the billions of assistance dollars that flowed into an underdeveloped system. The UN has on numerous occasions drawn attention to this. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon argued in relation to Afghanistan that "[…] *weak and corrupt law enforcement capacity* […] *continued to provide organised criminal groups with an avenue for the unchallenged use of the territory as a transit point for international drug trafficking. Allegedly, this happens with the support of members of the defence and security forces, as well as members of the political elite. This has led to the unabated spread of heroin trafficking.*"[585] In Afghanistan, members of the elite are not only suspected of involvement in the drug trade but also of employing the services of private security contractors/armed groups/private militias for that purpose.[586] The fact that the police forces reportedly are also implicated in the narcotics trade raises questions about the sustainability of police reform and capacity building.

Ways Afghan *national* security forces were built up has *not* ended ties to local/regional powerbrokers. In today's Afghan context, promotion, force allocation, and loyalty in office have kept strong patrimonialistic features. Although problems with leadership, staff turn-over, patronage, and corruption within the ANA are serious and substantial indeed, as they could further affect its future loyalties, the police effort, however, is widely regarded far less successful than the state of ANA's development.[587] Criticisms formulated towards the ANA are generally levelled against the ANP development effort, but they are even stronger with regards for the latter.

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[584] U.S. DoD Report (December 2012), *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 56-7.

[585] S/2012/462, 20 June 2012, para 69, p. 17

[586] KATZMAN (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 92

[587] U.S. DoD Report (December 2012), *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 56-7

Outcome is mixed at best. Among key aspects are attrition rates far higher than that those (already substantial) of the ANA, involvement in local factional or ethnic disputes because the ANP (contrary to the ANA) works in the communities its personnel come from, and widespread use of drugs.[588] Outside assessments published in the past few years have been particularly for disparaging police units, especially pointing at major problems with leadership, corruption, and rogue behaviours to the point where most Afghan citizens mistrust and fear the ANP.[589] The border police, in particular, even though an essential component to securing the country and countering illicit trafficking, often came to the fore as being particularly corrupt.[590] In the late 2000s, as ISAF and interagency partners in Kabul were expanding their visibility on the flows of money, narcotics, weapons, etc. across Afghanistan's criminal networks, and while the significant transnational dimension to corruption and organised crime in the country became all the more clear, these issues eventually came to be considered a central concern to international partners, which committed to work together with senior Afghan officials to act more effectively against the criminal networks operating at the country's borders, airports, customs depots etc. In this connection, the long delayed establishment of *Shafafiyat* was to be a key component of that effort towards an upgraded dialogue on matters of corruption and organised crime among relevant stakeholders.

In the critical area of SSR, *Shafafiyat* task force within ISAF, NTM-A, and USFOR-A were deemed to work closely with interagency partners (UNAMA in particular) and senior Afghan officials from the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior to develop detailed anti-corruption recommendations and implementation plans, including the creation of insulated investigative, oversight, and adjudicative bodies within the security ministries so as to ensure that greater internal accountability could be developed within the ANSF while avoiding political interference and intimidation.[591] This proved difficult implementing. Upon its establishment, the civil-military team – staffed in Kabul – has informed the work of international mentors within key Afghan ministries in the areas of transparency and accountability, while attempting to coordinate with the Afghan government's anti-corruption bodies to share information and offer assistance. In addition, ISAF also worked to identify areas in which security assistance was diverted within the ANSF for criminal ends to the net disbenefit of the coalition's mission. Yet, diversion by organised crime of security assistance provided to the ANSF appeared to be only part of a bigger problem of cross-cutting co-optation patterns by organised crime with the implications of which ISAF has been struggling for years. Questions that arose about the impact of the procurement and contracting procedures of ISAF itself (and the U.S. Army alike) on criminal networks highlight yet another areas where decisions by the mission can inadvertently (and did indeed) benefit criminal actors. In view of the extent of problems related to the co-optation and infiltration opportunities created by operations for criminal networks, notably with well-publicised cases of assets provided by the U.S./NATO/ISAF (such as fuel, food, ammunition and equipment) being sold on the black market and eventually ending up in insurgents' hands,[592] *Shafafiyat* and other such related structures established within ISAF and USFOR-A (Task Force 2010, Task Force Spotlight, CJ IATF-Nexus etc.) were put in charge of coordinating, expanding, and applying greater over-sight over the management of U.S. and ISAF contracting, acquisition, and procurement processes.

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[588] RUTTIG (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 157

[589] *Ibid.*, p. 161

[590] CORDESMAN (2012), "How Does this War End?", *op. cit.*, p. 27

[591] RATHMELL, Andrew, "Reframing Security Sector Reform for Counterinsurgency – Getting the Politics Right", in: SCHNAUBELT, Christian Schnaubelt (ed.), *Complex Operations: NATO at War and on the Margins of War*, NATO Defense College Report Forum Paper 14.

[592] CORDESMAN (2012), "How Does this War End?", *op. cit.*, p. 30

Thus, once acknowledged, yet arguably on the late, that the practices and processes (i.e. the governance) of international spending had thus far negatively impacted the mission objectives, procurement and contracting considerations were increasingly integrated into planning and operations at all levels as checks and balances levers, with the overall objective of contributing to mainstreaming counter-crime/corruption efforts into operations, better deny criminal patronage networks and insurgent access to security assistance funds and materiel, and avoid reinforcing criminal and exclusionary political economies. Importantly enough, through contracting guidance and a variety of additional efforts undergone to refine and develop comprehensive vendor-vetting and contract oversight procedures, ISAF commanders were made more aware of the impact contracting can have on their mission objectives.[593] Within certain caveats, contracting data-bases were set in theater in order to facilitate a common operating picture, implement a more rigorous vendor-vetting process, and to help to implement the so-called "Afghan First Initiative"[594] as an effort to ensure that ISAF and international contracting funds promote a more diverse, sustainable growth in the Afghan private sector (e.g. by supporting the development of Afghan companies to manufacture goods that would otherwise be imported.) Additional contracting reforms also included the disaggregation of large contracts to encourage more bidders and to deter the emergence of monopolies; the wider advertising of contracts so as to improve Afghan vendors' awareness of and access to the bidding process; the identification of intended sub-contractors in the course of bidding etc.[595] Whether they represented significant and effective inputs into ISAF decision-making processes relevant to anti-corruption/anti-crime efforts meant to strengthen the Afghan state, these initiatives however remained primarily reactive, and were arguably late to come  In many respects, they did indeed contribute to improve the tenor of the dialogue on matters of corruption and organized crime among ISAF, the international community by large, and the Afghan government, but from promoting greater unity of voice on those matters to enacting opportunity structures for effective collaboration and coordinated action are more than fifty shades of grey. These policy initiatives represented only a small part of a far more gloomy picture.

In Afghanistan, the intervening international community's approach to dealing with economic spoilers has been primarily reactive. Difficult, indeed, to integrate into stabilisation or state building processes those actors solely motivated by criminal gains, which disrupt peace and state-building processes out of criminal-economic interests. Then, particular challenges occur for the mission when economic spoilers are part of the government on whose consent the operations are based, knowing the short-term destabilising effect actively taking on them could have, even as the same powerbrokers are useful in "hunting down" Taliban and *al Qaeda* remnants and keeping a modicum of stability in remote areas. But in the long term, the consolidation of the drug trade and related organised crime that can be seen among other in the increased geographic spread of opium cultivation across the country since 9/11 will have profoundly negative consequences. Afghanistan's powerful, and by now consolidated, drug "cartels" have a vested interest in keeping the country from developing full stability, a fully grown licit economy and full integration into the world economy since that would automatically make the country less hospitable to the drug trade. As former Afghan Minister of Interior Ali Jalali once noted, accommodating the drug trade in the

[593] See for example *Commander of the Joint Chief of Staff Address to the Troops at ISAF HQ Afghanistan*, accessed at http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/transcripts/commander-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-address-to-the-troops-at-isaf-hq-kabul-afghanistan.html

[594] See review by the Office of the special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), Washington, DC, *Afghan First Initiative Has Placed Work with Afghan Companies, but Is Affected by Inconsistent Contract Solicitation and Vetting, and Employment Data Is Limited*, SIGAR Audit-12-6, January 2012; accessed at https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/2012-01-31audit-12-06.pdf

[595] ISAF HQ, Kabul, CJIATF-*Shafafiyat*, *SIGAR Information Paper* (UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO)

name of stability would amount to creating a "*pax narcotica*."[596] By force of the puzzles and pit-falls of in-conflict capacity-building in Afghanistan, and too reactive, too little, too late initiatives for mainstreaming counter-narcotics/crime/corruption into operations planning, what was once a crime-terror nexus turned, to a large extent, into a broader criminal-political nexus where linkages between organised crime opportunities and stabilisation operations have been commensurate with the benefits that the former derived from that endeavour going forward.

In view of the unprecedented, above 40 per cent rise in both poppy-cultivated areas and harvested quantities observed in 2013, which has not been seen since 2005 (and simply is unseen in terms of cultivated areas),[597] it might not take much vision to calculate what would happen to narcotics, criminal patronage networks, and corruption as the Afghan economy was to be expectedly driven towards recession as part of the "transition" *cum* disengagement process. Over the past few years, the rate of growth in Afghanistan had become close to unsustainable. The large demand for goods and services on the part of international actors, and substantial expenditures on foreign assistance, have created an environment in which corruption and graft have flourished.

## 4. Implications of the Afghan Counter-Crime/Corruption Experience for Future Operations: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

In anticipation of future missions of comparable complexity, it is essential to ensure that the lessons emerging from the counter-corruption/threat finance and organised crime in Afghanistan are integrated into NATO forces' training, doctrine, and leadership development. Although future efforts will demand close civil-military coordination and unity of effort, the armed forces of NATO member countries and partners must be prepared to anticipate and exercise initiative in addressing the problems of corruption and organised crime in counterinsurgency and stabilisation operations environments. The lessons and insights outlined in this section reflect the expectation that NATO forces and their interagency partners will, in the years ahead, engage in operations in which corruption and organised crime, the nexus of terrorism and organised crime groups and the "political-criminal nexus" at large, will serve as drivers of conflict, as well as impediments to sustainable security, host nation security force development, political progress, and human development. These lessons are likewise presented with the understanding that the U.S., ISAF donors and contributing nations have at times inadvertently contributed to and compounded, the problems faced in Afghanistan today, notably with respect to corruption, militarisation of society, organised crime permeation, state capture and dependency, and of which the still roaring Taliban-led insurgency must be seen more as a symptom than the cause of a set of deep crises in society that underlies the current conflict situation in Afghanistan – flaws and missteps that those of stakeholders involved as part of the eventually intervening "international community" cannot afford to make in future armed conflicts.

✓ **Lesson 1: Anticipate and respond swiftly to corruption and organised crime**

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[596] JALALI, Ali, "Afghanistan Beyond Bonn", address to the W.P. Carey Forum, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, 7 December 2009; accessed at www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/forum /WPC_2009_1207.htm (28 March 16)

[597] See http://www.unodc.org/afghanistan/en/october/2013/opium-production-in-afghanistan-shows-increase. html. Full details can be found in UNDOC, *Afghanistan Survey 2013*, "Summary Findings", October 2013; see also, International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 236, *Afghanistan: The Long, Hard Road to the 2014 Transition*, 8 October 2012, p. 16.

[597] S/2012/462, 20 June 2012, para 69, p. 16

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In in-conflict/insecure states with underdeveloped institutions and weak rule of law, a massive injection of international resources disbursed with limited oversight is likely to be accompanied by a surge in corruption and organised crime. International forces and their inter-agency counterparts prosecuting stabilisation and state-building operations must anticipate this development and be prepared to put in place, in the earliest stages of the mission, mechanisms by which to mitigate and monitor the problem (by tracking illicit financial flows, for example, and implementing vendor-vetting measures), while at the same time articulating expectations for transparency and accountability among officials in the supported government. Timing, in all these efforts, is critical. It is vital to launch counter-corruption initiatives before criminal networks and patterns of corruption become entrenched, before the population has become disillusioned with its government and international forces, and before the perception has arisen within the host government that impunity for politically connected criminals will be tolerated. The international community will also maximize its influence if it acts before its will to impose costs for corruption – whether through conditionality of aid or international law enforcement action – has been called into question.

## ✓ Lesson 2: Acknowledge the centrality of politics

It is now all too routinely recognised that international forces and their civilian partners engaged in stabilisation operations must ground all of their efforts in a thorough understanding of the history, culture(s) and politics of the state in which they are engaged. These should not only be position statement, but concrete measures and action plans. And yet, it is seldom done as such. War – whether in the form of a counterinsurgency campaign or post-conflict stability operations – is a fundamentally political endeavour. Corruption in in-/post-conflict states, likewise, is fundamentally a political problem, closely related to the balances of power among national elites. It is for this reason that efforts to reduce corruption and criminal permeation must be grounded in an understanding of local politics, and combined with efforts to convince local leaders that it is in their interest to reduce the threat of corruption and organised crime. Effectively responding to that threat, however, appears to be extremely difficult, as it nearly always requires taking political, economic, and social power away from those who benefit from the *status quo* established through external support and co-operation.[598] With this in mind, international forces must therefore work at understanding at best the key leaders with whom they engage and partners in the context of their political, social, and cultural networks. A precondition for devising specific measures to counter corruption and organised crime, indeed, is the detailed knowledge of the streams and networks as well as those power structures or clientele networks that underpin criminal activities. The intelligence community obviously has an important role to play in this regard, although additional capacities for information gathering and analysis may be required to ensure a proper focus not only on the composition of political networks, but on the historic affiliations, dynamic relationships, and balances of power within them – as well as an understanding of their respective roles in the context of a broader national political settlement. This holds also true in the context of UN peace operations.[599] Beyond the fact they tend to be displaced from their historical contexts, a major problem with such operations, as well as other more complex operations set to support externally imposed state-building projects (as in Afghanistan), is the previously commented diffi-

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[598] UNDP, "Fighting Corruption in Post-Conflict and Recovery Situations", June 2010; Stable URL http://www.pogar.org/publications/finances/anticor/fighting-corruption-in-post-conflict-2010e.pdf

[599] In the context of UN operations, "intelligence" has long been a sensitive term. However, this is beginning to change. Previously, missions have at time tried to compensate for the lack of intelligence capacities. Today there is increasing recognition that in modern peace operations environments, intelligence becomes more and more indispensable and missions are starting to acquire requisite capacities. In Mali, MINUSMA has built up an "intelligence fusion cell", while MONUSCO in DRC saw the first ever use of an unmanned, unarmed aerial vehicle (UUAV) for information gathering purposes in December 2013.

culty of their agents to understand the complexities of the local context in which they operate and to acquire the proper skill sets to be able to navigate local settings.[600] Out of the fact that "foreign interveners" (or "global actors") often fail to understand what really constitutes the indigenous social and political order in their designated areas of operations, risk is great of excessively relying on "local champions" in advancing on the exclusive path of an exogenous rational-legal approach to reform, especially in the counter-corruption/crime action field.[601] Strategic resistances to change encountered in Afghanistan are good example of this. Here, it is critically important to be aware that host-nation officials' interests might not always align fully with those of international actors. In some cases, host-nation political actors can be motivated by narrow agendas driven by their historical, ethnic, and factional affiliations – as well as a desire to maximise their political and financial positions prior to international forces' ultimate departure – rather than a shared commitment to satisfy mutual goals. It is clear, therefore, that counter-corruption/counter-crime efforts stand to have the greatest effect when implemented in support of a carefully coordinated political strategy on the part of international forces and their civilian counterparts, designed to marshal military, diplomatic, and economic tools and resources in pursuit of a thorough and clearly articulated set of political objectives.

✓ **Lesson 3: Prevent the criminal capture of institutions within the supported government**

Attention to the politics of the supported government and early implementation of joint anti-corruption measures are particularly critical for preventing the further criminalisation of political groups, including within the wider structures of the state, i.e. the emergence/recombination of a political-criminal "nexus" and the development of mutually beneficial relationships of protection and profit between corrupt government officials and criminal networks and/or paramilitary groups.[602] If left unchecked, these dynamics have the potential to lead to the criminal capture of critical state functions, whereby the supported government's institutions become directed towards the interests of a narrow political clique and their criminal associates, rather than advancing and protecting the broader national interest and that of local populations. In post-conflict states whose governments are the recipients of large sums of international assistance, there is an enormous incentive for criminal networks to infiltrate and co-opt fragile institutions newly flush with resources. The Afghan experience has demonstrated that international technical assistance and professionalisation training are necessary but not sufficient for girding institutions against criminal infiltration and subversion. Rather than focusing narrowly on capacity building, those providing international assistance must become attuned to patterns of criminal activity and work with key leaders in the supported government to develop coherent, broadly acceptable strategies to disrupt criminal networks and sever relations between political patrons and their criminal clients.

✓ **Lesson 4:  Understand the impact of international spending**

The allotment of substantial international resources – whether in the form of development and security assistance or contracts – without sufficient oversight into a contested or post-conflict state with an underdeveloped economy has the potential to empower significantly some actors while dramatically marginalising others, thus generating unintended political, social, and security

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[600] YAQUB (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 34.

[601] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *The State's Legitimacy in Fragile Situations: Unpacking Complexity*, Conflict and Fragility Series, OECD, Paris, 2010, p. 54

[602] GODSON, Roy, *Menace to Society: Political-Criminal Collaboration around the World*, National Strategy Information Center, 2003. See also, SHAW, Mark, "Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organised Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan", in *BUDDENBERG,* Doris, and BYRD, William A. (eds.), *Afghanistan's Drug Industry: Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy*, UNODC & World Bank, 2006; and ANDREAS, Peter, "The Political Economy of War and Peace in Bosnia", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Spring 2004).

consequences. Development, procurement, and acquisition initiatives thus, as ISAF's COIN Contracting Guidance suggests,[603] represent operational concerns that must be integrated and aligned with a comprehensive national or coalition political strategy. It will be imperative in future operations to implement measures to ensure rigorous vendor-vetting and sustained post-award oversight for large logistics and development contracts – and to pursue full integration across the civilian and military agencies involved, so as to achieve a common contracting operating picture.[604] In Afghanistan, it has further been observed that failure to adequately judge local populations' development needs or accurately assess communities' capacity to absorb international aid has generated extreme waste and created opportunities for graft, corruption, and patronage, while preventing the emergence of local entrepreneurs.[605] Under occurring aid practices, over half of the aid delivered to Afghanistan required procurement from donor countries; and we mentioned that close to 40 per cent of that aid aimed at serving the needs of ordinary Afghans actually flew back home, meanwhile thoroughly feeding embezzlement criminal networks on the way. Whilst effective and sustainable capacity building requires the use of local contractors and material resources as extensively as possible, greater transparency and oversight over aid flows is essential. Along with implementing mutual accountability frameworks capable of holding both the supported government and donors accountable for their respective performance, models of development focused instead on host nations' nascent small enterprises and business sectors stand to serve as a check against large scale corruption, while setting the conditions for inclusive, responsive governance of a sort that deters systemic abuse of power.[606]

✓ **Lesson 5: Promote transparency and accountability in security forces development**

With the consolidated view that future counterinsurgency and stability operations will be coupled with security force development missions, international forces can anticipate having significant access, agency, and leverage within the supported government's security sector. Alongside the many challenges it carries along, this access also presents a critical opportunity to integrate *from the very beginning* counter-corruption efforts within training and professionalisation initiatives. Whilst the development of effective, professional, and accountable security forces is essential, of course, for the transfer of security responsibilities to the host nation – a pre-requisite for successful stabilisation and security assistance missions – in many developing countries emerging from conflict, however, control of the security ministries and their forces is strongly sought after among elites and their networks as the political settlement develops.[607] As a result, security forces can become subject to factionalism, politicisation, and corruption. International forces assigned to develop the supported government's security sector must therefore be prepared

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[603] NATO/ISAF Unclassified Releasable to GIRoA, *COMISAF's Counterinsurgency (COIN) Contracting Guidance*, ISAF Headquarters, Kabul, Afghanistan, 8 September 2010, accessed at http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/stories/File/COMISAF-Guidance/100908-NUI-COMISAF's%20COIN%20GUIDANCE(1).pdf

[604] *Ibid.*

[605] MILLS, Greg, and McLAY, Ewen, "The Path to Peace in Afghanistan", *Orbis*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Fall 2011), and the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, "Evaluating U.S. Foreign Assistance to Afghanistan", released on 8 June 2011; available at http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/SPRT%20112-21.pdf

[606] HUBBARD, Glenn, DUGGAN, William, *The Aid Trap* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); and KILCULLEN, David, MILLS, Greg, and OPPENHEIMER, Jonathan, "Quiet Professionals: The Art of Post-Conflict Economic Recovery and Reconstruction", *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 156, No. 4 (August/September 2011).

[607] RATHMELL, Andrew, "Reframing Security Sector Reform for Counterinsurgency – Getting the Politics Right," in SCHNAUBELT, Christian (ed.), *Complex Operations: NATO at War and on the Margins of War*, NATO Defence College Report Forum Paper 14 (July 2010), available at http://www.hks.harvard.edu/cchrp/maro/pdf/NATO_Defense_College_MARO_article_7_10.pdf

to apply the same rigor of analysis to understanding the political and factional affiliations of key leaders within the host nation's security forces as those of other national figures, as discussed above. Experience tends to demonstrate that a security forces development model focused strictly on capacity building and professionalisation may not be sufficient for ensuring a politically neutral force or for adequately integrating former combatants into new national security structures. As the U.S. Army Counter-insurgency Field Manual makes clear, "*the acceptance of values, such as ethnic equality or the rejection of corruption, may be a better measure of training effectiveness in some COIN situations*" than simple "*competence in military tasks*."[608] In the long-term, there is no dichotomy between these objectives, as host-nation security forces rife with corruption, factionalism and permeated by organised crime will suffer significantly reduced ope-rational effectiveness. The Afghan experience demonstrates the extent to which corruption consistently can undermine a unit's leadership, morale, will to fight, readiness, and logistical sustainability. Conversely, to the degree that host-nation security forces are seen by the population to be professional and above ethnic, tribal, and political factionalism, they have the potential to lend additional credibility to the supported government, serving as the locus of an emerging sense of national unity.

✓ **Lesson 6: Integrate law enforcement, military, and information operations**

Corruption, organised crime, and insurgency are interconnected problems that cannot be dealt with in isolation. In fragile states engaged in or emerging from conflict, an effective response to these converging threats requires the integration of law enforcement, military, and information operations at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, so as to employ the full range of tools available to address these problems. The integration of these capabilities is also essential for exploiting the likely "criminalisation" of both the insurgency and elements within supported state structures. Regarding the former, such dynamic was seen, to varying degrees, in Colombia, Mali, Iraq, and Afghanistan – as insurgent groups that had engaged in illicit activities initially as a means of financing their operations be-came increasingly profit-focused, at the expense of their original ideological or political aims. International forces and their civilian partners can capitalise on this dynamic not only through information operations – calling attention to the groups' venality and hypocrisy – but by mobilising and empowering host-nation law enforcement assets through evidence-based operations against insurgents groups' criminal activities.[609] Because host-nation law enforcement and judicial institutions often become targets for insurgent/terrorist attacks, as well as for infiltration and subversion by criminal networks and their affiliates, internationally operating forces and their civilian partners must also help insulate and protect these institutions from intimidation and coercion. This effort requires sustained engagement within the host-nation judicial sector (much more sustained that was done in Afghanistan clearly), to ensure that investigators, prosecutors, and judges are allowed to operate free from bribery, intimidation, and political interference. These are not casual issues. In Afghanistan, ISAF officials have also

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[608] FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, "Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies", Department of the Army, Headquarters, Washington D.C., 13 May 2014 (latest amended version to the December 2006), section 6-13, full text available at http://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf

[609] On those various cases, see, for instance, PETERS, Gretchen, "Crime and Insurgency in the Tribal Areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan", Combating Terrorism Center at West Point Military Academy, United States Military Academy, Westpoint, October 2010; WILLIAMS, Phil, *Criminals, Militias, and Insurgents: Organised Crime in Iraq*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, June 2009; SPENCER, David, *et al.*, *Colombia's Road to Recovery: Security and Governance 1982-2010*, Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University, Washington DC, 17 June 2011; LACHER, Wolfram, *Organised Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Brussels, 13 September 2012; and KÜHNE, Winrich, *West Africa and the Sahel in the Grip of Organised Crime and International Terrorism – What Perspectives for Mali after the Elections?*, Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze (ZIF), Berlin, August 2013; available at http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/veroeffentli chungen/ZIF_Policy_Briefing_Winrich_Kuehne_Aug_2013_ENG.pdf

worked directly with senior, national-level Afghan leaders in an effort to lift protection with criminals, encourage prosecutions, and prevent reinstatement elsewhere in the government of officials removed from corruption, but these efforts have been too limited, also due to a lack of understanding and knowledge of the issue at stake, and came too late. The inclusion of *mujahideen* political leaders in new political institutions devalued these institutions from the outset. In Afghanistan, "security" was put above "justice" – i.e. dealing with war crimes that aforementioned leaders had been responsible for. Consequently, the critical question of transitional justice was ignored, as was the culture of impunity and addressing the plight of victims of war and violence, past and present. How to build peace and security if it is not based on justice? International assistance to Afghanistan has produced far too few tangible results in establishing a functioning independent rule of law-based justice system. The capacity of the Afghan justice sector continues to be limited by a lack of infrastructure and the inability to offer salaries sufficient enough to attract and retain trained legal personnel.[610] By and large, the strengthening and reform of the justice system as well as of potential oversight organs that are themselves corrupted and/or politicised still remain unresolved problems in today's Afghanistan, and here the experienced compartmentalisation of the police development effort, and efforts to improve governance and the rule of law may be fatal. Police forces cannot operate in a vacuum. They need a successful government presence and popular governance to win the support of the people and support for their justice efforts. There must be prompt justice of a kind the people accept and find fair enough to support or tolerate. Incarceration must set acceptable standards and jails must not become training and indoctrination facilities for insurgents, terrorists and criminals. Furthermore, the systems that have been set and used in Afghanistan for reporting on progress in the country's law and order enforcement sector were almost solely oriented towards force generation and support of counter-insurgency.[611] They were not tied to the weak, ineffective and corrupt patterns in governance and the justice system in far too many of Afghanistan's 403 districts. This, however, could still be corrected in the prospect of a development-centric sustained post-ISAF effort to assist the Afghan authorities in consolidating the country's law and order enforcement sector.

✓ **Lesson 7: Identify and act against the transnational dimension of the problem**

As the Obama administration's Strategy to Combat Transnational Organised Crime made it clear, and as also did the European Union's Action plan on the Stockholm Programme for the prevention of and the fight against organised crime – though in a (much) less explicit and comprehensive manner (and herein certainly lays an area for improvement) – the field effects of the acuteness of the problem of organised crime within weak and developing states are tremendous for international security.[612] It is a fact that most of those effects are transnational in nature, as are most of organised criminal activities indeed. In countering them, most operations have the distinct disadvantage in that their mandate is usually tied to one national territory, whereas organised crime and terrorist/insurgent groups generally operate transnationally. Moreover, nationally focused strategies can result in a balloon-effect with activities simply shifting to neighboring states.

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[610] CORDESMAN, Anthony, "Transition in the Afghanistan-Pakistan War and the Uncertain Role of the Great Powers", in Charles King Mallory IV & Joachim Krause (eds.), *Sustainable Strategies for Afghanistan and the Region After 2014*, Aspen European Strategy Forum, The Aspen Institute, Berlin, January 2012, p. 104

[611] Quarterly reporting by the (U.S) Defence Department is a perfect illustration of this.

[612] The White House, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security*, Washington D.C., July 2011. On the side of the European Union, see notably, *The prevention and control of organised crime: a European Union strategy for the beginning of the new millennium*, which served as a base for the Action plan on the Stockholm Programme for the prevention of and the fight against organised crime, and the European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2011 on organised crime in the European Union (2010/2309/ INI); available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=14118308 77574&uri=CELEX:52011IP0459

For these reasons, countering efforts should be regionalised as far as possible. If the Afghan experience is a reliable guide, key figures within criminal networks will also rely upon links to the international financial system to launder their criminal proceeds and maintain licit business interests abroad.[613] In these instances, OECD countries have a range of tools at their disposal to operate against the transnational dimension of corruption and organised crime, while furthering counterinsurgency and stabilisation objectives – by tracking illicit finance, initiating targeted coercive financial actions, pursuing sanctions designations, and identifying opportunities for mutual legal assistance requests. Internationally operating armed forces and their civilian partners would benefit in future operations from the creation of a central, unified, interagency strategic planning body with the capacity to manage and coordinate the application of these tools and capabilities against transnational networks.

✓ **Lesson 8: Develop a counter-corruption/counter-crime narrative that resonates with the population**

Given the extent to which corruption and proliferating criminal activity undermine popular confidence in the effectiveness, legitimacy and sovereignty of supported government authorities, international forces and their civilian partners must find means of presenting themselves as an honest broker between the population and the state, thereby avoiding perceived complicity in the host government's corruption, even as international forces continue to provide vital assistance to the supported state's leaders and institutions. It is therefore essential to consistently transmit a message of enduring international commitment at the strategic and tactical levels – commitment not only to ending corruption, but also to ensuring durable security and advancing the interests and aspirations of the population. Without a compelling narrative of commitment, a series of harmful hedging strategies can develop: criminal networks and their patrons will accelerate and expand their illicit activities, driven by a short-term maximisation-of-gains mentality that anticipates the eventual departure of international forces and the easy access to international resources that accompanies them. Afghanistan testifies to this only too blatantly. In wake of the announcement of the "Transition" (*enteqal*) strategy, international political will to engage in the country waned further, while the Afghan conflict started to retreat from the world media's front pages. With declining attention and returning soldiers, resources were due to decline further. Along with shrinking funding and interest, the dominant approach in Western capitals has become one of scaling down expectations to "*Afghan good enough*" governance – meaning tolerating some corruption – to cut costs and disengage while developing a narrative of relative success. This has already resulted in the decline of pressure for reform by international actors, blind eye to predatory governance, and in the resignation vis-à-vis vital gaps in the political system, including the lopsided balance between the three state powers, the lack of implementation of existing law and the creeping penetration of Islamist anti-democratic and anti-reform thinking into state institutions. Altogether, it gave ground for a sense of political disempowerment that today extends far beyond the ranks of the insurgency's sympathizers. Now, it is also difficult to resist the impression that towards the end of ISAF mandate, quasi concomitant to that of the Karzai era, particularly the U.S. has been following an approach of "domestication through corruption saturation"[614] of certain Afghan political actors, hereby hoping that providing them with income – legitimate and illegitimate – would make them cooperate and submit to the rule of law later. If true, such an approach would not only be wrong, but it will lead to the final erosion of the little trust left Afghans might still have in the international community, if any. This is perhaps the real defeat that the West has suffered in Afghanistan, and it will take decades for this scar to disappear.

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[613] MORGAN EDWARDS, Lucy, "State-building in Afghanistan: A Case Showing the Limits", *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 92, No. 880, December 2010, pp. 971-3

[614] RUTTIG (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 161

✓ **Lesson 9: Recognise civil society as a force for anti-corruption advocacy Develop a counter-corruption/counter-crime narrative that resonates with the population**

As has seen in Italy (Sicily), Colombia, Georgia, Mexico, and elsewhere, as also today in Ukraine, civil society groups can play a dramatic role in reversing the influence of organised criminal networks and the institutional corruption they encourage and enable. In Afghanistan too, civil society actors, notably those who have been actively supported throughout international assistance, aim to play an important role in preserving the gains that have been made and in making further progress in their country's reconstruction, through actively engaging with the Afghan government, the international community, and neighbouring countries. Civil society organisations, indeed, can play an important role in bringing Afghanistan's diverse set of ethnic groups together in a process of peace-building and state consolidation. It is incumbent upon them, with the support of international community, to show a commitment to so many Afghans, who need a voice in the post-ISAF era. When properly networked and empowered, social activists, educators, entrepreneurs, elements of the media, religious leaders, and other moral authorities can together foster a critical mass of societal support for upholding the rule of law, while stigmatising corruption, and generating positive social pressure for reform. Afghanistan's international partners, and European donors and aid organisations in particular, can (should) contribute to maintain the space created at peak of the state-building intervention for these groups to mobilise unimpeded, in part by remaining aware that, much like the host-nation's judicial institutions, civil society organisations will increasingly become targets of intimidation and retribution from criminal networks and their political patrons. Support for and engagement with a post-conflict state's civic and social organisations can directly advance fundamental security and stability objectives, to the degree that a healthy, vibrant civil society is the foundation of a stable state whose institutions are responsive and whose leaders are accountable.

✓ **Lesson 10: Employ incentives and disincentives**

Although it must be carefully and strategically applied, internationally operating armed forces and their civilian partners should be aware of the leverages they hold (and equally the field effects of those) to shape events within a host-nation's political space. These leverages are afforded, in large part, by the security assurances provided by military force, as well as by international assistance and spending, which in some cases may be the only reliable source of revenue for the government of a beleaguered post-/in-conflict state. It can prove vital when pursuing counter-corruption efforts, especially when host-nation officials' appetite for reform is minimal, and local leaders will thus need to be persuaded and incentivised into action. Incentives can include, for example, the provision of additional assistance to a given state institution (or a police/ military unit), linked to the execution of a desired host-nation reform or law enforcement action. Targeted coercive financial sanctions or international law enforcement measures represent yet another means of leverage that, again, must be applied only after consideration of the political context. Finally, although it represents a more indirect form of influence, intervening actors can take steps to integrate the host-nation into international regimes and compacts related to corruption, transparency, and accountability, in an effort to encourage compliance with international norms and standards that appeals to host-nation leaders' concerns about the state's international reputation, standing, and sovereignty.

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# Conclusion

Not only are the problems of organised crime, corruption, insurgency, arms proliferation, and the narcotics trade mutually reinforcing and convergent; they are also enduring.

This study presents a qualitative analysis of the anatomy of linkages between entrepreneurs of crime and political violence with specific reference to the Greater Central Eurasian region. A conceptual basis of the links between organised crime (OC) and terrorism and insurgency has been outlined, and systematically used to identify how these phenomena come together in several regional theatres of particular relevance to European security, i.e. that also have a direct impact on how the nexus between organised crime and terrorism is evolving in the EU.

To date, the Afghan intervention comes as a stereotypical experience of facing different variations of OC-terrorism linkages in an environment dominated by political instability, sustained conflict, embedded insurgents, and criminal activity that simunltaneously fuels and feeds cycles of violence. Its real-time outcomes as things stand as those lines are being written tend to demonstrate that even with sustained international and Afghan security and law enforcement efforts over the coming years, that is far from certain indeed, these powerful linkages will remain a fundamental threat to Afghanistan's stability and security, that of the macro-region, and the broader world indeed, long after the international force presence recedes. As most "transition" models tacitly assumed there would be no increase in the negative economic impacts of the insurgency and civil violence following ISAF withdrawal, they largely ignored the impact of the large-scale departure of international forces on Afghanistan's illicit economy, notably that based on narcotics, becoming even more attractive to those with large patronage systems to sustain, and the behaviour of large numbers of armed men who found themselves suddenly unemployed. While it is often believed that fewer funds would contribute to fewer opportunities for corruption and organised crime, and perhaps a sharper focus on government and contractor accountability and performance, this understanding however fails to give due regard to the ability of powerbrokers and corrupt patronage networks to shift to a regional and ethnic effort to exploit residual amounts of aid, and compensate for loss in profits, and further develop the grey and black portions of the economy to their benefit, i.e. by increasing the production of and trafficking in narcotics. Likewise, the influence of narcotics profits in the Afghan political economy may grow as ready access to international resources – and thus the potential for criminal diversion – diminishes. Illicit drugs will remain an important source of income for farmers, especially in the south, and the large amounts of money involved in trafficking will continue to be a major source of funding for traffickers, corrupt government officials, local powerbrokers, and the Taliban and other extremist paramilitary groups – and therefore a prime source of instability in and from Afghanistan.

While NATO, the U.S., and European contributing nations now focus on completing a modicum of success with the far less ambitious follow-up to ISAF, the conflict in Afghanistan is now essentially internal in nature (the Afghan government is engaged in armed conflict against armed opposition/insurgent groups with the diminishing, though hopefully enduring support of a group of nations within the international community), and Afghanistan remains a state where any improvement in terms of security and human development is affected by the violent activities of a broad range of actors drawing on organised crime with a variety of motives behind their involvement: from "mafias", drug "cartels" and criminal groups for which these activities are an end in itself, to the Taliban and other insurgent/armed opposition groups to which they are an opportunistic way of funding a political agenda, to elites for which illicit profits are a critical political resource, to ex-combatants for which crime becomes a way of earning a living in a chaotic environment. Any long-term security commitment to Afghanistan, therefore, if it is to have a chance of bringing some positive effects, must consider in an integrated manner not only the capabilities but also the legal and organisational arrangements necessary to sustain the integration of Afghan

and international law enforcement, counter-corruption, counter-narcotics, and counter-terrorism efforts. As once ISAF participating national security establishments are looking back on the Afghan war to cull lessons in preparation for future operations, the Afghan experience in terms of encountering organised crime and the security implications of the nexus of terrorism, warfare and organised crime for war-fighting and peace-making must be an essential area of focus. Few threats have cut as widely across international forces' lines of effort in Afghanistan as corruption and organised crime. By hollowing-out the critical institutions Afghanistan's sponsors and partners have struggled to build up over years, undermining the legitimacy of the government ISAF sought to support, preventing the mobilisation of the population against the Taliban, and contributing to insurgent narratives, corruption and the criminalisation of state structures have jeopardised the essential of what ISAF allies, and the broader international community have set out to achieve in Afghanistan. ISAF's continually improving understanding of the problem, however, as well as its efforts to engage constructively with Afghan leaders on the issue – while at the same time assembling some innovative tools necessary to address the challenge directly have together laid the foundation for counter-corruption/counter-crime/counter-nexus progress to enhance in the years to come, in Afghanistan, if international and Afghan civilian engagement is to be kept in a substantial form if any, and beyond. Much work lies ahead, clearly, and much still depends on the acknowledgement in policy circles of the hybrid and recombinant political-criminal nexus as a high level threat to international security. In Afghanistan, it certainly depends on the will of senior officials and political elites, and chiefly that of newly of President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah to commit definitively to reforms that, while daunting in the near-term, represent the country's best hope of achieving the promising and peaceful future that its people, after decades of conflict, sorely deserve, *for a better Afghanistan, for a safer world*.

As peace or stabilisation operations are already involved in countering crime in various ways, it only seems logical to seek for enabling them to do so with effective tools that can chip away at favouring modalities of convergence and transnational spill-overs. It could also be a primary way of supporting more effective mandate implementation and greater sustainability of achievements. Principally, measures to counter crime, its political economy, and linkages to political violence can begin from different starting points; they can be aimed at the actors, the activities themselves, or at the overall environment that enables crime. It seems that most activities focus on the former two, combating actors and activities, with repressive or coercive strategies dominating. However, it is at least as important to address overall factors that make a country vulnerable to organised crime and provide opportunity structures or serve as enablers for criminal organisations and violent political groups to converge. In that context, it is critical, for example, to also respond to strategies by criminal groups that seek to create loyalties and support among the population, whether this is through the provision of protection, other basic services or through charity. Tolerance of or even support for criminal activities by the local population can be a powerful enabler for organised crime and the nexus between organised crime and other non-state armed actors. This is particularly the case where, as encountered in Afghanistan, organised crime as a method for various actors or parts of society is common or where it comes with the control of strategic territory. Particularly in the context of internationally supported state-building processes, more, and more contextually sensitive strategies aimed at countering the political economy of organised crime need to be developed and mainstreamed into these processes.

Consideration of the threat posed by organised crime and, by extension, by the nexus between its intrinsic threat and the violent and subversive activities of rogue non-state groups, however, should not start once a mission is on the ground (or long after boots are on the ground as occurred in Afghanistan), but well ahead of its deployment. Mission planning processes as well as pre-mission assessment missions need to include threat assessments focused specifically on organised crime and its potential impact on mandate implementation and staff security. In fact, an operation should then be mandated and equipped to deal with likely scenarios from the outset. This way, time-lags which in the end benefit criminal actors might be avoided. To mainstream

consideration of organised crime and "nexus-like" threats into assessment and planning but also to strengthen mission capacities for analysis and response, operations require sufficient expertise on organised crime that is not automatically present in the contingents of police or troop contributing countries. Ideally, teams of experts should be trained and made available to support mission planning, mission start-up or information gathering throughout a mission's life.

A broad approach to countering enduring threats from the criminal-political "nexus", which includes local and international measures against actors, activities and enablers/opportunity structures, can only be realized through the combination, coordination and linking of various different instruments. Due to the puzzles and pitfalls outlined with regard to the Afghan experience, stabilisation operations (or peace operations alike) can only be effective in countering crime, its politics, and nexus to non-state armed groups, when they are part of a larger strategy. Pro-active analysis by expert panels and field-informed specialists could inform mandate implementation much more closely. Practical cooperation however, should not be limited to analysis and information sharing but could also be advanced in relation to mandated tasks such as border monitoring. The Afghan experience testifies all too blatantly to the extraordinary difficulty to create in a primarily reactive manner a unity of views and actions regarding the nature and content of a stabilisation operation's efforts, and even more a unity of command when it comes to counter diffuse and transversal threats. Not only coordination within ISAF/NATO/U.S. as well as in the international community overall has proved insufficient in Afghanistan, but albeit badly needed for civilian support to stabilisation/securitisation operations, this lack of unified effort among foreign donors/interveners, also sometimes confirmed by the knowledge gap among senior civilian and military leaders about the contingencies of programmes they claimed to control, has posed virtually unsolvable challenges in the Afghanistan mission. Critically, this lack of knowledge of what really constitutes the effective social and political order in their designated areas of operations amplifies the risk of excessively relying on "local champions" in advancing on the exclusive path of capacity-building blueprint implementation, especially in the counter-corruption/crime action field. As their role in "getting things done" and striking deals with "real" (i.e. relevant on the ground) political leaders, becomes essential to foreign interveners understanding the conditions of governance in the host country, criminalised "parallel" state structures are being built up and eventually consolidated within "stabilisation" processes that inadvertently end up co-opting spoilers motivated by a criminal-economic agenda instead. Whether accepting evidences provided here as to the development of such hybrid (state and non-state) criminal and terrorist/insurgent franchises, the pervasiveness of such political-criminal dynamics of "hidden powers" should caution the international community against blueprint solutions treating fragile and conflict-ridden states as cohesive entities that invariably require a heavy dose of state-building, or are best strengthened through the rapid construction of powerful domestic security forces, which, if these aspects do not receive priority attention, will only but strengthen in effect, rather than actually short-circuit the working relationship between criminal or violent actors and political leaders or state officials. If states harbouring ungoverned areas must win back control of their territories, this should not come at the cost of sowing today the seeds of tomorrow's criminalised states and replacing a once crime-rebel nexus by a criminal-political nexus. Then, another dilemma in their dealing with such states thus consists in maintaining foreign assistance programmes and diplomatic relations with governments that are embedded in predatory and criminalising power networks. In cases where these countries have real geo-strategic or economic significance, the quandary for foreign governments, and the EU in particular, lies in extracting strategic co-operation from the government without fostering the influence of clandestine power networks that often control levels of military, political and/or economic power.

Though the end of large stabilisation operations has often been predicted, it has in fact never realised. While NATO is now drawing down by and large its largest mission ever in Afghanistan, new theatres have emerged in places such as Mali, Libya and the Levant (Syria and Iraq), where the conditions and requirements of long-term needs and commitments are still unclear. In

this respect, incorporating fault-lines and policy lessons learned from Afghanistan, assessing risks and the outcomes of programmes and strategy blueprints developed and implemented in the Afghan War, not only is a task for NATO, but also for each individual nation having participated (yet eventually still participating) in the Afghan mission. Within member states, too, there is a need for fresh thinking on organised crime and (hard) security, both because the evolving and ever strengthening nexus between (organised) crime, terrorism and warfare is posing an ever greater threat to the security of regions where there is a strategic interest in stability and also because it has now proven how vividly it threatens homeland security. Along this need comes an urgent call to European civilian and military authorities for better comprehending and assessing the overall factors that provide opportunity structures or serve as enablers for the broad range of actors that draw on organised crime to converge. No longer is the state/non-state dichotomy useful in illuminating those problems, just as the historical divide between organised crime and non-state groups associating the practice of violent activities or armed actions with a political purpose and/or an ideology is becoming increasingly irrelevant. Being capable of understanding and mitigating that hybrid threat requires a truly integrated approach, including collection, analysis, law enforcement, policy, and programming enacted in new multipronged responses based upon a greater level of cooperation between the national and multinational bodies and agencies that respectively have anti-terrorist and organised crime-fighting objectives assigned to them.

Given the significant reshaping of nature of the State-TOC/terrorism/insurgency landscape in many parts of today's world, and the proliferation of criminalised "parallel" states, particularly in Greater Central Eurasia, and the fact that these hybrid relationships develop in peripheral regions of primary (geo)political relevance to European security, any strategy to address linkages between organised crime, terrorism, insurgency and state-related proxies must incorporate the whole range of law enforcement, including security services, military and diplomatic efforts. Significantly, more buy-in and civilian-military and police-military co-operation will also be essential. It is paramount to understand that any effective fight against entrepreneurs of crime and violence within an expanding political-criminal nexus depends on an integrated approach involving all stakeholders at a multilateral level.

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