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Enhancing Security through Collaborative Research

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Announcements

Words of Welcome from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume XIV, Issue 4 (August 2020) of *Perspectives on Terrorism* (ISSN 2334-3745). Our independent online journal is a publication of the *Terrorism Research Initiative* (TRI), Vienna, and the *Institute of Security and Global Affairs* (ISGA) of Leiden University's Campus in The Hague. All past and recent issues are freely available online at URL: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism.

Perspectives on Terrorism (PoT) is indexed by JSTOR, SCOPUS, and GoogleScholar. Now in its fourteenth year, it has more than 9,000 registered subscribers and many more occasional readers and website visitors worldwide. The Articles of its six annual issues are fully peer-reviewed by external referees while its Research and Policy Notes, Special Correspondence, Resources and other content are subject to internal editorial quality control.

The current issue is a **Special Issue**, focusing on the ***Nexus between Terrorism and Transnational Crime***. It is guest-edited by Jorge M. Lasmar and Rashmi Singh who both work in the Department of International Relations at the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais (PUC Minas), Brazil. In their Introduction, they explain the conference origins of the articles of this Special Issue and introduce both topics and authors.

Our ***Resources Section*** includes a bibliography by David Teiner on *Terrorism and Organised Crime in Latin America* which is linked to the topic of this Special Issue. It also includes the usual *Counter-Terrorism Bookshelf* column by our Book Reviews editor, Joshua Sinai (who has just been appointed as Professor of Practice, Counterterrorism Studies, at the Capitol Technology University). He introduces 28 (mostly new) studies which have reached his desk in recent months. Judith Tinnes, our journal's Information Resources Editor, adds a new *bibliography* - her sixth - *on the Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh*). There are also two book reviews by William Allchorn and Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin. They review new publications by Kurt Braddock (*Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization)* and by Jonathan Matusitz (*Global Jihad in Muslim and non-Muslin Contexts*) in this section. This is followed by contributions from two of our Associate Editors: Berto Jongman's regular survey of new web-based resources on terrorism and related subjects and Reinier Bergema's overview of recent and upcoming conferences and workshops on terrorism and counter-terrorism.

Due to the large number of publications we receive every month, we have again expanded our Editorial Board, and welcome here with great pride as its latest member Prof. em. ***David C. Rapoport,*** the founding editor of *Terrorism and Political Violence*. We have recently also appointed a new Assistant Information Resources Editor, David Teiner, from the University of Trier, Germany.

The articles for the current issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* have, as mentioned above, been compiled and edited by Rashmi Singh and Jorge M. Lasmar. They have been assisted by the principal editors of our journal, Alex Schmid and James Forest. The technical online launch of this journal issue at the end of August 2020 has, as usual, been in the hands Associate Editor for IT, Christine Boelema Robertus, with editing and proofreading support from Editorial Assistant Jodi Moore.

Introduction to the Special Issue

by Jorge M. Lasmar and Rashmi Singh

We are delighted to introduce this special issue on the crime-terror nexus which emerged from the TRAC Forum's third annual conference, titled "The Nexus of Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime', which was held at PUC Minas over four days in late September 2019. TRAC, or the Collaborative Research Network on Terrorism, Radicalisation and Organised Crime, was co-founded by the authors of this Introduction in 2016 and is based in the Department of International Relations of the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais (PUC Minas), Brazil. TRAC operates under the umbrella of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), one of the largest research consortia in the field of Terrorism Studies. Our key mission is to function as a bridge between theory, practice and policy formulation by linking researchers working in the area of security, particularly terrorism, radicalisation and organised crime, with practitioners in both public and private sectors. TRAC is comprised of academics and graduate students from universities across Brazil as well as researchers and practitioners from private and public sectors across Latin America. Amongst the many things that we do, we particularly pride ourselves in providing a neutral space to discuss and debate sensitive issues for academic researchers and non-academic professionals across a host of domestic, regional and international agencies.

Our annual conference, the TRAC Forum, has, in the few short years that we have been organizing it, emerged as one of the key conferences in the field of counterterrorism and transnational crime in Latin America. The forum provides an opportunity for practitioners and scholars in the field to establish professional relationships and exchange practical experience. Papers presented at the forum are designed to intertwine theoretical and practical knowledge, thereby offering participants the tools for developing a more critical understanding of the subjects under discussion. On the one hand, this supports decision-makers by providing them with the means to develop more informed responses to key security challenges whilst, on the other hand, also enabling academics to more fully understand the practicalities of intervention. Thus, the annual TRAC Forum seeks to expand and deepen the knowledge base of operators, policymakers, decision-makers as well as academics in the field of domestic, regional and international security. The event usually comprises both closed, by-invitation-only panels as well as open sessions, geared primarily at students. Our closed panels traditionally adhere to the Chatham House rule and are addresses by practitioners who primarily come from Brazilian military, intelligence and police units, although we are also joined by specialists from various other countries in the region and beyond.

The connection(s) and overlap(s) between terrorism and organised crime have increasingly been at the centre of key debates in both academic and policy/practitioner circles. While this convergence is by no means a new or recent phenomenon, contemporary developments have ensured that the threat posed by the terrorism-organised crime nexus is not only more complex but also warrants urgent and adequate responses. To this end, the 2019 TRAC Forum aimed to explore the multifaceted and nuanced connection(s) and overlap(s) between terrorism and organised crime, especially transnational organised crime. The papers presented covered a variety of issues, including, but not limited to: the impact of the terrorism – organised crime convergence on international politics at the international, national and/or sub-national level; the international norms, rules, regulations, decision-making process(es) and laws that impact, and are impacted by, this nexus; in-depth cases studies addressing the terrorism-organised crime convergence, including those shedding light on logistics, organisational structure and/or modus operandi of groups involved; the cyber-crime - cyber-terrorism convergence; social media and the terrorism – transnational organised crime nexus; money laundering and terrorism financing; the terrorism – transnational organised crime nexus and human trafficking/modern-day slavery. Because the terrorism - transnational crime convergence is dynamic and rapidly evolving, our contributors adopted different perspectives and disciplinary approaches in order to explore the many nuances and aspects of this evolution. The articles included in this Special Issue are mostly from our open sessions and/or were submitted as a result of our open call for papers. Unfortunately, the challenges of producing a Special Issue during the pandemic meant that some of our original contributors did not manage to submit their texts in time. Nonetheless, the papers that finally made it to this issue in the form of articles provide an excellent snapshot, not only of the state of the current debate on the topic but also of the rich, nuanced and vigorous

discussions we participated in at the TRAC Forum last year.

The first paper, by *Louise I. Shelley* of George Mason University, was the opening lecture at the 2019 TRAC Forum. It did a brilliant job of setting the stage for what would be four days of intense engagement with the subject. In her article, Prof. Shelley presents to the reader the extraordinary range of nuances inherent in the terror-crime nexus while also clearly illustrating how the ever-evolving convergence between terrorism and organised crime represents a grave challenge for the states and agencies involved in combatting the threat posed by this phenomenon. She begins by arguing that terrorist participation in illicit trade serves goals that extend well beyond mere revenue generation, as much of the literature on the subject tends to argue. Instead, terrorists engage in illicit trade for a variety of motives, ranging from the deliberate destruction of history to demoralising communities and weakening their social cohesion. As Louise Shelley demonstrates, the virulence of this dynamic crime-terror nexus is facilitated by the backbone of corruption and technological advances. These points, when raised by Prof. Shelley in her opening lecture at the forum last year, provided the springboard for a series of fruitful conversations on the topic and in a similar vein, this introductory article serves to provide the broad context for the pieces that follow.

Matthew Levitt develops some of these key ideas regarding the crime-terror nexus in his in-depth case study of Hezbollah's international terrorist operational capabilities. Levitt's article here, based on his keynote address at the 2019 TRAC Forum, intricately weaves together data from open sources to provide a richly detailed picture of the connections between, and the cross-border movements and modus operandi of, Hezbollah's various facilitators, operatives and their handlers. In addition to providing critical insights into Hezbollah's operational interests and reach, this text clearly emphasises the international nature of the group's terrorist and criminal activities. More importantly, in highlighting the ways in which criminal and terrorist processes overlap in the group's modus operandi, Levitt underscores some of the central challenges involved in identifying, tracking and prosecuting terrorist suspects who use organised criminal processes to advance their political ends.

Keeping the focus firmly on the Middle East, *Christian Vianna de Azevedo*'s article on the Syrian IDP camp *al Hawl* argues that, following IS' loss of territory over the last two years, prisons and refugee camps now more than ever occupy a central role in ISIS' strategy for resurgence in the region. Thus, as ISIS continues to wage a well-planned rural insurgency against the governments in Syria and Iraq, prisons and IDP camps like *al Hawl* can potentially provide it with fighters, facilitators, supporters and, perhaps most importantly, with the next generation for its expansive state-building project. As Azevedo demonstrates, *al Hawl* represents a microcosm of ISIS' campaign of garnering funding, indoctrination, propaganda and radicalization. Moreover, it is also an excellent example of how terrorist groups, like ISIS, can make use of organised criminal processes, means and networks - ranging from the falsification of documents to human trafficking - to not only survive adversity in the short-term but also to further their strategic interests in the medium to long-term. Drawing upon data from the author's time in the field, this article provides key insights into how ISIS' use of human trafficking underpins the sustainability of its political project.

Shifting the focus to Latin America in the next article, *Guilherme Damasceno Fonseca* provides an in-depth case study of a major Brazilian criminal group, the PCC, and its use of terrorist violence as part of its broader tactical toolkit. Fonseca begins by arguing that no single analytical framework seems fully adequate to study the PCC. While he himself is fully focussed on the PCC, this logic can most certainly be extended to any number of organised criminal groups around the world which also defy neat categorisation into any particular framework of analysis. Fonseca then applies an expanded 'third generation gangs' model – with its focus on politicisation, sophistication and internationalisation – to understand the PCC's use of terrorist violence. Here, most significantly, he modifies the original model by including the element of ideology in his analysis of PCC's politicisation, clearly supporting the point made by several authors in the field who argue that criminal organisations that use symbolic violence as part of their repertoire are perhaps better categorised as 'terrorist'. However, Fonseca is not arguing that the PCC is a terrorist organisation. Instead, he makes a much more subtle argument, suggesting that it is only in particular periods of its long existence that the PCC has used terrorist-like violence to achieve very specific and limited objectives. Thus, Fonseca's article makes a significant contribution to our empirical understanding of the PCC as well as to the frameworks we can apply to study not only this particular group but also other groups which demonstrate similar kinds of overlaps between the use of (quasi-)terrorist violence and their criminal activities/interests/goals.

In many ways Fonseca's piece provides a seamless transition into the last part of our special issue, which addresses the crime-terror nexus through a much more conceptual lens. Here, *David Teiner* begins with a literature review, debating how best to categorise cartel violence in Mexico. Not only does this provide the reader with an eagle's eye view of the state of the art of the literature on Mexican drug cartels but it also underscores some of the key ongoing debates relating to the crime-terror nexus in Mexico and beyond. Teiner, very ably and succinctly, summarises the discussion that exists about how the extreme violence practiced by drug cartels in Mexico should be categorised – i.e. as narco-terrorism or as criminal insurgency - while also highlighting some of the key limitations and problems associated with such a categorisation. Teiner also uses the Mexican case to illustrate another key question in the crime-terror nexus debate, i.e. to what extent do the overlaps between terrorist violence and criminal activity lead to a shift in the nature of such organisations? In other words, do criminal organisations that use terrorist means remain profit-driven and non-political or do they progressively become politicised? The same can be asked of terrorist groups who are increasingly involved in illicit criminal activities – i.e. how far do their primary motivations remain 'terrorist' and how much do these organisations transform into profit-driven entities?

Finally, *Christian de Azevedo* and *Sara Dudley* conceptualise some of the key underpinnings of the crime-terror nexus before forwarding a model that can counter the 'double nexuses' of organised crime, terrorism and corruption on the one hand and rogue regimes, revisionist states and violent extremist organisations on the other. Azevedo and Dudley posit that a dynamic nexus of military, law enforcement and academia is required to counter these fluid and virulent 'bad actor' nexuses with their multiple layers, overlaps and convergences. Coming from two different countries and professional backgrounds, they draw upon their own experiences of serving together in a tour of duty to argue and illustrate the advantages, challenges and rewards of creating a military-law enforcement-academia network to combat the threat posed by what are essentially interacting, bad actor network in the international system.

The articles in this Special Issue contribute some interesting ideas to ongoing discussions about the nature of the crime-terror nexus. They also underscore some elements of the discussion as it exists thus far. For one, it is clear that the crime-terror nexus is multi-faceted phenomenon that presents a key duality. On the one hand, the criminal use of increasingly terrorist means greatly complicates the task of law enforcement and other agencies involved in fighting organised crime. This is not only due to the increase in kinetic violence employed by organised criminal groups. But as Fonseca's and Teiner's articles demonstrate, it is also because elements usually associated with terrorism such as the construction of narratives and ideology, the use of propaganda, violent communication and psychological warfare, the use of the Internet or even the inclusion of religious references in their rituals are becoming increasingly relevant for organised criminal groups as well. As a consequence, these organisations are becoming progressively more diversified in their behaviour and thus even more difficult to counter. On the other hand, as suggested in Levitt's and Azevedo's articles, as terrorist groups become more involved in organised criminal activities and processes, they are also further empowered. The use of criminal means boosts their activities, increases not only their chances of survival but also their scope of operations and provides them access to means that essentially function as force multipliers. However, although it might seem contradictory at first glance, these processes of convergence also present unique opportunities for intelligence and law enforcement communities as the terrorist's footprint now becomes much more traceable. Furthermore, as terrorism-related legislation continues to, in general, lag behind laws that counter criminal activities in many countries, the terrorist overlap with crime provides agencies with opportunities to prosecute terrorist groups and operators with the help of pre-existing anti-crime legislation. It should be noted, however, that this is a short-term fix and should not be taken to mean that the absence of terrorism-specific legislation is either acceptable or appropriate.

Furthermore, two central concerns from TRAC's research framework are reflected in the current selection of articles. The first is the alignment of theory and practice. The second is the understanding that terrorist actions are influenced by a complex combination of a group's ideology, it's operational environment and the different types of rationalities involved. Hence, the articles in this Special Issue are clearly reflective both of the academia-practitioners nexus as well as the importance of reconciling theory with an empirical investigation of the *processes* involved in the crime-terror nexus at a *micro-level*. This Special Issue focuses on understanding and enquiring, both theoretically and empirically, how the crime-terror nexus can become *institutionalised*

and following on from that, how this institutionalisation of the nexus impacts on civil society. The articles in this Special Issue thus enhance our understanding about the processes of the crime-terror nexus, thereby ultimately helping us to grasp how ongoing changes in this dynamic can impact specific societies. Developing this discussion is crucial because it allows academics, policy makers as well as intelligence and law enforcement practitioners to not only isolate and detail signatures, indicators and observables, but also to detect how these may change over time and space.

Thus, while Levitt's, Fonseca's, Teiner's and Azevedo's articles deal with specific empirical investigations that may be restricted to a particular case study, the collection of articles presented here can be read as successfully developing a broad analysis of the crime-terror nexus. In short, taken together the articles in this Special Issue have much to say about the study of crime-terror nexus, including: (1) identifying both 'hard' and 'soft' aspects of this convergence which enables us to rethink our understanding of the relationship(s) between organized crime, terrorism and civil society; (2) accounting for the regional variations of this process which helps advance our understanding of the crime-terror nexus in general; (3) developing our understanding of this relationship as a reflexive process, which, in turn, bolsters our knowledge about how specific instances of convergence can impact civil, police and military anti- and counter-terrorism responses, and finally; (4) underscoring the importance of accounting for the close relationship between this nexus and the societies in which they are embedded, which helps us understand how these processes of convergence are consolidated within broader social and security structures.

Another important contribution of this Special Issue is that the empirical investigations presented here confirm that different kinds of rationality co-exist within the crime-terror nexus. Although this is not a new claim, it is important that academics and practitioners account for this co-existence. As the crime-terror convergence is a nested phenomenon, it is imperative to understand the specific social context(s) in which it occurs. Empirically assessing the rationality(/-ies) architecture of all the actors involved in this process can greatly contribute to both the research on, and policies and practices adopted against, the crime-terrorism nexus.

Finally, these articles demonstrate that while there exist clear similarities regarding how the relationship between crime and terrorism develops around the world, changes in context can bring about significant transformations in this nexus. It is vital to account for such nuances. Accounting for such variation feeds into the important understanding that each security context, and concomitantly every criminal/terrorist organizations, has a unique operational architecture. In other words, small variations of context can deeply affect how we conceptualise, understand and implement anti- and counter-terrorism policies and responses. Thus, perhaps the most valuable contribution of this Special Issue is the fact that it re-confirms that criminal-terrorism convergences are complex, ever-changing and by no means monolithic.

Last but certainly not the least, we would like to conclude by first extending our immense gratitude to Profs. Alex Schmid and James Forest for their patience, advice and assistance in bringing this Special Issue together. Thanks also to Jodi Moore and Christine Boelema Robertus for all their editorial and IT assistance and hard work. We are also deeply grateful to our many reviewers who took time out of their busy schedules to provide several rounds of critical commentary and feedback on these articles. We would like to extend thanks to all our contributing authors for not only participating in the TRAC Forum last year but also for their enthusiasm and consistent hard work under what were, for many, immensely challenging conditions produced by the home office environment enforced by the pandemic. Our sincere appreciation also extends to the IR Department at PUC Minas for the support that its staff consistently provide to both TRAC and the TRAC Forum. Pulling a Special Issue together is a real team effort and we definitely could not have done it without ours!

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Articles

Illicit Trade and Terrorism

by Louise I. Shelley

Abstract

Terrorist participation in illicit trade is not only about revenue generation. It serves many functions: destruction of history, demoralization of communities, the weakening of social solidarity, and harms individuals' health and well-being. It also pays for the social service functions of terrorist groups. Over time, the role of the drug trade has become less central to the financing of terrorist groups. Diversification of illicit product has been key to their survival. This is part of the rational trade practices of terrorists: engaged now in less policed forms of illicit trade than narcotics where they can make consistent profits with less threat to their supply chains. Terrorist groups are technically adept and have relied recently more heavily on technology and cryptocurrencies to facilitate the operations of their illicit trade in arms and drugs, increase anonymity, and reduce risk. The United Nations has increasingly recognized the key role that illicit trade assumes in the funding and operations of terrorist groups. Curbing illicit trade by terrorists is not just the responsibility of multinational bodies such as the UN, government, or law enforcement bodies – it requires a whole of society approach including business, civil society, journalists, and researchers.

Keywords: terrorism, illicit trade, oil smuggling, trade-based money laundering

Introduction

As this article goes online, there is ongoing illegal digging for antiquities in Iraq and Syria. The financial proceeds of this activity are important, but the cultural damage of this activity cannot be overestimated.[1] Diverse terrorist groups are profiting from the raiding of major and minor sites in the Middle East[2], destroying cultural and religious history that cannot be understood without the objects in situ. But this destruction is intentional[3] and dual-purpose: to generate funds and to destroy a past that is not consistent with the perpetrators' artificial construction of history. It is key to understanding that illicit trade is not just about money and resources, an argument not acknowledged adequately in the literature.

The example of antiquities looting shows that terrorist participation in illicit trade is not only about revenue generation, it serves many functions: destruction of history, demoralization of communities, the weakening of social solidarity, and harming individuals' health and well-being. This has been the case since the relationship between crime and terrorism was first observed and the term 'narco-terrorism' was coined. Terrorist groups made large amounts of money from the drug trade in Latin America, such as the Sendero Luminoso in Peru and the FARC in Colombia, but this has also been observed with other groups in Asia, such as the Taliban. In 2002, the US Drug Enforcement Agency stated that 14 out of 36 groups identified as terrorist organizations by the US government were also involved in the drug trade.[4] Certain Taliban leaders have justified their involvement in the drug trade by arguing that "…circumstances, specifically the 'American occupation', make it permissible, since defeating the greater evil requires embracing the lesser evil of drug money.[5] Yet, over time, the role of the drug trade has become less central to the financing of terrorist groups. Drugs still remain a revenue source as the recent disclosure of a huge shipment of the synthetic drug captagon by ISIS whose market value was estimated at over $1 billion was disclosed in the port of Naples, a port partly controlled by the Camorra crime group. Surveillance of the Camorra and tapped communications allowed the discovery of this hidden shipment by Italian law enforcement in mid-2020.[6]

Terrorists, like transnational criminals, another key group of malicious non-state actors, diversified their illicit products as a key to their survival. For example, the FARC, when they came to the negotiating table, were

making more money from illegal gold mining than they were from the sale of drugs. Often, as this article will discuss, we find terrorist groups engaging in rational trade practices just as do actors in licit trade. They have diverse commodities and complex international financial flows, including in less policed forms of illicit trade than narcotics where they can make consistent profits with less threat to their supply chains.[7] They have become increasingly involved in new technology—raising funds through online sales, using cryptocurrencies. Some groups use cryptocurrencies to facilitate the operations of their illicit trade in arms and drugs, and trade in antiquities which has increased anonymity and reduced risk.[8]

Terrorists focus on many forms of illicit trade with high returns and low risk. The Islamic State's (ISIS) use of oil smuggling illustrates this. The origin of oil is not easily traceable and it can be combined with oil from other sources to mask its origins. ISIS used well-established smuggling routes to move the oil, repurposing routes for illicit trade that had been used since Ottoman times. Apart from oil, terrorists use some of the least policed areas of illicit trade to generate revenues. They engage in illicit trade in used cars, new and used clothing,[9] pharmaceuticals,[10] sale of counterfeits,[11] cattle rustling,[12] and natural resources such as charcoal[13] and coltan[14] as well as trade in cigarettes and gold.[15] More recently, they have been more involved in human smuggling and trafficking, antiquities trade and cybercrime as they are technically adept and capitalize on their strategic advantage.[16]

The UN Resolutions: Innovation and Limits

Since 2014, the United Nations Security Council has recognized that there is a direct link between terrorism and the funding of terrorism. Resolution 2195, and the subsequent resolution 2199 more directly tied to ISIS, articulate many forms of illicit trade that are at the core of funding terrorism. This was an important and innovative change for the UN Security Council. It was the first time that trade in intangible commodities was linked to the destructive force of terrorism and the prolongation of conflict. It represented a coupling of trade and insecurity, a first in the policy making of the United Nations. The United Nations also recognized the centrality of corruption to the facilitation of this trade, a phenomenon that was not recognized by multinational bodies until the late 1990s.[17]

Resolution 2195, passed in December 2014, articulated the following: "Reaffirming the need to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts, expressing concern that terrorists benefit from transnational organized crime in some regions, including from the trafficking of arms, persons, drugs, and artefacts and from the illicit trade in natural resources including gold and other precious metals and stones, minerals, wildlife, charcoal and oil, as well as from kidnapping for ransom and other crimes including extortion and bank robbery.…".[18] The focus on particular forms of illegal activity and illicit trade are combined with the need for "good governance and the need to fight against corruption, money-laundering and illicit financial flows".[19] The centrality of corruption as a facilitating mechanism of terrorism and illicit trade is made very clear in the document but has not been studied sufficiently in the academic literature.

The Resolution 2195 goes beyond drugs and focuses on diverse activities that may have been linked to terrorist funding, such as the trade in charcoal, but were not widely acknowledged. Furthermore, terrorism is linked to the illicit trade in many types of natural resources including oil, metals, stones, mineral, timber and wildlife. The linking of terrorist financing with environmental damage is not surprising as important environmental research links so much of conflict to regions with high levels of biodiversity.[20] This is an important innovation in the fundraising for terrorist groups and also reflects the tendency of transnational crime groups to increasingly focus on environmental crime and natural resources as an important revenue generator.

There are certain obvious omissions in this list. These include the failure to allude to the role of the illicit trade in cigarettes, the trade in counterfeits, and the role of terrorists in illicit online activity not just for recruitment but for revenue generation. All of these have been major financial activities of terrorists. Hamas and Hezbollah have a long history of involvement with the illicit cigarette trade, and more recently ISIS also profited from it. In the mid-2000s, the US Senate held a hearing on the money generated by terrorists from the trade in

counterfeit goods.[21] The Financial Action Task Force issued in 2013 a report on the role of terrorist groups in the counterfeiting of currency.[22] Various terrorist groups have generated money for their activity through computer crimes, including Hamas, Lashkar e-Taiba, and Hizballah and al Qaeda.[23] The Bali bombers continued to generate money online even after their arrest and detention.[24]

There are different reasons for the exclusion of these acts that support terrorism in Resolution 2195. First, the United Nations did not want to be seen as aiding companies in linking terrorism to illicit trade. Therefore, they were focusing on security rather than the financial interests of cigarette companies or those whose intellectual property was being violated by terrorists. In addition, the devastating effects of the spread of terrorism in Africa, with Boko Haram and al-Shabaab, was a driving reason for the adoption of this Resolution. The Foreign Minister of Chad presided over the Security Council's discussion of the proposed Resolution and was especially concerned with the tangible goods that financed terrorism.[25]

Resolution 2199, passed in February 2015, was focused on denying financial resources to ISIS.[26] Its particular focus is on the illicit trade in oil, as well as other crimes that ISIS was committing on territory it controlled. Once again, the role of the trade of a natural resource in the generation of terrorist financing is emphasized. The document also addresses the trade-based money laundering that helps finance a terrorist group. It focuses on the facilitators of illicit trade, such as those involved in transport and illicit financial flows.

More recently, in July 2019, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2482 on the linkages between terrorism and organized crime.[27] The resolution does not significantly expand on the types of crime that are linked to terrorism, except with some attention to the proliferation of different substances and materials linked to WMD. This measure is more concerned with the facilitating mechanisms for illicit trade, such as "the abuse of legitimate commercial enterprise, non-profit organizations, donations, crowdfunding and proceeds of criminal activity".[28] In discussions of the drug trade, there is also analysis of the role of online marketplaces and international shipping that facilitates the movement of goods.

What is Illicit Trade?

UN Security Council Resolution 2195 refers to illicit trade as a funding source of terrorism, but it never clearly articulates what this phenomenon is and how it differs from illegal trade. There is no standard definition of illicit trade. The World Customs Organization (WCO) has been issuing annual reports on illicit trade since 2012; prior to this, it issued separate reports on drugs, intellectual property rights, and tobacco. In 2012, WCO's initial report included six different types of illicit trade; it also included the areas of security (aimed at the analysis of seizures of weapons, ammunition, explosives and chemical precursors), environmental protection, and cultural heritage[29]. In that report, it defined illicit trade as the following:

> Illicit trade involves money, goods or value gained from illegal and otherwise unethical activity. It encompasses a variety of illegal trading activities including human trafficking, environmental crime, illegal trade in natural resources, intellectual property infringements, trade in certain substances that cause health and safety risks, smuggling of excisable goods, trade in illegal drugs and a variety of illicit financial flows.[30]

Clearly, the United Nations drew on this concept from the WCO, but, as noted previously, there were certain important elements of illicit trade addressed by the WCO that are not incorporated into the UN Resolution.

In 2016, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) developed its own definition of illicit trade; it is more encompassing and focused on the consequences of illicit trade, including its impacts on economic stability, social welfare, and public safety – issues that were not addressed by the WCO but are clearly relevant to the consequences of illicit trade of terrorist groups.[31]

Yet the concept of illicit trade was developed before the United Nations ever codified the concept in their resolution. However, this concept was not applied specifically to terrorist groups but more often to the smuggling

across borders in areas with weak border controls, lack of respect for borders established during the colonial period, or severe problems of corruption.[32] A narrowly limited definition of illicit trade was developed more than two decades ago that defined illicit trade as "a commercial activity for the provision of goods and services that violates the laws of the exporting and/or importing country."[33] But illicit trade does not need to cross borders; it can be entirely domestic. Moreover, the costs of illicit trade are not just monetary as the OECD expanded in a subsequent development of the concept that focused on the resulting harm to communities.[34]

Terrorists and Illicit Trade

Both organized crime groups and terrorists engage in illicit trade.[35] This article will focus on terrorist groups identified by the US government.[36] Its subject is not the transnational crime groups that commit acts against politicians such as has occurred recently in Mexico where criminal groups killed 145 politicians in the 2018 elections.[37]

Terrorism and crime were not linked until the early 1980s when the term narco-terrorism was coined by the Peruvian President Fernando Belaúnde Terry. The concept was first identified in the Latin American context but has been used elsewhere.[38] There are important reasons that terrorists have turned to crime as a means of supporting themselves. First, the decline of state-supported terrorism[39] with the collapse of the Soviet Union and its diminished impact on Eastern Europe meant that those engaged in terrorism had to find other means to support themselves and to purchase arms.

Second, many countries with the presence of significant terrorist groups have under-employed youth who are vulnerable to employment by non-state actors - both criminals and terrorists. Islamic groups involved in terrorism have increasingly recruited those with criminal backgrounds, particularly in Europe.[40] This recruitment has often taken place in prisons.[41] The very high connectivity between terrorism and crime has become more evident since Europol began to cross check its databases of criminals and terrorists to determine linkages.

Third, terrorism-associated criminal activity often serves dual uses. It causes social harm and possibly helps traffickers achieve political objectives. Often they fund social service activities. This has been seen most recently with some of the politicized criminal groups in Mexico.[42] This has been a long-standing tradition with Hezbollah and Hamas and occurred also in Syria.[43]

Taliban drug traffickers thought of using drugs as another way of imposing harm, and Peruvian drug traffickers also considered the political outcomes of their role in the drug trade.[44] More recent examples of dual-use crime apply to kidnapping and human trafficking, as a recent UN report refers to human trafficking as a strategic tactic of terrorists, decimating communities and institutionalizing sexual violence and slavery.[45] In Nigeria, the kidnapping of the Chibok girls by Boko Haram provided trafficked labor and sex for the terrorists,[46] and it also demoralized the community from which the girls came. The failure of the Nigerian military to rescue the girls and protect its citizens revealed the weakness of the army. Moreover, the corruption of the government was revealed as the military personnel assigned to combat Boko Haram lacked the protective gear to engage with the terrorists.[47] It revealed the Nigerian state's incapacity to protect its citizens.

The trafficking of Yazidi women by ISIS is another example of the dual-use crime.[48] A handbook was issued by ISIS on the rules for enslaving Yazidi women,[49] who not only provided sexual services to the fighters but also revenue for ISIS as the women were sometimes sold. It also humiliated and decimated Yazidi communities, a religious group that ISIS views as infidels.[50] This illicit trade had very important security implications both for those who were victimized and those behind this significant human rights abuse.[51]

Another example of trafficking as dual-use crime is trade in antiquities. Not only did the removal and selling of antiquities generate funds for ISIS, but it also eliminated or removed objects of the pre-Islamic period in Mesopotamia, a period that is anathema to ISIS.[52]

Terrorists' Management of Illicit Trade

Terrorists manage illicit trade operations in ways that are not dissimilar from transnational criminals with whom they often interact. In some respects, they also mirror the practices of legitimate business: they have diversified to many different products, seek effective supply chains, and manage supply chains in order to reduce risk and enhance the chance of delivery of their trade goods.

Terrorists have not only diversified from the narcotics trade, but they often traffic in some normally licit commodities such as oil, gold, minerals, and pharmaceuticals. But these goods become items of illicit trade because terrorist groups are not authorized to acquire these goods, use trafficked labor to obtain these resources, or transport them across borders with the intent to evade taxation and customs duties. For example, ISIS smuggled oil out of Iraq and also provided petroleum products for participants in the ongoing conflict in Syria.[53] The PKK benefited from oil smuggling from Iraq into neighboring Turkey, where it extracted revenue for goods that crossed territory it controlled.[54] The affiliate of ISIS in North Africa is also involved in the oil trade, especially in Libya.[55] Gold mined in Colombia has also been used as a funding source for the terrorist group FARC.[56] This gold, often obtained through artisanal mining, became one of the largest revenue sources for Colombian terrorist groups. Coltan, an essential element of cell phones and computers, has become an important revenue source for African terrorist groups[57] and is often extracted by child or forced labor in the Congo. In Burkina Faso, terrorists worked with local criminal groups to trade in a medicine used to counter seizures in people with epilepsy.[58]

Illicit goods may be combined and moved together to increase efficiency or may be combined with licit goods to mask the shipment. In order to run their businesses effectively, and exploit existing supply chains to maximum advantage, terrorists rely on particular groups or locales that may be sympathetic to their cause. Diaspora communities are key elements of terrorists' support structures. The Tamil Tigers relied on supporters in Canada.[59] Hamas and Hezbollah rely on support structures in the Tri-Border Area of Latin America and supporters in the United States also facilitate operations (as will be explored later). The presence of West African diaspora communities in Europe are also key to the financial flows of terrorist groups in the region, as illicit financial flows can be hidden within remittances.[60]

Prisons are also key recruitment locales for terrorists. In recent years in Europe, many individuals involved in terrorist groups have spent time in prison, which is key for recruitment, networking and support for operational personnel after their release from confinement.[61] In some cases, incarcerated terrorists are able to engage in illicit trade during confinement by using cell phones and other means of communication.[62]

Traditional organized crime groups widely operating in the movement of illicit trade often work with terrorist groups in the movement of goods through ports and are central to trade-based money laundering that is key to the movement of terrorist funds. Free Trade Zones are also central to the movement of goods by terrorist groups, as there is often only limited inspection of goods to facilitate rapid processing.[63]

Terrorists are deeply involved in illicit trade in conflict zones. It is both a form of revenue generation and a means of providing the communities in which they are operating with the commodities that they need for survival. For example, the illicit trade in gold by the FARC in Colombia might contribute to the provision of goods needed in communities under their control. The commodities that are traded may differ from one conflict region to the other, but terrorists in West Africa, Iraq, Syria, North Africa, and elsewhere are involved in the trade in drugs, arms, natural resources, and other commodities.

Facilitators of Illicit Trade by Terrorist Groups

Terrorists cannot profit from illicit trade unless they have the ability to move their goods, communicate with

their suppliers and purchasers, and launder their money. Lawyers, accountants, and transport specialists are often key facilitators of terrorist involvement in illicit trade. Effective supply chains for terrorists often require them to intersect with the legitimate economy. In some cases, individuals and businesses who are facilitating the movement of these goods are unaware that their clients are terrorists. This may occur because the terrorists are operating through shell companies or front businesses and therefore their true nature is hidden.

The ability to transport goods is absolutely key to the facilitators of illicit trade for terrorists or "rogue" states. The types of transport differ whether the terrorist group/"rogue" state is moving drugs, oil, antiquities, or procuring parts for nuclear facilities. "Increasingly, shipping companies and vessels are used prominently in sanction evasion. For example, Iran and North Korea falsify documents, reflag vessels, and switch off automatic identification systems to avoid being discovered in the process of illicit transfers of goods."[64] In Africa, the movement of the goods may be simpler and not require subterfuge. Weapons for Boko Haram are often "sourced from Sudan and smuggled through neighbouring countries to the Sambisa Forest in Nigeria. The weapons …[are] concealed in trailers and trucks responsible for transporting food items across the region."[65] In Nigeria, the owner of a transport business, "confessed to using the proceeds from his transportation business to finance the group's activities and to using the same vehicles to transport group members and materials to target areas".[66]

Falsifiers of documents are also key to the careful execution of illicit trade in support of terrorist objectives. Sometimes fraudulent documents are provided to terrorists themselves so that they can move and sometimes accompany the goods that are traded to support them.[67] Such elaborate forms of obfuscation are not always needed as terrorist groups can ship excavated coins by mail and can sell counterfeit goods in open-air markets, as was done by one of the terrorists who attacked the editorial offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris.[68] But when individuals are transporting weapons, drugs, or even valuable wildlife parts, there are greater efforts made to cover up the source of the commodity and sometimes the actual country of destination.

Key facilitators of illicit trade also include money movers and launderers. Examples include hawaladars or underground bankers that serve the D-Company, a crime-terror group based in Pakistan.[69] Hawaladars in Turkey have been identified by the US government as transfer points for money going to ISIS sleeper cells in Iraq and Syria.[70] Recently, facilitators that support Hamas-based groups in Gaza were discovered moving money online.[71] The US has identified many financial facilitators of terrorism as of late 2019. The list of designated terrorist supporters included men working for the IRGC in Iran, ISIS in Syria, Hamas, al-Qaida, and ISIS in the Philippines. One of the facilitators of ISIS "…was involved in operating jewellery stores and money exchange/transfer businesses in Istanbul, Urfa, and Gaziantep, Turkey".[72]

The antiquities trade has a very high level of sophisticated facilitators that can be conservators or dealers.[73] Hobby Lobby, a privately owned company, established the Bible Museum in Washington, D.C. To provide items for exhibits in their new museum, they acquired thousands of objects that were sourced from questionable antiquities traders and many of the objects were of questionable provenance, as explained in a federal case against Hobby Lobby that required the repatriation of thousands of objects to the countries of origin. Some of the objects acquired may have recently been acquired from Iraq and Syria – countries which have been extensively looted since the US invasion.[74]

Facilitators may also be the high-end firms like Mossack-Fonseca in Panama whose files, when revealed in a massive newspaper leak, included the presence of known terrorists on their customer lists.[75] They specialized in creating shell companies, a convenient way to launder money. Because many jurisdictions, including the United States, do not require knowledge of who is the beneficial owner of the business, it is possible for terrorists to hide the proceeds of their illicit trade behind shell companies without having to reveal their identities. Unfortunately, there are far too many professionals willing to open accounts without making adequate inquiries on the individuals seeking to open accounts. Researchers on the feasibility of establishing shell companies found that facilitators were less likely to offer their services to individuals who might be terrorists, but some service providers did not ask for sufficient documentation to determine whether their potential clients were terrorists or terrorist financiers.[76] This explains how individuals who were identified on Europol's terrorist

watch list could be included in the lists of clients of Mossack-Fonseca, as revealed by the Panama Papers.

Cash intensive businesses such as restaurants, casinos, and money exchanges are frequently used as vehicles to launder money from illicit trade and other fundraising activity. For example, the owner of the La Shish chain of restaurants in Michigan fled to Lebanon after learning that he was to be indicted for supporting terrorism through his business.[77] This is not the only locale in which restaurants help facilitate money laundering. At a Middle Eastern restaurant in Quito, Ecuador, "Rady Zaiter ran a drug ring that brought in $1 million per shipment of cocaine smuggled to Europe and Asia. An internal police report confirmed that the operation was connected with Hezbollah, which reportedly received upwards of 70 percent of the ring's profits. Zaiter was arrested in Colombia, and six others were arrested in Ecuador for involvement in his network".[78]

Casinos are also potentially important facilitators for criminals, terrorists, and corrupt individuals.[79] A currency exchange business in the Tri-Border Area of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay was named in a US federal indictment as a major facilitator of terrorism. The businessman who ran one of the largest money exchange businesses in the area, known for its crime-terror relationships, was extradited by Paraguay to Miami to face criminal charges.[80]

Import-export firms are often used as a way to facilitate the movement of illicit goods. As Matthew Levitt explained, Lebanese businessmen in Europe built a "web of import-export companies in Western Europe as part of …[Hezbollah's] dormant network, with the purpose of inserting large quantities of explosive and related equipment into target countries".[81] A similar network was identified in procuring equipment for Iran's nuclear program that was shipped between 2010 and 2012. Nine hundred shipments between Germany and Turkey were directed through shell companies that were used to mask illicit trade. The goods shipped were misidentified as valves and plumbing equipment when in reality these were cooling devices for Iran's nuclear program.[82]

Real estate and construction firms are also important in laundering the proceeds of illicit trade linked to terrorism. The U.S. Treasury, in sanctioning Adham Tabaja, stated that he "is a Hizballah member and majority owner of the designated Lebanon-based real estate development and construction firm Al-Inmaa Group for Tourism Works and its subsidiaries. His company has been used by Hizballah as an investment mechanism. He maintains direct ties to senior Hizballah organizational elements, including the terrorist group's operational component, the Islamic Jihad, the unit responsible for carrying out the group's overseas terrorist activities". [83] This problem is much broader than Hezbollah, as real estate is frequently used as a key vehicle for various terrorist groups to launder money generated from illicit trade and other activities.[84]

One of the most common methods of laundering money is Trade-Based Money Laundering (TBML). TBML exploits international trade transactions to transfer value and obscure the origins of illicit proceeds. Terrorists use TBML as a way of moving money and facilitating the movement of illicit funds for other uses through their involvement in illicit trade. Commonly traded items, such as used cars, new and used textiles, electronics and precious metals, are often used in trade- based money laundering.[85] Illustrative of this is a well-known case involving Hezbollah that was reported in 2015. The terrorists "wired funds from Lebanon to the United States to buy used cars, which were then shipped to Benin and sold throughout West Africa. The criminals then combined the profits from the sale of these cars with the proceeds from drug sales in Europe and subsequently sent the funds back to Lebanon via bulk cash smuggling and deposited the funds into the Lebanese financial system."[86]

The FARC was also deeply involved in trade-based money laundering as it became more involved with the illicit gold trade, starting in the early 2000s. It would move the illicitly mined gold or combine it with legally mined gold to disguise its origins[87]. Chechen terrorists also used gold to transfer money to Arabian states where they could deposit it securely.[88]

Banks and financial services firms have also been used to move money for terrorist groups. As alluded to previously, financial institutions in Lebanon and the Lebanese-Canadian bank moved over US$ 300 million for Hezbollah between 2007 and 2011, much of it the proceeds from illicit drug trade.[89] A more recent case also

handled by the federal court of the Southern District of New York resulted in the conviction of Reza Zarrab and Mehmet Attilla for moving tens of billions in oil proceeds from Iran through the Halk Bank in Turkey. The money was moved through the gold trade (as also seen in Colombia and Russia). The laundered money was generated while Iran was under sanctions and served the IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps)[90] which was subsequently designated a terrorist organization by the US government.[91]

Cryptocurrencies have also become a facilitator of terrorist financial activity and of illicit trade, and, as a recent RAND study has suggested,[92] there is potential for growth in this area. Terrorist financing and illicit trade is still in its early stages, but, as researchers have shown, it has advanced significantly in the last five years. The Ibn Taymiyya Media Center (ITMC; the media wing of Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem, a jihadist group based in Gaza), designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, has been the first terrorist group documented to use crowdsourcing through cryptocurrency in order to buy weapons.[93] The 'Equip Us' campaign ran from June of 2016 to June of 2018: "ITMC promoted it on platforms like Twitter, YouTube, and Telegram, posting a Bitcoin address to which donors could send funds. This shows the importance of social media and online activity in raising money for terrorist groups that can be applied to the use of illicit trade. While only a single Bitcoin address was disclosed as part of the campaign" a block chain analysis firm was "able to discover an additional 27 addresses associated with the campaign".[94] In 2019, a much more sophisticated campaign was initiated by the military wing of Hamas, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades (AQB), a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization. Money transfers could be facilitated by hawaladars who would use Bitcoin to transfer money to AQB. Donors were also given information on how to set up private wallets, through which they could make their own private transfers via Bitcoin.[95] This is probably the most sophisticated use of cryptocurrency by an identified terrorist group.

The diverse facilitators of international terrorism provide groups with the resources needed to acquire materials, such as weapons, through illicit trade. They also allow them to launder the proceeds they have generated through illicit trade into the legitimate economy.

How to Address the Linkages of Illicit Trade and Terrorism

Facilitators are key hubs in the networks that organize the illicit trade that supports and equips terrorists. They and the illicit financial flows that they help move must be central to any strategy to disrupt illicit trade supporting terrorism.

Illicit trade often intersects with the legitimate economy. This is seen in the case of transportation, finance, and service professionals. Participants in the licit economy may be able to identify anomalies or even suspicious trade transactions that result in the funding of terrorist activity. The requirement that banks report suspicious activity is key, but there needs to be reporting of anomalies in other sectors of the economy to law enforcement and other institutions to ensure the integrity of legal trade. There also needs to be better reporting on beneficial ownership to understand who lies behind an account or a company. This is separate from the already existing role of "know your customer" which was certainly not applied to many of the bank account holders named in the Panama Papers.

Greater transparency is needed in supply chains, and much more attention needs to be paid to identifying fraudulent or doctored documents that accompany shipments. The use of blockchain—a distributed, decentralized, public ledger—may be key in ensuring that shipments cannot easily be exploited by terrorists involved in trade.

Often criminals are key participants in the supply chains of terrorist traders; more traditional crime groups are nationalistic or dependent on the state for contracts. Therefore, it is not in their interest to cooperate with terrorists. If criminals are informed that they are supporting terrorist networks, they may refrain from doing so out of their own self-interest.

As this article has pointed out, increasingly, illicit trade is going online with its funds moving through cyberspace.

Therefore, electronic finance platforms and social media need to be responsible, not only for limiting hate speech and terrorist recruitment online, but also for ensuring they are not facilitating terrorist involvement in illicit trade. Platforms and social media have expanded their activity to monitor terrorists, but they have not done enough to monitor their platforms for trade facilitation. That is why it is still possible to find sellers of illicit antiquities online who are linked to terrorist groups as was discussed previously in relation to Facebook but also other types of social media.

Corruption facilitates illicit trade for crooked businessmen, organized crime, and terrorist groups. This occurs at borders, at ports, and in prisons. Paying more attention to the role of corruption in facilitating all forms of illicit trade is key. If such corruption is curbed, it will have a positive impact on curbing terrorist involvement in illicit trade.

Curbing illicit trade by terrorists is not just the responsibility of government or law enforcement bodies. It requires a whole-of-society approach, including business, civil society, and researchers. Journalists are also key to understanding the complex networks that support crime, terrorism, and the trade that finances and facilitates their operations. Only when various members of society address the threat of illicit trade that funds terrorists and equips operations, is there a hope of stemming this activity. Society must be nimble, as terrorists will try to find new ways to exploit the new technical capacities that become available. Additionally, governments and society must ensure the resources needed by their citizens are provided, so that they do not turn to terrorists and criminals to have those needs met.

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Breaking Hezbollah's 'Golden Rule': An Inside Look at the Modus Operandi of Hezbollah's Islamic Jihad Organization

By Matthew Levitt

Abstract

In September 2019, the U.S. Department of Justice announced the arrest of Alexei (Ali) Saab, a naturalized American citizen from Lebanon, on charges of marriage fraud and material support to the designated terrorist group Hezbollah. Saab reportedly served as an operative of Hezbollah's external terrorist operations wing, the Islamic Jihad Organization (also known as the External Security Organization or Unit 910). In this role, he carried out surveillance of potential target locations in several American cities to "prepare for potential future attacks against the United States."[1] Saab's case came on the heels of two others in the United States, including the conviction of Ali Kourani for engaging in similar preoperational surveillance for Hezbollah and an apparent plea-bargain for Samer el-Debek who was dispatched on Hezbollah missions abroad. Just a few years earlier, in 2012 and 2015, two Hezbollah operatives had been arrested in Cyprus. One was arrested for carrying out surveillance of Israeli tourists and other targets in Larnaca and Limassol, while the other was stockpiling ammonium nitrate for the production of explosives. Law enforcement officials learned much about Hezbollah's covert operations from these cases, including details being made public for the first time in this article. Taken together, these cases - along with those involving operatives in Thailand and Peru - illustrate Hezbollah's external operations modus operandi, senior handlers, communications techniques, travel patterns, terrorist training, and offer even limited information about the pay scale for Hezbollah operatives. Publicly disclosing such information breaks the "golden rule" of Hezbollah's Unit 910, as expressed to Kourani by his Hezbollah handler: "The less you know about the unit, the better."[2]

Keywords: Hezbollah, terrorism, modus operandi, surveillance, training

Introduction

Hezbollah [also spelled Hizballah] has not carried out a successful international terrorist attack since it blew up a bus of Israeli tourists arriving at the airport in Burgas, Bulgaria, in July 2012—but not for lack of trying. Law enforcement and intelligence authorities have successfully thwarted a long list of Hezbollah plots and operational preparations around the world since then, including cases in Bolivia,[3] Canada,[4] Cyprus, Nigeria, Peru, Thailand, the United Kingdom,[5] and the United States.[6]

In fact, Hezbollah has run at least two distinct operational trend lines in the years since the February 2008 assassination of the group's longtime terrorist mastermind, Imad Mughniyeh, in Damascus. One set of plots relates to Hezbollah's stated desire to avenge Mughniyeh's death, while the other set of missions began slightly later, as part of Iran's shadow war with the West in the lead-up to the 2015 Iran Deal. The latter class of missions began in January 2010, when Iran created a new unit within the Qods Force—the external operations arm of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC)—to carry out attacks against countries perceived as undermining Iran's nuclear program. Complementary to the creation of this unit, Iranian officials tasked Hezbollah with carrying out attacks targeting Israeli soft targets—primarily tourists—in an effort to pressure Israel not to target people and places tied to Iran's nuclear program.[7]

Together, these two incipient events led Hezbollah to spot promising recruits for the group's terrorist operatives units (the Islamic Jihad Organization (ISO), or External Security Organization (ESO), also known as Unit 910) from within its armed militia (effectively a sub-state army), the Islamic Resistance, and from the group's other militant, political, social and youth branches. Once spotted—either for their existing skillsets, demonstrating particular promise, or having foreign passports and/or dual-nationalities—these recruits received training in the dark arts of espionage, countersurveillance, operational security, weapons training, and more.[8]

In hindsight, it is clear that Hezbollah realized that its international terrorist operations capabilities had withered on the vine in the post-9/11 era, a time when the group wanted to avoid being included in the "war on terror" and so cut back on foreign operations while maintaining international logistics, procurement and financing networks. Thus, in the 2008-2010 time period, Hezbollah began to reinvest the time and resources necessary to instill in its new recruits a knowledge of sophisticated tradecraft.

In the years that followed, a string of Hezbollah operatives would be arrested. In some cases, the suspects were ultimately released without charges (and likely deported), such as the 2015 case of a man in his 40s who was caught stockpiling thousands of disposable ice packs containing ammonium nitrate, a key bomb-making component, in the U.K.[9] In others, they would be detained until trial and tried. In Nigeria, some were convicted and others not.[10] In Peru, one was convicted on false-document charges and is being retried on terrorism charges.[11] In Cyprus and the United States, several operatives were charged and convicted for their Hezbollah operational activities. The cases of Samer el-Debek and Ali Saab, both in the Southern District of New York, are still pending trial.[12] Among those plots that law enforcement have intercepted, the cases in the United States and Cyprus provide the most information. Taken together, material made public in these cases opens a window into Hezbollah's external operations modus operandi, its senior handlers, communication techniques, travel patterns, terrorist training, and even pay scale. Publicly disclosing such information breaks the "golden rule" of Hezbollah's Unit 910, as expressed to Kourani by his Hezbollah handler: "The less you know about the unit, the better."[13]

Hezbollah in Cyprus: "It Was Just Collecting Information About the Jews"

Hezbollah has a long history of engaging in operational activity in Cyprus,[14] but a pair of interrelated arrests of Hezbollah operatives there in July 2012 (just two weeks before the successful Hezbollah bus bombing in Burgas, Bulgaria) and May 2015 began to pull back the curtains on Hezbollah's covert operations modus operandi.

Hossam Yaacoub

On July 7, 2012, Cypriot police arrested a 24-year-old Swedish-Lebanese dual citizen, Hossam Yaacoub, on suspicion of being a Hezbollah operative engaged in preoperational surveillance of Israeli tourists arriving in Cyprus, not long after he returned to his Limassol hotel room after a surveillance mission at the Larnaca airport.[15]

When questioned by police, Yaacoub initially denied ties to terrorist activity, and then spun a tall tale about his recruitment and mission over the course of a series of depositions.[16] Ultimately, Yaacoub conceded he was a paid and "active member of Hezbollah" sent to Cyprus to conduct surveillance.[17] Just four hours after insisting to police he was in Cyprus on business, Yaacoub admitted, "I did not tell the whole truth."[18] In his original, fabricated story, Yaacoub claimed to have been randomly approached and recruited by someone named Rami, who he assumed was associated with Hezbollah, despite the fact that, according to Yaacoub, this affiliation was never explicitly stated.[19] Yaacoub claimed that "Rami" tasked him with collecting information on Israeli flights arriving at Larnaca airport, gave him basic information on going incognito with a basic disguise (hat and glasses) and avoiding airport surveillance cameras, which was partially true.[20] In a following deposition, Yaacoub confessed that "the story I told you in a previous deposition about a guy called Rami, as you can guess, did not happen."[21]

What did happen, Yaacoub would ultimately explain, is that he was recruited in 2007 by someone going by the name Reda. Reda sent Yaacoub for multiple training sessions, used him as a courier to meet Hezbollah operatives in Europe, and dispatched him to Cyprus several times for operational purposes.[22] After several rounds of training (see below), in 2009, Hezbollah sent Yaacoub on his first trip to Cyprus, via Dubai.[23] Hezbollah paid for Yaacoub's weeklong vacation in Ayai Napa, laying the groundwork for a cover story. Indeed, Yaacoub said that he was specifically sent to Cyprus in 2009 "to create a cover story for people to get to know me, to keep coming with a justifiable purpose and without giving rise to suspicions."[24] Next, Hezbollah dispatched

Yaacoub to Lyon, France, to pick up a bag from one person and deliver it to another.[25] Soon after, he was sent to retrieve a cellphone, two subscriber identification module (SIM) cards, and a third unknown object wrapped in newspapers from someone in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and to bring those back to his Hezbollah handler in Lebanon.[26]

Yaacoub returned to Cyprus at Hezbollah's behest in December 2011 and again in January 2012, where he continued to build his cover story while simultaneously undertaking operational activities as well. For example, he was told to look into renting a warehouse.[27] Yaacoub claimed he did not know the precise reason for this task, but speculated that "perhaps they [Hezbollah] would commit a criminal act or store firearms or explosives."[28] On this conjecture, he was either well-informed or prescient.

Yaacoub was also tasked with carrying out preoperational surveillance of specific targets during his December 2011 Cyprus trip.[29] His handler told Yaacoub to collect detailed information about a parking lot behind the Limassol Old Hospital and near the police and traffic departments. Hezbollah wanted Yaacoub to take pictures and be prepared to draw a schematic of the area during his debriefing in Lebanon. Hezbollah handlers asked Yaacoub to pay attention to security cameras, to take notice if payment was required on entry and if parking attendants held on to the car keys, and to look for security guards. Yaacoub was to locate Internet cafes in Limassol and Nicosia, to mark these on a map, and to purchase three SIM cards for mobile phones from different vendors on different days. Hezbollah also requested Yaacoub identify safe places to meet in public, which he did, selecting a zoo in Limassol and an area outside a castle in Larnaca. Hezbollah told Yaacoub "to spot Israeli restaurants in Limassol, where Jews eat 'kosher,'" but Yaacoub said that an Internet search indicated there were none.[30] Later, in January 2012, Yaacoub was instructed to inspect the Golden Arches hotel in Limassol, collect brochures, and explore the area around the hotel (he did survey the area, but the hotel was undergoing renovation and closed).[31]

While insisting he was unaware of the ultimate purpose of his reconnaissance, Yaacoub admitted being aware that "something weird [was] going on" and speculated it was "probably to bring down a plane, but I don't know, I just make assumptions."[32] Despite his feigned ignorance, Yaacoub understood that his activities were intended to help Hezbollah engage in activities in Cyprus. "I did all these things after receiving clear instructions from Hezbollah, so to have Cyprus as a basis [sic] and be able to serve the organization."[33]

In his final deposition with police, Yaacoub was somewhat more forthcoming, conceding he was carrying out targeting surveillance but insisting this did not constitute terrorist activity. His calculus, while flawed, was revealing of the Hezbollah mindset: "It was just collecting information about the Jews, and that is what my organization is doing everywhere in the world."[34]

In March 2013, a panel of judges on a Cypriot criminal court rejected Yaacoub's defense that he collected information for Hezbollah but had no idea for what purpose. There could be no "innocent explanation" for his actions, the judges ruled.[35] "There is no doubt these are serious crimes which could have potentially endangered Israeli citizens and targets in the republic," they stated.[36] Yaacoub was convicted of participation in a criminal organization, participation and acceptance in committing a crime, and money laundering—Hezbollah's terror wing was only later designated as a terrorist group by the European Union in July 2013—and sentenced to four years in prison.[37] After serving two years and five months of his criminal sentence, Yaacoub was granted early release from prison and escorted to Sweden.[38] He is believed to have subsequently returned to Lebanon, but his release was not the end of the Cyprus saga.

Even as the EU debated designating Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, ultimately settling on banning only the group's terrorist and military wings, the group's Cyprus operation continued unabated.[39] According to Cypriot police, once Hossam Yaacoub was arrested, Hezbollah decided to move the ammonium nitrate ice packs it was stockpiling in Cyprus.[40] Subsequent investigation would reveal that parallel to Yaacoub's surveillance missions in Cyprus, a Hezbollah operative named Talal Khalil rented a storage space in which ammonium nitrate ice packs were stored from 2010 to 2012.[41] According to Cypriot authorities, in 2010 Hezbollah used a French-Lebanese professor, Jalal Jomaah, who was teaching in Lyon, France, at the time, as a cutout to purchase a single-family home in Larnaca in 2010 for 350,000 Euros (well above the normal asking price for

that neighborhood, according to investigators).[42] Then, after Yaacoub's arrest, the ice packs were transferred to the basement of this house for storage, even as the EU debated designating Hezbollah as a terrorist group. With Yaacoub arrested, and Hezbollah likely on edge, the group decided to pull Khalil out of Cyprus and periodically send in a different operative—Hussein Bassam Abdallah—to visit Cyprus for a few days at a time and check on the ammonium nitrate cache. Khalil and Jomaah remain fugitives, believed to be in Lebanon, wanted on outstanding arrest warrants.[43]

Hussein Bassam Abdallah

According to Cypriot police, Abdallah, a 26-year-old dual Lebanese-Canadian national, traveled to Cyprus about 10 times to check on the explosive material, staying for 10-20 days at a time, over a three year period from 2012 to 2015.[44] Despite the arrest and conviction of Yaacoub, Cypriot authorities were unaware he was part of a larger Hezbollah plot that continued unabated even in the face of the unwanted attention of Yaacoub's trial.[45]

Then, in May 2015, Cypriot police received intelligence indicating that a large quantity of ammonium nitrate, a chemical precursor for production of explosives, was being stored in the basement of a house in Larnaca.[46] Police initiated surveillance of the property, revealing that the house was occupied by Abdallah.[47] Abdallah had rented a seven-seater Nissan Qashqai SUV, but surveillance determined he was making plans to rent a larger minivan and a warehouse.[48] When inquiring about the warehouse, Abdallah made suspicious inquiries, wanting a private storage space that was also sufficiently isolated.[49] Concerned he was preparing to move a large quantity of explosive precursor material from the home, police executed an arrest warrant for Abdallah and a search warrant for his home, where they found a basement stacked with boxes containing 65,573 ice packs, yielding 8.2 tons of ammonium nitrate.[50]

Police also found cash, cellular phones, documents, and a photocopy of a doctored British passport featuring Abdallah's photograph and a fictitious name.[51] As a dual Lebanese-Canadian national, Abdallah traveled on his Canadian passport, but according to prosecutors, he planned to use the photocopied fake passport to rent a vehicle and storage space.[52] Hezbollah paid Abdallah well for his services as guardian of the explosive chemicals. Police seized 9,400 euros when they arrested him, which he conceded was his latest payment from Hezbollah.[53]

Like Yaacoub, Abdallah confidently told police a well-rehearsed cover story over the course of his initial interviews. He readily provided his personal and family background and calmly explained that he came to Cyprus as a tourist with the intention of finding a house to rent for his mother and sister, who he said wanted to move there.[54] Like Yaacoub before him, Abdallah referred to a fictitious man named "Rami," who he claimed generously offered the keys to his own unoccupied house, telling Abdallah that if there were any items in the house he did not need, he could move them into storage.[55] Abdallah claimed he simply planned to move the 447 large cardboard boxes he found in the basement to a storage facility, not thinking the ice packs were in way suspicious, and insisted the police must have made a mistake arresting him.[56]

After 18 days, however, as time passed and investigators collected more evidence (from their own investigative work, through European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation-EUROPOL, and other friendly services), Abdallah began cooperating. He confessed to being a member of Hezbollah's terrorist wing, adding that he underwent military training and was recruited by his Hezbollah handler in Lebanon for the express purpose of traveling to Cyprus every couple of months to "safeguard" the ammonium nitrate cache.[57] His orders for this last trip to Cyprus were to move the explosive material from the safehouse to a warehouse storage facility.[58]

Abdallah admitted that Hezbollah planned to mount attacks in Cyprus targeting Israeli or Jewish interests, but said he had no knowledge of the ultimate targeting or timing of the attack.[59] A singular bombing, however, may not have been the full scope of the operation—the quantity of explosives Hezbollah stockpiled would have facilitated many attacks. According to information Israeli officials say they received from Cyprus, Hezbollah was using Cyprus as a "point of export" from which to funnel explosives elsewhere for a series of attacks in

Europe targeting Israeli and Jewish sites, including synagogues and other Western targets.[60]

It remains unclear who Abdallah's Hezbollah handler was, but testimony in another Hezbollah trial in a U.S. federal court would later reveal that Yaacoub's handler was probably Fadi Kassab (true name believed to be Majed Abdullah).[61] According to Cypriot police, Kassab was also involved in another Hezbollah case in Thailand in 2012 and traveled to Cyprus under the name Alexander Bouji (Yaacoub knew him by a third name, Sami Helo).[62] Cypriot authorities determined that Fadi helped initiate the Cyprus plot by arranging for the importation of 33,200 first aid kits to Cyprus, each containing two ice packs.[63] Kassab then removed the 66,400 ice packs and sold the remaining first-aid kits to a multinational corporation as gifts for its clients.[64]

Abdallah ultimately plead guilty to participating in, and providing support to, a terrorist organization; money laundering; and possessing explosive substances.[65] He was sentenced to six years in prison. Fadi Kassab remains a fugitive, believed to be in Lebanon, wanted on an outstanding arrest warrant.[66]

U.S. Arrests: "I am a member of 910, also known as Islamic Jihad or the Black Ops of Hezbollah"

The June 2017 arrests of Hezbollah terrorist operatives Ali Kourani and Samer el-Debek marked the first time the Department of Justice openly described arrested Hezbollah operatives as members of the group's Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO) terrorist wing. In fact, the operational activities of these operatives so concerned U.S. authorities that the director of the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center warned in October 2017 that the U.S. intelligence community had updated its assessment of the possibility of Hezbollah attacking the U.S. homeland. "It's our assessment that Hezbollah is determined to give itself a potential homeland option as a critical component of its terrorism playbook," former Director Nicholas Rasmussen said.[67] Since then, Kourani has been tried in federal court and convicted on all counts (el-Debek has to stand trial, though it appears he pleaded guilty pursuant to a cooperation agreement with the government).[68] Even more recently, in September 2019, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested another Hezbollah IJO operative, Alexei Saab (Saab has yet to stand trial).

Both Kourani and el-Debek were recruited around January 2008, just a month before the assassination of IJO commander and longtime wanted Hezbollah terrorist Imad Mughniyeh in what was later revealed to be a joint U.S.-Israeli operation.[69] But Hezbollah was engaged in operational planning even before Mughniyeh was killed, as evidenced by the fact that Saab was recruited several years earlier, in 1996, when he first served as a spotter observing and reporting on Israeli and South Lebanon Army movements in south Lebanon but only attended his first Hezbollah training three years later.[70] Kourani's family is well-known in Hezbollah circles—indeed, he would brag to FBI agents that his family was like the "Bin Ladens of Lebanon" and note that one of his brothers was the "face of Hezbollah" in the village of Yatar, Lebanon—so he was able to get into a Hezbollah training program in 2000 as a 16-year-old boy.[71] Only later, in 2008, after becoming a U.S. resident, would he be recruited into the IJO. El-Debek said he was recruited into Hezbollah in late 2007 or early 2008, likely because of the fact that he held a U.S. passport, and he attended his first training session that same year.[72] The timing of recruitment is significant because it demonstrates that Hezbollah had begun to rebuild its international terrorist networks even before Mughniyeh's death. Kourani and el-Debek were then in the right place at the right time. In a eulogy broadcast at Mughniyeh's funeral, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah issued a not-so-veiled threat that attacks abroad would follow, saying, "With this murder, its timing, location and method—Zionists, if you want this kind of open war, let the whole world listen: Let this war be open."[73] As Kourani would later tell the FBI, Hezbollah was "desperate because they were looking to exact revenge for [Mughniyeh's] death."[74]

Ali Kourani

One of the FBI agents who met with Kourani recalled that the then-suspect "sat back in his chair, squared his shoulders and stated, 'I am a member of 910, also known as Islamic Jihad or the Black Ops of Hezbollah. The

unit is Iranian-controlled.'" He explained that although the unit reports directly to Hezbollah's Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah, Iran oversees its operations as well.[75]

Like Yaacoub in Cyprus, Kourani's handler was also Fadi Kassab, whom federal prosecutors argued is actually named Majed Abdullah. Kourani believed "Fadi" was a European-Lebanese dual-national, possibly a British citizen.[76] He described Kassab to the FBI as the person "responsible for IJO operatives in both the United States and Canada." According to Kourani's statements to FBI agents, even as Kassab was running Kourani as an agent in New York, the Lebanon-based handler played hands-on roles in the Hezbollah attack in Bulgaria in 2012.[77] Kourani confirmed for the FBI that Kassab was also Hossam Yaacoub's handler for Hezbollah's Cyprus plot.[78]

At Kassab's instruction, Kourani carried out a variety of pre-operational intelligence-gathering missions in New York City, including conducting surveillance of FBI and U.S. Secret Service offices, as well as a U.S. Army armory. Kourani described himself as a Hezbollah sleeper agent, and carried out other operational activities in New York, such as identifying Israelis in New York who could be targeted by Hezbollah and finding people from whom he could procure arms that Hezbollah could stockpile in the area. Kourani told the FBI he believed his IJO handler tasked him with identifying Israelis currently or formerly affiliated with the Israeli army "to facilitate, among other things, the assassination of IDF personnel in retaliation for the 2008 assassination of Imad Mughniyeh."[79]

Kassab also tasked Kourani with collecting detailed information about New York's JFK and Toronto's Pearson International airports. Prosecutors used Kourani's travel documentation to show that he traveled through JFK 19 times and through Pearson seven times. Based on these surveillance runs, Kourani reported back to Hezbollah details regarding airport security procedures, the uniforms worn by security officials, and locations of cameras, security checkpoints, and other security barriers. At trial, prosecutors concluded that Hezbollah wanted this information because the group was "thinking about how to get terrorists, and weapons, and contraband through airports, from Lebanon into Canada, from Lebanon into the United States."[80]

Hezbollah came up with other ways to take advantage of Kourani's presence in the United States. For example, he was asked to procure surveillance equipment, including drones, night-vision goggles, and high-powered cameras for Hezbollah, but never did. He was also told to try to obtain employment at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to facilitate Hezbollah's procurement of fraudulent identification documents for use in operations. Kourani demurred from applying for a clerical job at the DMV—which Kassab believed would be useful in procuring drivers' licenses and license plates for operatives—but he did apply for a job at the New York Police Department.[81]

Hezbollah also saw the benefit of deploying a U.S.-based operative elsewhere around the world with his legitimate U.S. passport. Fadi pressed upon Kourani the importance of obtaining U.S. citizenship and getting an American passport, and just a week after becoming a naturalized citizen in April 2009, Kourani obtained a passport. Although he claimed on his passport application that he had no immediate travel plans, he immediately applied for a visa to China, which he received eight days later. Three days after the receipt of his visa, he flew to Guangzhou, China.[82]

Kourani, who trafficked in counterfeit clothing, originally stated he went to China for a medical device trade show, but he understandably could not explain why someone who sold counterfeit goods would attend such a trade show.[83] Kourani told FBI investigators that he had a Chinese contact in the counterfeit clothing business named Frank, but he did not know Frank's last name. He claimed he traveled to China with Frank's son, but he did not know the son's first name.[84] In fact, Kourani went to visit the Guangzhou-based medical device company that produced the ammonium nitrate ice packs Hezbollah uses to make explosives. According to the Department of Justice, "the purpose of the trip was to develop relationships that the IJO could rely on to obtain ammonium nitrate to be used as an explosive precursor chemical." Substantiating this theory, the DOJ added, authorities had previously seized bomb-making precursor chemicals manufactured by a Guangzhou company in Thailand in 2012 and again in Cyprus in May 2015.[85]

Samer el-Debek

El-Debek appears to have been a Hezbollah supporter well before the group recruited him as a paid IJO operative in late 2007 or early 2008. In July 2006, for example, he sent an email from his work email to his personal email account expressing support for Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah.[86] Once recruited, however, el-Debek became a salaried operative, receiving compensation for his support of Hezbollah through about 2015, according to U.S. investigators.[87]

Over the course of eight months, FBI agents interviewed el-Debek five times in person and several more times over the phone.[88] They discovered that beginning in 2008, and on several other occasions through 2014, el-Debek received Hezbollah military and religious training in Lebanon, from basic military and surveillance and countersurveillance techniques, to advanced bomb-making techniques, with a focus on ammonium-nitrate explosives, which Hezbollah referred to as "Samad."[89] His explosives training focused on methods to create maximum damage and casualties, target people and buildings, and collect dual-use chemicals available at hardware stores to build explosive devices.[90] El-Debek was specifically trained, U.S. officials noted, in technically sophisticated techniques of the kind Hezbollah operatives utilized to construct the ammonium-nitrate bomb used in the 2011 Burgas, Bulgaria bus bombing. That bombing, officials added, was carried out by el-Debek's relative, Mohamad Husseini. In a meeting with FBI agents, el-Debek identified a photograph of Husseini, noting that he and Husseini were both members of Hezbollah's IJO.[91]

Hezbollah dispatched el-Debek on his first mission three years before the Burgas bombing, in May 2009, shortly after his first explosives training. Hezbollah had set up a safe house in Bangkok, Thailand, where a group of Hezbollah operatives were storing chemical explosive precursors for the manufacture of improvised explosive devices. According to the criminal complaint issued against el-Debek, he was sent to clean up the explosive materials abandoned by other operatives who believed they were under surveillance. Using his American passport, so as to avoid applying for a Thai visa, el-Debek traveled from Lebanon to Kuala Lumpur and on to Bangkok.[92]

Hezbollah must have had reason to suspect they would need to send el-Debek to Thailand at some point, because as early as April 2008—soon after he first joined the IJO—he reached out to women in Thailand asking if they would be his guide or expressing interest in getting to know them better.[93] When it came time to travel, el-Debek would leverage these relationships as part of his cover story. During his two-day layover in Malaysia, el-Debek met his IJO handler, who instructed him to use sex tourism as cover. Once in Thailand, he could hire an escort and use her to draw out any surveillance authorities may have set up at the safe house.[94]

In Bangkok, el-Debek followed these instructions, hiring a female escort, to whom he gave the key to the safe house, watching for any sign of surveillance as she entered the house. Seeing nothing suspicious, he entered the premises and found around 50 boxes of material that he believed to be ammonium nitrate sealed in plastic. He filled his car with boxes, poured the remaining chemicals down the drain, and left. Two days later, apparently convinced the safe house was not under surveillance, el-Debek was instructed to return the explosive precursor materials, pay the rent, and leave as he came, traveling through Malaysia. He then contacted his brothers by email, first from Bangkok and then Kuala Lumpur, telling them in one email, "I m ok . . I finish the deal here . . suppose to arrive Sunday . . don't u guys worry [sic]."[95]

El-Debek next attended language school to learn Spanish before being deployed to Panama twice, each time for about a month, first in February 2010 and a year later in February 2011. On his first trip, el-Debek traveled via Colombia and was tasked with acquainting himself with the lay of the land—learning to drive, developing a cover story as a businessman looking for local business opportunities—and casing and identifying security procedures at the Panama Canal and the Israeli embassy. He was also told to locate the U.S. embassy and continue his Spanish lessons while in Panama. El-Debek located hardware stores where he could buy materials used to build explosives, such as acetone and battery acid.[96]

He returned to Panama a year later, traveling through the United States, but not before emailing Panama tour operators from Lebanon asking about tours at or near the Panama Canal. The canal, el-Debek's handlers told

him, would be his primary focus on this trip.[97]

Per the specific instructions Hezbollah gave him, el-Debek took many photographs of the canal with the purpose of identifying areas of weakness, construction, security, and the proximity between the shore and ships transiting the canal. Hezbollah also asked el-Debek to take pictures of the Israeli embassy, but he decided not to do so because he assessed this to be a secondary tasking and was afraid of getting caught. His IJO handlers also asked for photographs of the American embassy, and for information about periods of heavy traffic in and out of the embassy, vehicular traffic patterns in front of the embassy, and locations of houses and apartments near the embassy. El-Debek claimed to the FBI that he neither took pictures of the U.S. embassy nor visited it, but he did tell his IJO handlers that it appeared people waiting for U.S. visa appointments were able to enter the embassy and wait inside. On his return to Lebanon, el-Debek met with his handler and the handler's superior and provided them with detailed photographs, maps, notes, and the camera he used in Panama.[98]

El-Debek appears to have pleaded guilty to several terrorism-related offenses pursuant to a cooperation agreement with the U.S. government. The indictment of Alexei Saab includes significant information from a cooperating witness (CW-1), who while unnamed, appears from his description to be el-Debek.[99]

Alexei Saab

Over five months, from March to July 2019, FBI agents conducted a series of interviews with Alexei Saab—also known as Ali Hassan Saab, Alex Saab, or Rachid—during which Saab appears to have provided significant details about his recruitment, training, and operational activities on behalf of Hezbollah.[100]

Saab joined Hezbollah as a young man barely out of his teens, and his first missions for the group were confined to Lebanon. In the mid to late-1990s, prior to the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, a young Saab was assigned to observe Israeli Defense Forces and Southern Lebanese Army soldiers in the border areas around Yaroun and report on their movements, including patrol schedules, formations, checkpoint security procedures, and the types of vehicles the soldiers drove.[101]

From 1996 to 2000, Saab met his first Hezbollah handler at least 15 times. This handler gave Saab his assignments in Lebanon and received Saab's written reports on surveillance in the Yaroun area. Around 1999, Hezbollah sent Saab to attend a basic military training course focused on the use of small arms (M-16, AK-47, pistol) and grenades.[102]

By 2000, Hezbollah spotters appear to have seen potential in Saab, recruiting him into the IJO and training him in Hezbollah external operations. Only then did Saab get more advanced training in sophisticated IJO tradecraft, weapons and military tactics, and bomb-making. Around the time of his recruitment, Saab's handler also introduced him to three additional handlers. These three would become Saab's interlocutors now that he had joined the IJO. Later that same year, Saab lawfully entered the United States.

After moving to the United States in November 2000, Saab returned to Lebanon some ten times over the years and received additional terrorist training during at least some of these trips. For example, in 2004 and 2005, Saab was instructed in triggering mechanisms, explosive substances, detonators, and circuit assembly during a specialized explosives training that lasted several days over a three-week period.[103]

In 2011, the United Nations (UN) Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) indicted several Hezbollah operatives for reportedly carrying out the February 2005 bombing that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and several others in downtown Beirut.[104] As it happens, part of Saab's explosives training took place shortly after the Hariri assassination, and Saab's Hezbollah trainers presented him and other trainees with photographs of the bombing scene. They had the trainees analyze the photographs to determine the epicenter of the blast and the type of explosive and triggering mechanism employed.[105]

During this training, Saab learned which shapes of explosive charges are most effective against various targets, including specific Israeli targets. Saab built a "sticky bomb" with C4 explosives, which he detonated in the mountains outside Beirut near a Hezbollah safe house. Other parts of the explosives training course were held

in an underground workshop. On his return to the United States in April 2005, right after he completed his explosives training, Saab traveled via Turkey, where authorities detected explosive residue on his luggage or clothing. Saab was allowed to fly on to JFK Airport in New York, where he was interviewed upon arrival and denied knowing why his luggage tested positive for explosive residue.[106]

Meanwhile, around 2003, Saab's handlers instructed him to conduct preoperational surveillance of "hot spots" in New York City and to prepare intelligence reports on his findings for the IJO. Saab conducted surveillance of dozens of locations in New York and elsewhere, later explaining to the FBI that his Hezbollah training was so effective that he would habitually collect intelligence as a matter of course as he went about his business. He would casually stop to take pictures that he said looked touristic in nature, with the dual purpose of identifying structural weaknesses and "soft spots" to determine how an attack might cause maximum damage should the IJO later decide to bomb that location. For example, Saab's surveillance photographs of New York City bridges focused on structural details—such as the main joints, towers, and cables—with an eye toward placing explosives for the purpose of disabling the bridge.[107]

At some point in 2003, Saab traveled to Lebanon and was taken to a Hezbollah safe house to meet his IJO handlers. Over a two day period, per their instructions, Saab drafted a detailed report on potential targets in New York City, with an annotated map and summaries of specific locations, including federal, state and local government buildings, United Nations headquarters, the Statue of Liberty, the New York Stock Exchange, the Empire State Building, New York's three international airports, and New York tunnels and bridges. Saab's handlers debriefed him on this information, and he provided them photographs of the locations included in his report.[108]

Saab conducted additional preoperational surveillance in other U.S. cities, including of landmarks and monuments in Washington, D.C., and tourist sites and buildings in Boston, such as Fenway Park and Quincy Market.[109] In January 2005, Saab traveled from Lebanon to Istanbul, Turkey, at Hezbollah's expense, for the purpose of collecting intelligence about the city. Saab flew from there to Damascus, where he met his handlers in the lobby of the Al-Safir hotel before driving back to Lebanon with them.[110] Sometime that year, Saab, who had been living in the United States since November 2000, filed an application for naturalization (lying, when he affirmed that he had never been "a member of or in any way associated with . . . a terrorist organization),[111] and he became an American citizen in August 2008.[112] He received his American citizenship in August 2008.[113]

Trends in Hezbollah IJO Modus Operandi

As members of a group engaged in international terrorist activities, it should not surprise that Hezbollah IJO operatives carry out preoperational surveillance, collect information about cities where they operate, prepare target packages for prospective operations, or collect and stockpile explosive materials. Recent cases involving these malevolent activities offer insight into Hezbollah modus operandi, specifically those related to documents and travel, operational handlers, legends and cover stories, training and pay scales, operational security, and communication, which may prove useful to law enforcement in detecting and intercepting potential future plots.

Dual Nationals

Historically, a classic modus operandi of Hezbollah is recruiting, training, and dispatching dual nationals to carry out missions outside of Lebanon. Having operatives who can travel on their legitimate, non-Lebanese passports provides excellent cover, and usually means the operatives also have experience living and/or traveling abroad, and likely speak foreign languages.

Hezbollah operatives have explicitly spoken to the organization's nuanced understanding of customs and immigration. For example, Kourani stated that he was directed by his handler to obtain not only a passport but also a passport card, which can be used to enter the United States by land from Canada or Mexico.[114] The

handler explained that in the event Kourani's U.S. passport was seized, Kourani could use his Lebanese passport to fly to either Mexico or Canada and then use the passport card to cross the land border back into the United States.[115]

El-Debek told FBI investigators he believed he was recruited to the IJO because he held a U.S. passport. He also said that on his mission to Thailand, he was instructed to travel from Lebanon to Malaysia on his Lebanese passport and then from Malaysia to Thailand on his U.S. passport. This flight pattern and document use would allow him to avoid obtaining a visa to enter Thailand.[116] In a similar vein, Yaacoub traveled internationally on Hezbollah business using his Swedish (rather than Lebanese) passport.[117] As noted below in Figure 1, dual-nationals from a variety of countries—including Australia, Canada, Colombia, France, Philippines, Sweden, and the United States—are represented among Hezbollah IJO operatives.

Hezbollah's military and political leadership engaged in a joint effort to identify Hezbollah members who were to be tasked with acquiring citizenship in foreign countries, according to the U.S. Treasury Department. In July 2019, Treasury designated Hezbollah parliamentarian and Shura Council member Muhammad Hasan Ra'd for using his political position to act on behalf of Hezbollah and Iran. According to the Treasury Department, Ra'd and Hezbollah security chief Wafiq Safa "maintained a list of a hundred Hezbollah members who were to acquire foreign citizenship in order to carry out long-term missions in Arab and Western countries."[118]

False Documents

Hezbollah also has a long history of producing counterfeit documents and procuring legitimate passports to be doctored into fraudulent documents for Hezbollah operatives. The FBI noted this trend in a November 1994 report:

> In an ongoing effort to bring more members into the United States, Hizballah also alters or steals travel documents, passports and visas. In one such operation, Hizballah members presented photo-substituted passports and fraudulent visa applications at a U.S. Embassy. Eighteen individuals obtained passports in this manner.[119]

A few years later, in 2001, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) issued a report on "Expanding Links between Alien Smugglers and Extremists: Threats to the United States." The report warned that various terrorist groups, including Hezbollah, "are tapping into global alien smuggling networks to abet their movements around the world, including to the United States." The report underscored that Hezbollah relies on these networks for travel documents. It claimed that "[t]hey solicit help from document vendors who cater to illegal migrants to receive genuine—though fraudulently obtained—passports, visas and other identification documents from corrupt officials."[120]

More recently, in Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Peru, among other places, Hezbollah operatives used a combination of legitimate, non-Lebanese passports and other fraudulent identification papers (see Figure 1). The Bulgaria bombers carried fake U.S. driver's licenses from Michigan; Bassam Abdullah in Cyprus had a copy of a false British passport; and Mohammed Hamdar in Peru carried a fake Peruvian national identity card and a fake passport from Sierra Leone.[121]

At one point, Kourani's Hezbollah handler even asked him to get a job at a Department of Motor Vehicles office "in order to facilitate efforts by the IJO to obtain fraudulent identification documents for use in operations." FBI agents recounted that Kourani told them in an interview that "the IJO is interested in these kinds of identifying documents because they would utilize those in connection with attacks, as they did in the Burgas bus bombing in 2012."[122] Kourani feared that applying to the DMV job would draw too much attention to himself (as an overqualified applicant with an MBA), but the instruction underscores the priority Hezbollah assigns to the need to procure high-quality false documents.[123]

Operational Handlers

Once recruited, Hezbollah IJO operatives are typically assigned one or more operational handlers who over-

see their training, give them their operational taskings, maintain communication with them while they travel abroad, sometimes travel to meet them outside of Lebanon, and debrief them on their return to Lebanon. El-Debek, for example, met his handler in Malaysia on his way to Thailand to carry out a mission for Hezbollah.[124] In recent years, the names of two key Hezbollah IJO handlers have come to light: Salman Raouf Salman (aka Salman el-Reda) and Majed Abdullah (aka Fadi Kassab).

Figure 1: Hezbollah's use of dual-nationals and fake documents

	Dual Nationality*	Fake Documents	Year of Arrest**	Plot Location	Type of Activity
Hussein Bassam Abdallah		British passport	2015	Larnaca	Explosives storage
Hussein Atris	Swedish		2012	Bangkok	Explosives storage
Youssef Ayad	Filipino		2014	Bangkok	Preparations for terrorist attack
Samer El-Debek	American		2017	Bangkok, Panama City	Explosives disposal, pre-operational surveillance
Meliad Farah (aka aka Hussein Hussein)	Australian	Michigan driver's license (Brian Jeremiah Jameson)	2012**	Burgas	Terrorist attack
Mohammed Hamdar		Liberian passport and driver's license, Sierra Leonean passport and driver's license	2014	Lima	Pre-operational surveillance
Hassan Khalil Hizran	Swedish		2015	Israel	Pre-operational surveillance
Mohammad Hassan al-Husseini	French	Michigan driver's license (Jacque Felipe Martin)	2012**	Burgas	Terrorist attack
Hassan el-Hajj Hassan	Canadian	Michigan driver's license (Ralph William Rico), U.S. Social Security card (Ralph William Rico)	2012**	Burgas	Terrorist attack
Ali Kourani	American		2017	Guangzhou, Toronto, New York	Explosives procurement, pre-operational surveillance
Samuel Salman El-Reda	Colombian		1994 - present**	Buenos Aires, Panama, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Southeast Asia	Preparations for terrorist attack, operational travel, handler
Alexei Saab	American		2019	New York, Boston, Washington D.C.	Pre-operational surveillance
Hossam Yaacoub	Swedish		2012	Limassol, Larnaca	Pre-operational surveillance

** All operatives also hold Lebanese citizenship. **Not arrested. Year refers to known activity.*

El-Reda, a dual Lebanese-Colombian citizen, oversaw the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, coordinating between the Hezbollah sleeper cells in Buenos Aires and the Tri-Border Area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay.[125] For these actions, he is the subject of an Interpol Red Notice arrest warrant.[126] When designated as a terrorist by the U.S. Treasury in July 2019, the U.S. government identified el-Reda as a senior IJO member who "directs Hezbollah's foreign operations from Lebanon."[127] The State Department identified el-Reda as "a leader in Hezbollah's External Security Organization

(ESO)[who] has also been involved in plots worldwide" and published a Rewards for Justice notice, offering up to $7 million for information leading to el-Reda.[128]

El-Reda fled South America after the AMIA bombing and rose through the ranks of Hezbollah's IJO. In the years that followed, the Treasury Department reports, his work for the IJO focused in particular "on Southeast Asia and South America in the 1990s, including a flurry of operational missions in 1997 with three visits to Panama, two to Colombia, and one to Brazil."[129] More recently, Mohammed Hamdar, who was arrested by Peruvian police in October 2014 for planning a terrorist operation in Peru, identified el-Reda his Hezbollah IJO handler.[130]

Meanwhile, according to Kourani, Fadi Kassab held the IJO handler portfolio for IJO operatives in the United States and Canada (he added that Kassab's role in the Bulgaria bombing may have been a result of the fact that one of the operatives was a dual Canadian-Lebanese national).[131] Until the May 2019 trial of Kourani, Fadi Kassab was only known by that name and a couple other aliases he used in the Cyprus operations (Sami Helo and Alexander Bouji). But in interviews with FBI agents, Kourani identified Kassab as his handler and, when shown a picture of Kassab, stated that he knew this person as Majed Abdullah. Kourani then backtracked, alleging he was not sure if this was this was the person he knew as Fadi, his handler. Nonetheless, whenever Fadi came up during the interview, Kourani pointed or motioned toward the photograph of Majed Abdullah.[132]

According to Kourani, Fadi Kassab is a dual citizen of Lebanon and a European country, possibly England,[133] and it was Kassab who served as the hander for the operatives in the Cyprus[134] and Bulgaria cases as well.[135] According to Kourani, when he had asked Kassab about the Burgas, Bulgaria bombing, Kassab told him that the less he knew about the bombing, the better.[136] At one point, in a sign of his confidence in Kourani, Kassab suggestion that Kourani return to Lebanon to become an IJO handler and mentor himself.[137]

Cover Stories

For some IJO operatives, posing as a tourist has proven to be the cover story of choice, while others developed carefully crafted legends—typically mixing fact and fiction, grounding their cover stories at least in part on their true, and therefore confirmable identities. Recent cases suggest that posing as a tourist might suffice for a Hezbollah operative when simply carrying out surveillance in a place where tourists are typically found. But for more substantial assignments abroad, Hezbollah might invest in a more robust cover story.

Consider the cases of Muhammad Hamdar and Alexei Saab, who carried out surveillance operations in Lima, Peru, and in New York City, respectively. Peruvian authorities found photographs of popular tourist spots when they searched Hamdar's apartment, along with surveillance photographs.[138] As for Saab, his training specifically included lessons in "tradecraft in conducting surveillance and in taking videos and photographs for the IJO without drawing the attention of law enforcement authorities."[139]

When el-Debek traveled to Thailand, his cover story was sex tourism, which enabled him to use his escort to try and draw out surveillance of the Hezbollah safe house before entering himself.[140] El-Debek was next sent to Panama, where he took Spanish lessons and operated under the cover story that he was a businessman visiting to identify potential business opportunities.[141]

Ali Kourani was able to operate in New York City under his true identity, but when dispatched on an IJO mission to Guangzhou, China, Kourani also posed as a businessman. At one point, Kourani maintained his travel to China was to attend the Canton Fair, an import/export trade show, for the purpose of "looking at textiles, clothing, shoes, medical equipment, and medical devices."[142] In another telling, he traveled to the Canton Fair with the son of a contact in the counterfeit clothing business, but he only knew his contact's first name, Frank, and did not know the name of his traveling companion at all.[143] In fact, prosecutors established that the true purpose of this trip was "to develop relationships which the IJO could rely on to obtain ammonium nitrate to be used as an explosive precursor chemical."[144]

But the most sophisticated cover story among these recent cases was the one developed and deployed over time in the case of Hossam Yaacoub. In his deposition with Cypriot police, Yaacoub explained that his handler sent

him to Cyprus "to create a cover story for people to get to know me, to keep coming with a justifiable purpose and without giving rise to suspicions." To further his cover, Yaacoub traveled to Cyprus via Dubai, and spent a week vacationing in Ayia Napa at Hezbollah's expense. For Hezbollah, the benefit was that when Yaacoub next returned to Cyprus he could say that the idea for importing merchandise from Cyprus came to him while on vacation there a couple of years earlier. When he did return to Cyprus, in December 2011 and January 2012, Yaacoub was told "to create a cover story" as a merchant interested in importing to Lebanon juices from a specific local company in Cyprus. While there, he also collected information about renting a warehouse in Cyprus. "I did all these things after receiving clear instructions from Hezbollah, so to have Cyprus as a basis [sic] and be able to serve the organization," he said.[145]

Training and Pay Scale

When interviewed by authorities, Hezbollah operatives spoke of a mix of weapons, surveillance, interrogation, explosive, and ideological training, conducted in both group and one-on-one settings. However, there does not seem to be any standard curriculum for all recruits beyond basic training. For example, among Kourani, el-Debek, Saab, and Yaacoub, only el-Debek received a crash course in ideology.[146] During 2013 or 2014, he attended a six-day ideological camp, with sessions on religious rules and topics including martyrdom ideology. And only Kourani and Yaacoub described being instructed in the art of denial and resistance to interrogations; Yaacoub purportedly engaged in a two-hour-long training with a representative of Hezbollah's intelligence unit in 2000.[147]

The extensiveness and frequency of training also differed, according to these Hezbollah operatives' statements, and included: a 45-day "Hezbollah 101" boot camp (Kourani), two-day-two-night military training (Kourani), six-day religious training (el-Debek), four surveillance and counter surveillance trainings over four years (el-Debek), a several-day training over a three-week period (Saab), and 6-7 training sessions, each lasting 3-5 days, at several different camps outside Beirut (Yaacoub), in addition to individual instruction with handlers.[148]

Figure 2: Hezbollah Training

	Number/timing of trainings	Length of trainings	Surveillance	Resistance to Interrogation	Religious	Military	Weapons Used
Samer El-Debek	Military training on "several occasions" from 2008 to 2014; surveillance and counter-surveillance training at least 4x from 2009 to 2013; religious training in 2013 or 2014; Spanish language training in late 2010	Religious training (6 days)		X			AK-47, M-16, and MP assault rifles, Russian PKS automatic rifle, 9 mm pistol, RPG 7, explosives
Ali Kourani	"Boot camp" in 2000; military training in July 2011; surveillance and resistance to interrogation training around 2008	"Boot camp" (45 days); 2011 military training (2 days, nights)			X		AK-47, MP5 submachine gun, PKS machine gun, Glock, rocket launchers
Alexei Saab	"Extensive Hizballah training" between 1996 and 2005; first military training in 1999; explosives training in 2004 and 2005; surveillance training between 2003 and 2005	Explosives training (several days over 3 weeks)		X	X		AK-47 and M1-16 rifle, pistol, grenades, explosives
Hossam Yaacoub	2-3 months with Wahid; 5-7 months with Yousef; 2008 courier training in Antalya, Turkey; military training 6-7x	Military trainings (3-5 days each)			X		FN Browning, Glock, AK-47, MP5, PK, RPG7, C4 explosives

Note: Reflects only those trainings explicitly referenced in indictments, interrogations, and/or court testimony. Bassem Abdallah is not listed due to lack of publicly available information.

Nonetheless, military tactical training is clearly considered essential: "[T]he organization wants its members to know how to handle firearms," Yaacoub explained, adding that "it does not mean that they will participate in any military operation."[149] Hezbollah operatives have reported using AK-47s, M-16s, M-5 assault rifles,

PKS automatic rifles, 9mm pistols, and RPF-7s, among other firearms.[150] In addition, el-Debek described receiving specialized training in explosives assembly, achieving what the FBI assessed as "extensive training as a bomb-maker" and "a high degree of technical sophistication in this area."[151] In interrogations after his arrest, el-Debek discussed learning to produce and handle explosive materials; build landmines; remotely detonate devices; and target people and buildings. On the last day of his training, he purportedly detonated five or six bombs. Likewise, during a three-week explosives training in 2004 and 2005, Alexei Saab was taught about triggering mechanisms, explosive substances, detonators, and circuit assembly, assembling a sticky bomb that was tested near a Hezbollah safe house in the mountains outside Beirut.[152] Saab and other trainees were also shown photos of the bombing that killed Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri and were asked to identify the center of the blast, and the size, type, and triggering mechanism of the explosive used.[153]

Pay scales varied among Hezbollah operatives as well, at least from the few cases in which limited payment data was available. According to the FBI, Kourani maintains that the IJO "offered to pay him a salary to reimburse him for travel and also to pay off some of his debts," but Kourani says he never accepted money from the IJO.[154] Samer el-Debek, on the other hand, started receiving a regular Hezbollah salary shortly after first being recruited to the group. From 2007 to 2015, el-Debek was employed by Hezbollah, eventually being paid over $1,000 per month, plus medical expenses.[155] Yaacoub became a salaried Hezbollah operative in 2010, staring once he completed basic training, but only earned $600 a month.[156] One cannot draw any significant conclusions about Hezbollah operatives' pay scale from such limited data, but it is provided here nonetheless to get this information into the public domain.

Operational Security

Although there appears to be no consistency in the timeline, order, or length of Hezbollah external operations training, the value placed on secrecy and anonymity is a constant. Kourani, Saab, and Yaacoub were all picked up for their military trainings in vehicles with blacked-out windows and/or driven blindfolded to undisclosed locations. In 2008, after his initial recruitment into the IJO, Kourani was driven, while wearing a blacked-out motorcycle helmet, to a meeting with his handler.[157] In a sign of extreme precaution, even the elevator buttons in the building where the meeting took place were described as "being scrambled on or out of sequence and so he did not know where in the building they went to."[158] In July 2011, when he attended a military training camp in the vicinity of Birkat Jabrur, Lebanon, Kourani was picked up with five or six other operatives by an unknown driver in a van and asked to wear a black, balaclava-style mask.[159] Similarly, Alexei Saab was picked up at a predetermined Beirut location by "a white van with blacked-out windows" with "rows of seats separated by curtains."[160] The pickup procedure for Yaacoub appears to have been slightly more nuanced, albeit still surreptitious. His trainer, Aiman, provided Yaacoub with the answer to a coded question to give to his driver, and new passwords were given to Yaacoub by his trainers for each pickup.[161]

This extreme obsession with secrecy extended from pickup into the classroom. At an auditorium-style interrogation training Kourani attended, the 20 to 25 other operatives all donned masks, and during Saab's trainings between 2000 and 2005, operatives were put in a classroom partitioned by cubicles and advised not to talk or share personal information.[162] They were asked to use fictitious names (Saab used the pseudonym Rashid).[163] During Yaacoub's trainings, trainees and instructors wore hoods, slept in individual tents, and were forbidden from seeing each other.[164]

The seriousness with which the secrecy order was taken is evident in interrogations Cypriot authorities conducted with Yaacoub, during which he spoke of recognition by voice. For example, Yaacoub said he assumed one of his fellow trainees was American because of his accent; he also recognized a fellow trainee while on a mission in the Netherlands not from his name or appearance, but "by his voice."[165] Indeed, Yaacoub told authorities that "everything is done in complete secrecy within the organization," while Kourani told the FBI that the organization's "golden rule" was that "the less you know the better it is."[166]

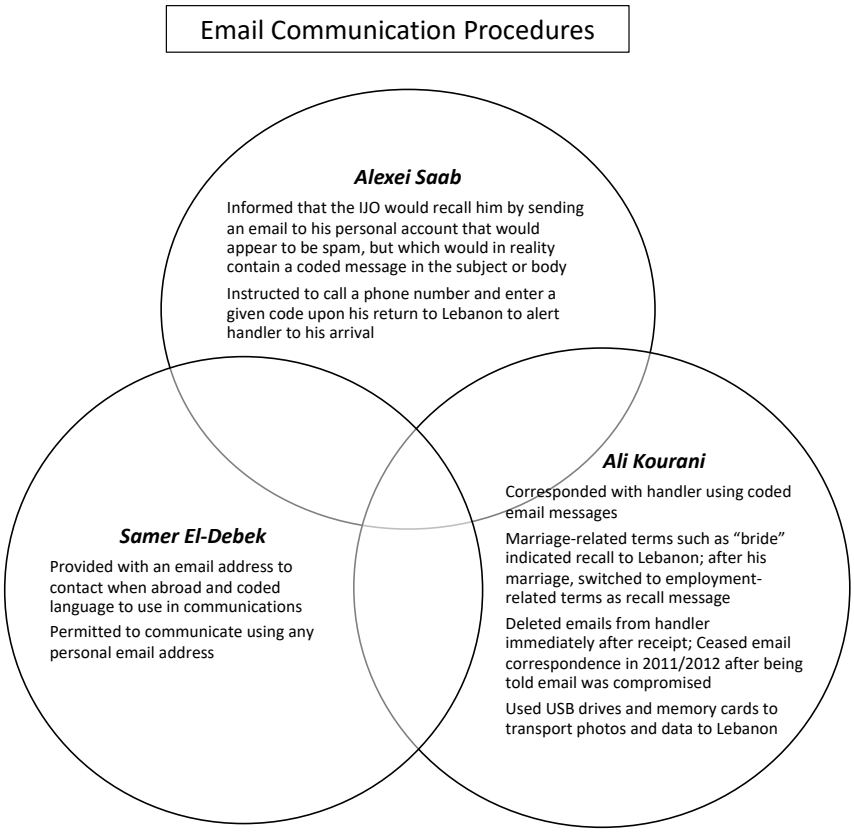
Operational security took on even greater importance after the late-2014 arrest of Mohamad Shawarba, a senior Hezbollah operative accused of spying for Israel. Hezbollah believed Shawarba provided information that enabled Israel to disrupt several terrorist operations abroad, according to Kourani.[167]

Communication

Perhaps the greatest level of detail concerning communication between operatives and handlers comes from Kourani. In Kourani's telling, his standard operating procedures differed domestically and internationally. While outside of Lebanon, Kourani corresponded with his handler, Fadi, via email. Fadi used two email addresses, as did Kourani (on Gmail and Hotmail), including one address in the name of a childhood friend.[168] In discussing operations, the two used marriage-related terms; for example, the word "bride" was a cue that Kourani should return to Lebanon. After he was married, they adjusted their code accordingly; Fadi used references to jobs or employment prospects as a recall message. Kourani deleted all emails from Fadi immediately after their receipt.

Rather than email photographs, Kourani was instructed to use digital storage media, such as universal serial bus (USB) drives and memory cards, to transport photos and other data back to Lebanon (in September 2015, he was found in possession of one such cell phone card, hidden beneath a sticker on his passport, when travelling through customs at John F. Kennedy International Airport).[169] He ceased using email altogether in 2011 or 2012, after being told that communications had been compromised. To reach Fadi once inside Lebanon, Kourani followed a multi-step procedure. He was instructed to call a telephone number associated with a pager and use a predetermined code.[170] His handler would then contact Kourani to set up a meeting by calling one of Kourani's relatives, either his father or brother.[171]

The instructions given to other operatives mirror Kourani's. Hezbollah gave el-Debek an email to contact when he was abroad and coded language to use in his communications (he was permitted to use an email address of his choosing).[172] Saab was told that the recall message would be an email to his personal account that would appear as spam, but that would contain a coded signal in the email's subject or body. He too was told to call a particular phone number and use a numeric code when in Lebanon to alert his handler to his return; after receiving the code, the handler would contact Saab on his personal cell phone or at his family's home.



Only Yaacoub's instructions differed slightly; his primary means of communication with higher-ups was text.[173] If a meeting was required, Yaacoub would receive a text about the weather, indicating that he should go to the Finikoudes promenade in Lanarca at 6:00 p.m. If no one showed up, he was to return the following day at 2:00 p.m., and then the next day at 10:30 a.m.[174]

Conclusion

Hezbollah is a multifaceted organization, engaged in a wide range of activities from overt social and political activities to covert militant, criminal and terrorist activities. While Hezbollah has a vested interested in publicizing the former, which it does through the television, radio, online and social media platforms it operates, the group goes to great lengths to conceal its militant and criminal activities. Fadi Kassab made this clear when he taught Ali Kourani, one of the Hezbollah operatives he was running at the time, the "golden rule" of Hezbollah's Unit 910: "The less you know about the unit, the better."[175] Indeed, such compartmentalization is a cornerstone of Hezbollah's operational security training.

This article's aim was to shed some light on what Ali Kourani described as "the Black Ops of Hezbollah," the Islamic Jihad Organization or Unit 910 (aka External Security Organization),[176] specifically laying out what recent cases have revealed about how Hezbollah operatives are trained and paid, how they communicate, travel, create cover stories, and conduct surveillance, and how they are run by their handlers.

After a close analysis of Hezbollah modus operandi, the strategic takeaway is nuanced: Hezbollah is a highly-skilled, operationally capable and dangerous adversary. But it is not 10 feet tall; its handlers and operatives make mistakes, and in at least the recent cases explored here international intelligence and law enforcement agencies have been able to take advantage of these mistakes and peel back much of the group's operational mystique and secrecy.

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Notes

[1] "New Jersey Man Indicted for Terrorist Activities on Behalf of Hizballah's Islamic Jihad Organization," Office of Public Affairs, Department of Justice, September 19, 2019, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/new-jersey-man-indicted-terrorist-activities-behalf-hizballah-s-islamic-jihad-organization.

[2] Court transcript at 282 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[3] "2017 Country Reports on Terrorism," U.S. Department of State, September 2018, 195, 298.

[4] Court testimony at 352 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[5] Ben Riley, "Iran-Linked Terrorists Caught Stockpiling Explosives in North-West London," The Telegraph, June 9, 2019, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/06/09/iran-linked-terrorists-caught-stockpiling-explosives-north-west/.

[6] "New Jersey Man Indicted for Terrorist Activities on Behalf of Hizballah's Islamic Jihad Organization," Office of Public Affairs, Department of Justice, September 19, 2019, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/new-jersey-man-indicted-terrorist-activities-behalf-hizballah-s-islamic-jihad-organization; "Ali Kourani Convicted in Manhattan Federal Court for Covert Terrorist Activities on Behalf of Hizballah's Islamic Jihad Organization," Office of Public Affairs, Department of Justice, May 17, 2019, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/ali-kourani-convicted-manhattan-federal-court-covert-terrorist-activities-behalf-hizballah-s; "Bronx Man And

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[7] Matthew Levitt, *Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran's Shadow War with the West*, Policy Focus 123, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 2013, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/hizballah-and-the-qods-force-in-irans-shadow-war-with-the-west.

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[10] "Hezbollah Arms Dealer Sentenced to Life in Nigeria, Two others Freed," Reuters, November 29, 2013, https://www.haaretz.com/nigeria-hezbollah-operative-sentenced-to-life-1.5295804.

[11] "Peru: Extremism and Counterextremism," Counter Extremism Project, https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/peru.

[12] Material used here from these two cases comes from indictment documents. This means FBI and other law enforcement authorities concluded the material is accurate and reliable but the defendants are innocent until proven guilty. As discussed below, it appears el-Debek has pleaded guilty and is cooperating with authorities.

[13] US v Ali Kourani, Southern District of New York, Court testimony at 282, May 8, 2019.

[14] Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 130, 246.

[15] All references to Hossam Yaacoub's interviews and depositions came from the official English translation of his police depositions. These were taken in Arabic, translated into Greek, and then into English by a certified translator. For details, see Depositions of Hossam Taleb Yaacoub, Criminal Number Σ/860/12, File Page 35, 79, 85, 110, 134, 187, by interviewing police officer Sergeant Michael Costas, Cypriot Police. Depositions taken on July 7, 2012, July 11, 2012, July 11-12, 2012, July 14, 2012, July 16, 2012, and July 22, 2012.

[16] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/11/2012, 79.

[17] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 110.

[18] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/11/2012 – 7/12/2012, 85.

[19] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/11/2012 – 7/12/2012, 85, 88.

[20] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/11/2012 – 7/12/2012, 87.

[21] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/16/2012, 135.

[22] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 110-113.

[23] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 112.

[24] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 110.

[25] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 112.

[26] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 112.

[27] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 112.

[28] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 113.

[29] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/16/2012, 135-137.

[30] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/16/2012, 137.

[31] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/16/2012, 136.

[32] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/11/2012 – 7/12/2012, 88.

[33] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/14/2012, 112, 113.

[34] Hossam Taleb Yaacoub Deposition, 7/22/2012, 188.

[35] Menelaos Hadjicostis, "Cyprus Court Convicts Hezbollah Member," Associated Press, March 21, 2013, https://apnews.com/9b2fba18477b4f9098dd3da95fb0ff2b.

[36] Benjamin Weinthal, "Cyprus Jails Hezbollah Man for Plot to Kill Israelis," *Jerusalem Post*, March 28, 2013, https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Cyprus-jails-Hezbollah-man-for-plotting-to-kill-Israelis-308000.

[37] "2014 Country Reports on Terrorism," U.S. Department of State, June 2015, 98.

[38] "European Court rejects convicted Hezbollah member's application against Cyprus," Cyprus News Agency, May 24, 2019, https://in-cyprus.philenews.com/european-court-rejects-convicted-hezbollah-members-application-against-cyprus/.

[39] James Kanter and Jodi Rudoren, "European Union Adds Military Wing of Hezbollah to List of Terrorist Organizations," *The New York Times*, July 22, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/23/world/middleeast/european-union-adds-hezbollah-wing-to-terror-list.html.

[40] Author interview with Cypriot Police Official, October 2015.

[41] "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

[42] "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

[43] Ben Ariel, "Cyprus Sentences Hezbollah Member to 6 Years," Arutz Sheva, June 30, 2015, http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/197471; "Hezbollah member jailed in Cyprus bomb plot against Israelis," Associated Press, June 29, 2015, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4674174,00.html; Dave Battagello, "Former Windsor man pleads guilty to storing bomb materials for Hezbollah," *Windsor Star*, July 6, 2015, https://windsorstar.com/news/former-windsor-man-pleads-guilty-to-storing-bomb-materials-for-hezbollah/; "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

[44] Menalaos Hadjicostis, "Hezbollah Member Pleads Guilty to 8 Charges in Cyprus," Associated Press, June 29, 2015, https://apnews.com/9b2fba18477b4f9098dd3da95fb0ff2b; Author interview with Cypriot Police Official, October 2015.

[45] "Hezbollah member jailed in Cyprus bomb plot against Israelis," Associated Press, June 29, 2015, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4674174,00.html.

[46] Zvi Mazel, "Opinion: The EU dithers in the face of Iranian terror," Geopolitical Intelligence Services, September 27, 2019, https://www.gisreportsonline.com/opinion-the-eu-dithers-in-the-face-of-iranian-terror,defense,2985.html; "Report: Hezbollah planned huge, game-changing attacks on Israel targets globally," *The Times of Israel*, June 12, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-planned-immense-game-changing-terror-attacks-report/.

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[48] "Hezbollah member jailed in Cyprus bomb plot against Israelis," Associated Press, June 29, 2015, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4674174,00.html; "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

[49] Author interview with Cypriot Police Official, October 2015.

[50] "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

[51] "Hezbollah member jailed in Cyprus bomb plot against Israelis," YNet News, June 29, 2015, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4674174,00.html; Author interview with Cypriot Police Official, October 2015.

[52] "Lebanese Man Jailed in Cyprus Ammonium 'Plot' against Israelis," Reuters, June 29, 2015, https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-cyprus-security-explosives/lebanese-man-jailed-in-cyprus-ammonium-plot-against-israelis-idUKKCN0P91AL20150629.

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[54] "Lebanese-Canadian confesses to Cyprus terror charges," *The Times of Israel*, June 29, 2015, https://www.timesofisrael.com/lebanese-canadian-confesses-to-cyprus-terror-charges/. Author interview with Cypriot Police Official, October 2015.

[55] "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

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[59] "Lebanese Man Jailed in Cyprus Ammonium 'Plot' against Israelis," Reuters, June 29, 2015, https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-cyprus-security-explosives/lebanese-man-jailed-in-cyprus-ammonium-plot-against-israelis-idUKKCN0P91AL20150629.

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[61] Court transcript at 365 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[62] "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015; Author interview with Cypriot Police Official, October 2015.

[63] "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

[64] "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

[65] Ben Ariel, "Cyprus Sentences Hezbollah Member to 6 Years," Arutz Sheva, June 30, 2015, http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/197471.

[66] "Cyprus Ammonium Nitrate Case," Cypriot Police PowerPoint Presentation, October 2015.

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[68] Regarding "Cooperating Witness 1," the description of whom appears to be a clear reference to el-Debek, see Complaint at 10, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[69] Complaint at 11, United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017); Complaint at 9, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017); Adam Goldman and Ellen Nakashima, "CIA and Mossad Killed Senior Hezbollah Figure in Car Bombing," *Washington Post*, January 30, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-and-mossad-killed-senior-hezbollah-figure-in-car-bombing/2015/01/30/ebb88682-968a-11e4-8005-1924ede3e54a_story.html.

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[71] Complaint at 11, United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[72] Complaint at 9, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[73] "Hezbollah leader: Israel faces 'open war,'" CNN, February 14, 2008, https://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/02/14/lebanon/index.html.

[74] Court transcript at 362 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[75] Court transcript at 263, 305 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[76] Shown a picture of Majed Abdullah, Kourani claimed he wasn't sure if that was his handler, Fadi, or not. But throughout the interview, whenever he mentioned Fadi he gestured toward the photo of Majed. Prosecutors argued that Faid Kassab is Majed Abdullah. See Court transcript at 281, 282, (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[77] Court transcript at 352 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[78] Court transcript at 365, (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[79] Complaint at 19, United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[80] Court transcript at 864 (May 15, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[81] Complaint at 19, United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017); Court transcript at 871-872 (May 15, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[82] Court transcript at 315-318 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[83] Court transcript at 318-319 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[84] Court transcript at 338 (May 8, 2019), United States v. Ali Kourani (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[85] "Ali Kourani Convicted in Manhattan Federal Court for Covert Terrorist Activities on Behalf of Hizballah's Islamic Jihad Organization," Office of Public Affairs, Department of Justice, May 17, 2019, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/ali-kourani-convicted-manhattan-federal-court-covert-terrorist-activities-behalf-hizballah-s.

[86] Complaint at 11-12, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[87] "Two Men Arrested for Terrorist Activities on Behalf of Hizballah's Islamic Jihad Organization," Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Justice, June 8, 2017, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/two-men-arrested-terrorist-activities-behalf-hizballahs-islamic-jihad-organization.

[88] Complaint at 9, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[89] Complaint at 9-10, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[90] Complaint at 10, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[91] Complaint at 11, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

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[93] Complaint at 14, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[94] Complaint at 12-13, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[95] Complaint at 13-14, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[96] Complaint at 14-15, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[97] Complaint at 16-17, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[98] Complaint at 16-17, United States v. Samer El-Debek (S.D.N.Y. 2017).

[99] Complaint at 10, United States v. Alexei Saab (S.D.N.Y. 2019).

[100] Complaint at 11, United States v. Alexei Saab (S.D.N.Y. 2019).

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[102] Complaint at 12, United States v. Alexei Saab (S.D.N.Y. 2019).

[103] Complaint at 14, United States v. Alexei Saab (S.D.N.Y. 2019).

[104] See Ayyash et al. (STL-11-01), https://www.stl-tsl.org/en/the-cases/stl-11-01.

[105] Complaint at 14-15, United States v. Alexei Saab (S.D.N.Y. 2019).

[106] Complaint at 14-15, United States v. Alexei Saab (S.D.N.Y. 2019).

[107] Complaint at 16, United States v. Alexei Saab (S.D.N.Y. 2019).

[108] Complaint at 17-18, United States v. Alexei Saab (S.D.N.Y. 2019).

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ISIS Resurgence in *Al Hawl* Camp and Human Smuggling Enterprises in Syria: Crime and Terror Convergence?

by Christian Vianna de Azevedo

Abstract

Al Hawl camp remains the largest Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Northeastern Syria. The camp holds people who fled ISIS as well as individuals and families connected to ISIS (members and supporters) who were displaced from its former territory. It currently holds around 68,000 people, 94% of whom are women and children. ISIS and its predecessor, Al Qaeda in Iraq, have benefited from prison contexts which were fundamental for both groups to grow. Prisons have proven to be breeding grounds for Jihadist indoctrination and networking. Al Hawl has been part of ISIS's strategy through crime and terror networks that have developed within the camp. ISIS residents in Al Hawl camp conduct terrorist indoctrination, radicalization, human smuggling, document fraud, forgery and financing. These criminal activities have aided ISIS in having the upper hand inside the camp while preparing its militants for a future role in case the caliphate is restored. In the meantime, since its territorial defeat two years ago, ISIS has benefited from the human smuggling networks that operate in Syria since 2011. Smuggling its fighters, facilitators and families out of the conflict zone has been an important strategy for ISIS future ambitions.

Keywords: ISIS, Al Hawl, Insurgency, Crime, Terrorism, Facilitation, Smuggling.

Introduction

Al Hawl Camp remains the largest IDP camp in Northeastern Syria. It is so huge that it can be seen from dozens of kilometers away. Its large matrix of tents spread as vast as a city. The camp sits on the outskirts of the Syrian town with the name *Al Hawl*, in Northeastern Syria, close to the Syria/Iraq border. Historically, *Al Hawl Camp* was established by the United Nations to hold refugees from Iraq in 1991. In 2016, the camp was reopened by US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to harbor civilians who were displaced in the course of operations against the Islamic State (ISIS/Daesh) in Eastern Syria. Nowadays the camp continues to hold individuals who fled ISIS, as well as individuals and families connected to ISIS, who were displaced from its former strongholds. It currently holds around 68,000 people, 94% of whom are women and children.[1] 86% of the residents are Iraqis and Syrians and 20,000 of the total population are children under the age of five. There is a section of the camp that holds more than 11,000 foreign women and children from up to 62 different countries. Out of this total 7,000 are children. The camp is run by the SDF, whose guarding personnel amount to only 300–400 men to cover the entire camp.[2]

The camp's demographics changed dramatically with the fall of Baghouz at the end of March 2018 (ISIS last stretch of territory that SDF and US backed forces recaptured). In December 2019 the camp population used to be of around 9,000 people. However, at the end of March 2019 it had grown to nearly 74,000.[3]

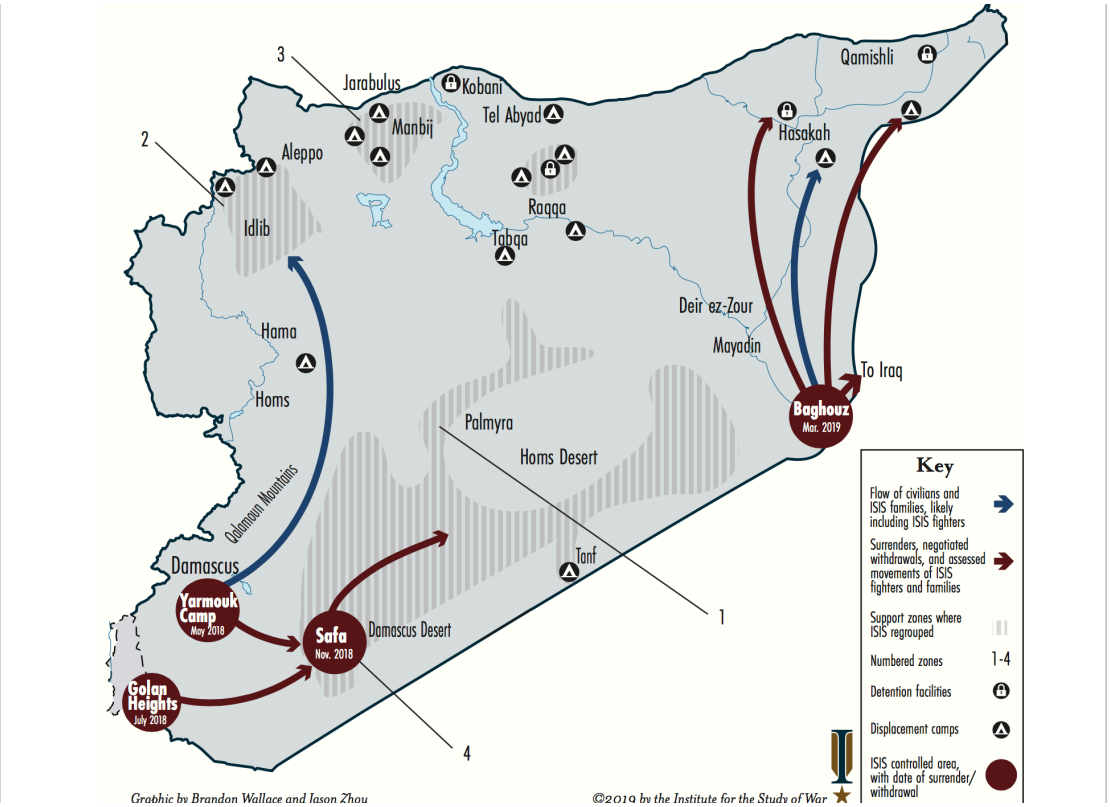

Figure 1: Main dispersal of ISIS forces in Syria. (May 2018 through April 2019). Source: Cafarella (2019).

However, between March and December 2019 the camp's population has slowly decreased. This is not only due to the dedicated efforts by the SDF and a few countries to repatriate some IDPs back home but also due to some escapes through smuggling schemes that have been set up.

Al Hawl Camp's maximum capacity is 40,000 people. Thus, the overall conditions have worsened fairly quickly after the population was inflated with the fall of Baghouz. Even with the presence of international aid workers and agencies it was clear that after March 2019 the conditions for the women and children have become dire. Before the Turkish invasion of Northern Syria in October 2019, there used to be a solid presence of UNICEF, the ICRC, Doctors Without Borders and similar aid organizations to help SDF to take care of the residents. However, one of the consequences of the invasion was a growing instability and insecurity that forced these organizations to leave the camp for around two months, only resuming their assistance in December 2019.[4]

The precarious conditions observed in the camp since 2019 have not improved. On the contrary, its overall situation has gotten worse. At the height of the summer, in mid- 2019, scores of children died of malnutrition and diseases. Besides, there is no sewage system, there are not enough latrines, there is no regular food delivery, no potable water and the whole camp smells terribly due to these precarious conditions. There are sand flies in large quantities everywhere and they transmit leishmania and other diseases.

The weather in the region is also inclement: awfully hot and dry summers and severely cold winters. That also makes life in the *Al Hawl Camp* very uncomfortable. Additionally, the children are falling behind on their education as the camp authorities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are not able to supply proper school services. Anger about the under-resourced and badly managed overall conditions has intensified. Thus, this extreme environment aggravates further the residents' grievances and makes it a fertile terrain for ISIS radicalization. Another point is that no attempt has ever been made to isolate ISIS extremists from IDPs and refugees—who are mainly Syrians and Iraqis—who were the original inhabitants of the camp before the fall of Baghouz.[5]

One of the immediate consequences of the appalling conditions at camp was a change in the environment. It developed into a rough and violent one, since attrition among the camp's residents became routine and the

atmosphere turned more violent as people and groups started to vie for the limited and scarce resources such as food, shelter and medical supplies. Soon, the residents started to act aggressively toward each other.[6] The foreigners have usually been more violent and more radical than the Iraqis and Syrians. By late March 2019 the radical foreigners connected to ISIS had already started to burn the tents of the other residents they deemed 'infidels' and they shouted at them.[7] The SDF guarding the camp decided it was time to divide the residents in two different geographical locations: a larger area for the Iraqis and Syrians, and a smaller area for the foreigners, nearly all of them with strong ties to ISIS.[8]

Furthermore, ISIS propaganda has always insisted that the women play a key role in educating and indoctrinating the children. Nowadays there is something new to ISIS's structure: women have been taking some leadership roles since they have been in charge of some fronts that in the recent past were almost exclusively run by men. ISIS's loss of territory has then introduced a new role for women in the group's framework since most residents in *Al Hawl* as well as in other Kurdish-run camps in Northeastern Syria are women and children. In the absence of male leadership, these women have been running ISIS activities within the camp. The current grip of ISIS within *Al Hawl* camp's residents has been enabled by several criminal enterprises that have helped the radicalized residents to foster ISIS's ideology inside the facility as well as mimic its former caliphate structure. This has become viable through a stream of funding, smuggling of all sorts and criminal activities.

The women taken to *Al Hawl* are now some of the most fanatical and stern enforcers of ISIS's ideology. These women are the ones who stood loyal to the group as it retreated to Baghouz and endured defeat after several weeks of fierce battle. They are probably ISIS's most hardcore defenders. Therefore, they have harbored the same resentment and grievances derived from the sectarian tensions during the conflict and thus they are fundamentally connected to the ISIS insurgents, many of whom have families, relatives, or friends' families housed in *Al Hawl*. Hence, since ISIS insurgents are aware of these circumstances, they have been funneling money—among other things—to the women in *Al Hawl* and are in constant communication with them in order to assure them that they are not forgotten and they have a task to undertake: prepare for ISIS's future resurgence.[9]

In late 2019 US military officials evaluated that ISIS has been militarily defeated but not eliminated.[10] The terror organization remains cohesive and still maintains an intact command structure as well as running an insurgency in parts of rural Syria.[11] Knowing that under certain conditions prison environments are ripe for terrorism radicalization, *Al Hawl* has become part of a plan for the future territorial resurgence of ISIS. In particular, *Al Hawl's* tens of thousands of interned children are a vital part in ISIS's strategy. Consequently, those children have been undergoing intense indoctrination within the camp, since they are expected to be the next generation of ISIS cadres. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had most likely thought of it. In interviews, some of the more radical ISIS residents have admitted that their coming to *Al Hawl* happened on Baghdadi's orders after the fall of Baghouz. Also, in September 2019, Baghdadi addressed his constituencies stating that all means should be taken by ISIS militants to free the women and children at *Al Hawl*. Ever since, it has been noticeable that there have been efforts in smuggling women and children out of *Al Hawl.* Funds have been channeled to residents through criminal ways. Likewise, smugglers have been able to move their clients out of the camp. In the meantime, with money in their pockets, the women have been able to get more resources and even weapons inside the barbed wire.[12] Once more it is possible to envision a terrorist organization using the prison environment to make inroads and establish roots to grow and spread. Meanwhile, ISIS has benefited from the services provided by human smuggling networks not only for its women and children in *Al Hawl* but also to move fighters and facilitators who are spread across the desert to those areas where the insurgency remains strong.

Ever since its inception, ISIS and its predecessor AQI have benefited from prison contexts. In fact, prisons were fundamental for both groups at various moments in time. Abu Zarqawi, AQI founder and the ideological godfather of ISIS had been incarcerated from 1994 to1999. He was convicted for being involved in terrorist plots in Jordan. Dreadful prison conditions changed his life forever and his grievances only grew stronger. In the meantime, he had time to strengthen his extreme Islamist ideological convictions and develop his leadership in a conducive environment where he found a number of inmates willing to listen to his 'message'. Years later,

after being released from prison, several of his former prison mates would end up joining his terrorist network and form the embryo of ISIS in Iraq.[13]

Besides, terrorist groups frequently partner or merge with criminal organizations to advance their objectives. Criminal organizations often have competences that are useful for terror groups and vice-versa. Terrorist groups, for instance, usually take advantage of human smuggling networks to move their fighters, to assist them in plot and execute attacks, extract fighters after attacks have been carried out, infiltrate terrorists' cells overseas, hide key facilitators in safe places, to name their main uses. Some terrorist organizations have established long-standing partnerships with human smuggling networks. Others resort to them only when needed, while yet others develop 'in-house' capabilities for human smuggling and document forgery in order to keep their profile as low as possible.

This article aims to provide some insights on how crime and terror interplay within *Al Hawl Camp* and how this may contribute to ISIS's territorial resurgence in Syria and Iraq. The camp has become a breeding ground for the radical Islamist ideology and ISIS has been taking full advantage of this. Additionally, this article aims to shed some light on how the human smuggling networks that operate in the region are structured and what role these play for ISIS since ISIS takes advantage of the existing smuggling routes to move its militants across the region and beyond.

The next section will briefly discuss the role of prisons in shaping jihadists and in particular those from ISIS. Then some reflections on ISIS's insurgency after the loss of its former territory will be offered. In addition, some insights on the dynamics of *Al Hawl Camp* and the role of ISIS women are provided. Criminal activities have aided ISIS to gain the upper hand inside the camp and militants prepare for the time when the caliphate will be reborn. The article also provides an outline—based mostly on fieldwork—of how the human smuggling enterprises in Syria are handled and how they might serve ISIS in its long-term strategy.

Prisons and Their Role in the Shaping of ISIS

Prisons are known for being important breeding grounds for jihadist ideology. Looking back at history, it is possible to identify a number of jihadist leaders that were radicalized at least in part within prison systems. This is especially true in Muslim-majority countries where Islamist extremists also take advantage of the prison environment to recruit and indoctrinate new followers, restructure networks of radicals, reinforce their extremist ideology, share ideas and learn from likeminded people.[14]

It is important to note that not everyone actually becomes radicalized with extreme Islamist beliefs solely as a result of time spent in prison. However, prison time can potentially accelerate radicalization as a result of isolation from mainstream society and also by exposing the inmate to ideologies to which certain persons are highly susceptible.

Prison life is indeed something that terrifies the newcomers. New convicts, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, usually arrive in a prison feeling insecure, confused, unsettled and afraid. Quite a few reports indicate that some imprisoned Islamists have used a proactive strategy of taking advantage of this confusion and anxiety by offering food, help, friendship, protection and spiritual guidance for the new arrivals. Prison radicalization generally begins through personal relationships and not through radical ranting and brainwashing speeches to large audiences. The best potential for radicalization in a prison context lies in a one-to-one approach.[15]

However, prison administrations worldwide face a dilemma: to separate or not to separate extremists from ordinary criminals. More often than not, prison authorities tend to not separate them from ordinary inmates because they are afraid to keep all the extremists together. Nonetheless, there is not enough evidence proving that separating the extremists and blending them with ordinary people is a better decision in terms of countering radicalization. Experiences in a variety of prisons in different countries have shown the danger of putting together ordinary criminals with terrorists or insurgents. There are a number of cases showing that they have learned from each other and that the ideologically driven prisoners were successful in recruiting new

members for their cause. This is particularly the case when either charismatic and well-spoken extremists come in contact with ordinary prisoners and, knowing their grievances, gradually talk them into their extremist beliefs, or, on the other hand, when the extremists are powerful within a specific prison and coerce ordinary inmates to join their cause by fear or by offering them some form of material assistance. In the Muslim world this has happened particularly with ordinary Muslim prisoners or new converts who have limited knowledge of Islam and are not very educated.

While in prison, extremists often assume a leadership role in the same way they try to in wider society. They usually try to become representatives of other prisoners in one way or the other. First, they do so by directly opposing the prison authorities, leading hunger strikes, riots and rebellions. In these situations, they are eager to show to other prisoners that they do not crack under pressure. Second, they do so via a more indirect approach, living a pious and humble routine in prison, seeking, thus, to radiate confidence, peace of mind and faith in order to impress other prisoners whose beliefs are not yet established. Furthermore, terrorists and extremists often take advantage from hostile and aggressive prison cultures where moderate speeches and tolerant messages are frequently eclipsed in an environment that usually respects violence and moral power.[16]

Accordingly, what has been unfolding in *Al Hawl Camp* for about a year and a half is not unique and new to ISIS or to the jihadist prison scene. We can draw an interesting parallel between *Al Hawl Camp* and a prison for jihadists in Iraq which more than a decade ago was dubbed the "Jihadist University" and become well known for its role as a breeding ground for the predecessor of ISIS. *Camp Bucca* was one among a number of US detention centers in Iraq that were set up after the US invasion in 2003. Often heavily populated and inadequately managed, this overcrowded prison germinated what was then the next generation of jihadists. Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi was the most infamous of *Bucca's* detainees. An untold number of future ISIS's members did prison time at this camp, including nine of ISIS top leaders.[17]

Since its inception, *Camp Bucca* became overwhelmed by large quantities of detainees following the crisis in the *Abu Ghraib* prison in 2003. Additionally, after the scandals at *Abu Ghraib*, the rules regarding prisoners' routine in *Bucca* had become laxer. Therefore, *Camp Bucca* had a grim start and soon after a lot of problems began to surface. Detainee assault on US guards became routine. Detainee-on-detainee violence between detainees also soared, and riots became commonplace. In this context, detainees were divided among sectarian lines to ease the tension within the prison (around 85% of the detainees were Sunni Arabs). Additionally, extremists were mixed with moderates within each compound. Soon, the inmates were enforcing Sharia Law and disputes were being settled according to these laws and harsh Sharia courts became routine within the prison system. Islamist extremists would maim and kill fellow inmates for behavior they considered un-Islamic. This situation led to a growing fanaticism since there was an enormous collective pressure on the detainees to become more radical in their beliefs. To make matters worse, there was very little communication between US guards and the US camp administration on the one hand and the detainees on the other. Consequently, most inmates did not know why they were there or when they would be released. This fact aggravated the already-delicate situation within the camp and drove many moderate Sunnis into the hands of radical Islamists. Some reports by US soldiers who served in *Bucca* state that most of the inmates were not angry young men looking for revenge at any cost. They were mostly driven into joining the extremists for their need of physical or financial self-preservation. Others were coerced into radicalizing under the threat of being harmed or even by fears for the wellbeing of their families outside.[18]

Hence, *Al Hawl's* chaotic environment has much in common with *Camp Bucca*: overpopulation, lack of rules for its residents, ongoing violence among residents, frequent assaults on SDF guards, constant riots, extremists mixed with moderates in each of the compounds, strict enforcement of Sharia Law by the more radical residents, lack of proper and effective communication between the SDF personnel and the residents, intimidation and fear. This complex and hectic environment of *Camp Bucca* created a boiling pot for jihadists and the insurgency. The extremists were able to recruit other captured Iraqis through coercion, affinities or by addressing their grievances. The recruitment was followed by intense indoctrination using structured training programs based on a perverted Sharia law interpretation that involved harsh physical sentences to any opposition.

Another event that brings similarities to the current overall situation in IDP camps and prisons in Northeastern Syria and most notably in *Al Hawl Camp* is the earlier "breaking the walls" campaign unleashed by Al Baghdadi in Iraq between 2012 and 2013. This campaign was aimed at freeing jihadists incarcerated in Iraqi prisons. At that time the US forces had already withdrawn from controlling these prisons and they were more vulnerable to prison breaks from the outside. In those years ISIS conducted a series of surprise attacks on the major penitentiaries in the country and was successful in releasing a number of important ISIS members as well as a large number of potential volunteers for joining its ranks. In the *Abu Ghraib* prison attack alone more than 500 detainees were released.[19] More recently, a few months before being killed, Al Baghdadi exhorted ISIS militants to free the women and children held in *Al Hawl*. The call holds a great deal of similarity with the 'breaking the walls' campaign.

The answer to the question of how to counter prison radicalization is never easy. After all, prisons are environments in which disgruntled (and often violent) individuals are kept in order to be punished by the state. Correspondingly, IDP and refugee camps also provide an environment of lawlessness, despair and abandonment. Prisons and IDP camps in Muslim countries as well as in other parts of the world are often overcrowded, unhealthy and uncomfortable places. Individuals confined in such places tend to be receptive to ideologies that praise anti-social and anti-state violence and offers simple but fanatical answers to their grievances.

Certainly, the history of ISIS can be traced back to prison systems in the Middle East. Prisons have had a key importance in several critical moments for this terrorist organization. As will be described in the next section, despite its territorial losses, ISIS is actually far from being defeated in Syria and Iraq. ISIS still counts on its extensive experience as an insurgent force to keep in check the ability of Syrian and Iraqi governments to effectively fight back. As it has aptly done in the past, the group relies on local Sunni Arabs' grievances against the current rulers of Iraq and Syria and also relies on its constituencies, family members and militants detained in many prisons and IDP camps across the two countries.

The Increasing Power of ISIS's Insurgency Campaign in Iraq and Syria

In August 2014 the US began its bombing campaign against ISIS in Iraq and Syria and set up a coalition of countries to fight the self-proclaimed caliphate. The military campaign was named '*Operation Inherent Resolve*'. Following that, Russia also stepped in and began fighting ISIS, but it targeted mostly other insurgent groups that threatened the power of Bashar al Assad. In 2015 ISIS faced some key losses in the border areas with Turkey and Iraq. In 2016 ISIS lost ground as fast as it had captured it. Iraqi security forces backed by the US military forces inflicted heavy damages on ISIS infrastructure and troops. Iraqi forces retook Mosul by mid-2017 and at the end of that year ISIS was considered defeated in that country. In Syria, US-backed Kurdish forces regained territory, including Raqqa in October 2017. However, ISIS was still propping up attacks through its use of social media as well as spreading its ideology while also admonishing militants to conduct attacks worldwide. In 2018, ISIS had already lost 95% of its territory in Iraq and Syria and by the end of the year the only strip of territory the group held was the town of Baghouz at the Iraqi/Syrian border. In March 2019, ISIS finally lost that too and its territorial caliphate was gone.

Nevertheless, ISIS has been proving that it was actually never defeated.[20] The group has never lost its will to fight. As early as in the summer of 2016, ISIS had begun to articulate a post-caliphate strategy, falling back on a insurgency that now seems increasingly difficult to be decisively crushed. ISIS's well-planned and long-term strategy focuses on a rural insurgency based on hit-and-run tactics against government structures and other targets. This tactic is designed to demonstrate that nothing is out of ISIS reach. It also employs targeted assassinations directed at Sunnis who collaborate with government forces. In fact, ISIS has systematically eliminated village leaders and other civilians who have collaborated with other insurgent groups or anti-ISIS forces in both Syria and Iraq. These actions are aimed at preventing the consolidation of opposition to ISIS's rule that might appeal to local people, villages and tribes. ISIS also targets Shia and Kurdish militias.

These attacks are not a sign of desperation. On the contrary, they actually are part of a sophisticated defense strategy of 'low-intensity conflict' which ISIS has adopted ever since it realized as early as 2016 that it would lose its territorial domain. At the time of this writing, ISIS's command and control framework appears to be intact.[21]

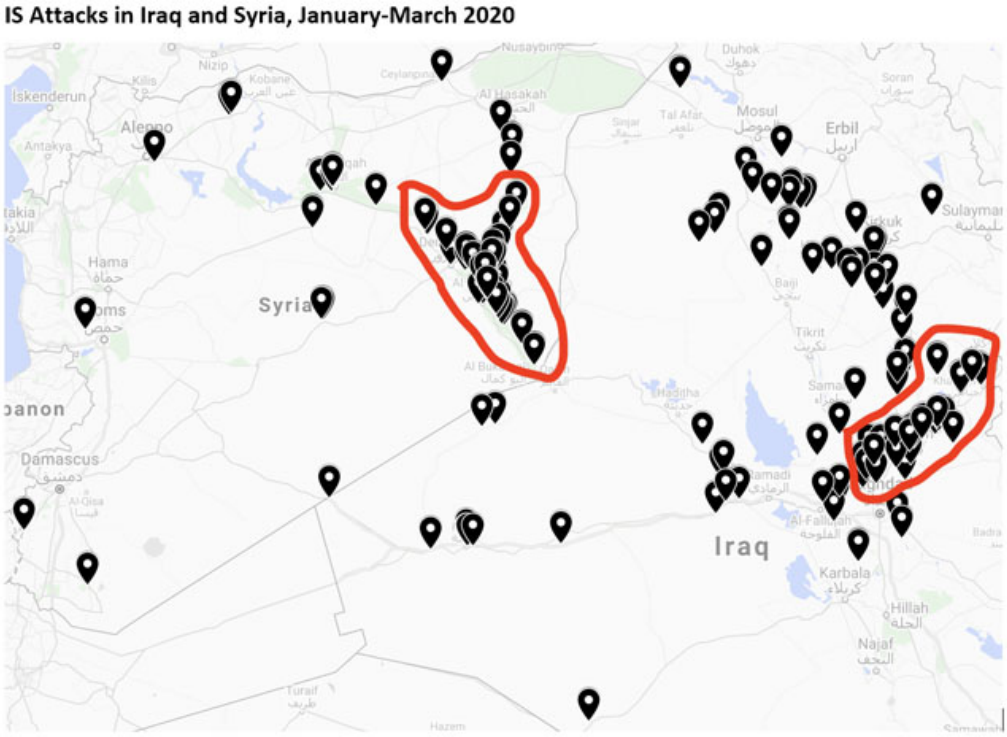

Figure 2: The areas of Deir Al Zour (Syria) and Diyala (Iraq) have seen most of the attacks since the fall of Bahgouz in 2019. This map shows the attacks between January and March 2020. Source: Zelin (2020).

From the fall of Baghouz in March 2019 until March 2020, ISIS has claimed around 2,000 attacks in Iraq and Syria. Two governorates, one in Iraq and one in Syria, saw most of the attacks: Deir Al Zour (Syria) with 580 attacks and Diyala (Iraq) with 452 attacks. These statistics demonstrate that ISIS has a solid presence in these areas where its forces appear to be stronger and very capable.[22] Moreover, ISIS has benefited from its strategic depth in the desert areas in Southeastern Syria (especially to the south of highway M20). There the group has been recently able to hide, structure and launch bold attacks against Syrian military and security forces (albeit Syria's regime claims that this area is under its government control). A few months ago (April 2020) ISIS's attacks against Syrian military and pro-regime forces near Al Sukhnah have left many dead. Also, in the province of Deir Al Zour, ISIS has recently (July 2020) started to target tribal leaders and elders in a series of ambushes. The frequently successful attacks carried out by ISIS have shown it has stepped up its operations in the past few months. These territories are valuable for its insurgency, as they contain important gas fields as well as the highway M20 that connects Deir Al Zour to Homs and Damascus. Equally important, the desert itself provides the insurgents with a perfect spot to hide in and operate. Besides, ISIS has been taking advantage of the COVID-19 outbreak in Syria and the consequent quarantines and curfews imposed by the regime to contain the virus. ISIS has recently launched bolder operations, taking advantage of the fact that the government's forces have been recently depleted due to the quarantine measures.[23]

ISIS's insurgency campaign has aimed at both degrading governance structures and slowing reconstruction efforts. It contributes, thus, to the perpetuation of state failure and violence in war-torn Syria as well as in troubled and politically fragile Iraq. It also takes into account that, at some point in the future, ISIS will seek to regain territorial control in Iraq and Syria. Meanwhile, another key component of its insurgency and long-term strategy lies in the IDP camps and prisons across Syria and Iraq. Thousands of ISIS fighters and their family members as well as other people that lived within former ISIS territories were rounded up in ISIS last stronghold and taken to IDP camps and prisons within the conflict zone, mostly in the Northeastern part of Syria, which is still under SDF control.[24]

Currently the total population interned in the camps and prisons in Northeastern Syria surpasses 100,000 people. From these, about 92,000, mostly women and children, have been held in IDP camps. Another approximately 10,000 ISIS male fighters are detained in prisons. There are no good data on how deeply these detainees and IDP camp residents have been ideologically indoctrinated by ISIS. However, radicalization efforts by ISIS have been stronger for about a year.[25] The prisons and camps can potentially provide the insurgency with fighters, facilitators, supporters and a future generation (the children) for their state-building project. If the ISIS insurgency eventually gains the upper hand in the desert and in the small settlements in East Syria in the near future, the women and children housed in *Al Hawl*, once freed, will most likely become a core element for achieving ISIS's territorial objectives.

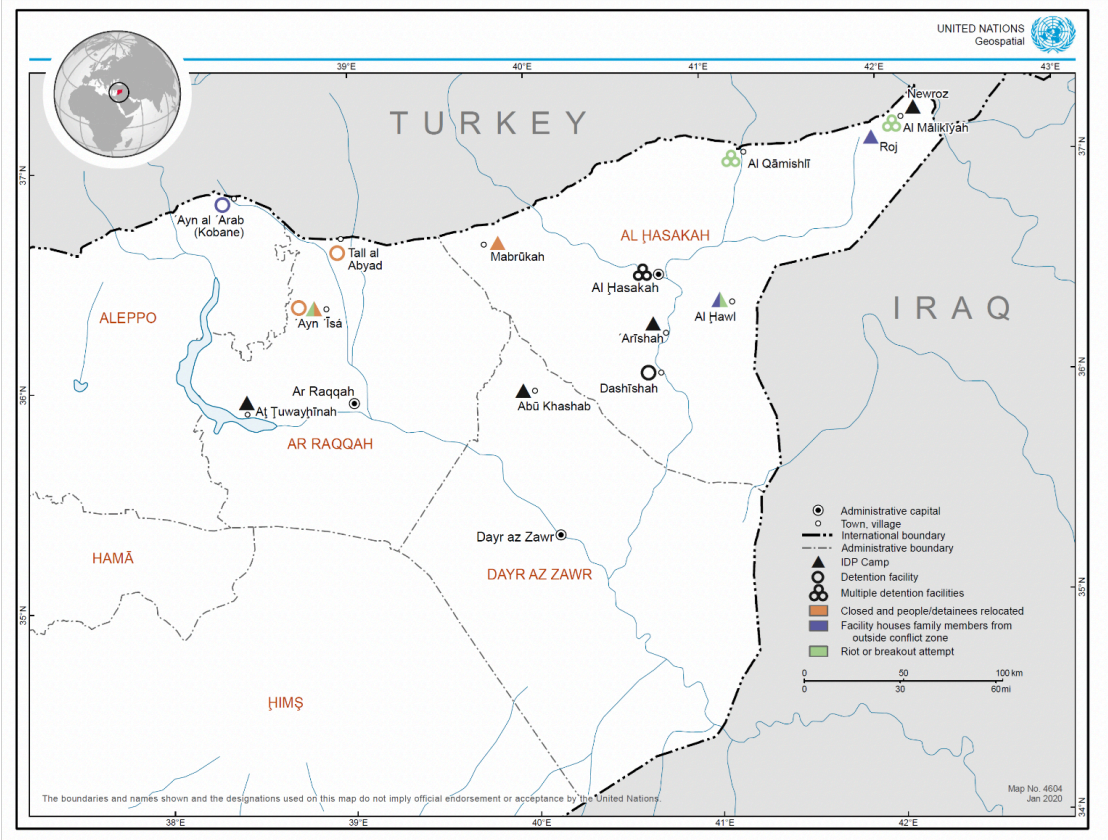

Figure 3: Map of detention facilities and IDP camps Northeastern Syria. 2020. Source: UN S2020/53 (2020).

Correspondingly, a rural insurgency enables ISIS to not only degrade its adversaries, but also to recruit new members and prepare the ground for its long-term survival. This is especially true in the areas of Syria's and Iraq's contiguous borders. Some authors dub it '*Syraq*' (mimicking the 'Afpak' expression). The '*Syraq*' landscape extends deep into Syria and Iraq, with favorable geographical and sociopolitical conditions to help jihadists survive and linger on. Additionally, ISIS considers both countries to be a single front, thus dispersing its militants and fighters (including die-hard foreign and local fighters as well as important commanders who were preserved for future actions) in the area spreading from Al Sukhnah/Central Syria and Deir Al Zor/Eastern Syria to Anbar and Diyala provinces in Iraq. There is an estimate that the ISIS insurgent force comprises of between 10,000 and 14,000 fighters plus 3,000 foreign fighters in both Iraq and Syria. The 'Syraq' desert has been vital for ISIS's survival strategy since it provides a number of excellent spots for fuel and water depots as well as transportation routes. It also allows ISIS to establish alliances with nomads and smugglers. Thus, ISIS has been able to regroup, coordinate sleeper cells, reorganize its funding, hide money in caches and make more money through extortions. Consequently, the group has remained capable of planning and executing attacks such as roadside IED attacks, mortar strikes, raids on military and police outposts, attacks on infrastructure, and so on.[26]

The governments of Syria and Iraq recognize that these border regions are their soft underbellies and a source

of vulnerability They know their outreach is limited in this part of their countries. In these areas where Sunni Arabs form the majority of the population, the US-led anti-ISIS coalition has not partnered with any viable local forces to fight against ISIS and capture towns previously governed by them. Rather, it has partnered mainly with Kurdish forces which are alien to that battle space. Currently, this landscape sees a lot of Shia and Kurdish militias. Most of this region has seen heavy fighting and now lies in ruins. Furthermore, the presence of Shia and Kurdish militias increase the sectarian tension in this whole area.[27]

In the meantime, ISIS has devised a strategy to evade the US precision air strikes that have depleted its forces over the years due to overwhelming US air power. As a result, ISIS progressively began refraining from engaging in urban combats, costly battles and conventional assaults and raids. ISIS has made its chain of command and control partially flexible by allowing small groups of fighters to make their operational decisions autonomously, based on local circumstances and needs. Therefore, most of its small cells have avoided direct engagement with their adversaries in order to minimize losses.[28]

Another important feature in ISIS post-caliphate strategy is the use of the cyberspace through local and international networks. This move helped them to reorganize its chain of command and keep its finances, logistical support, intelligence, security, indoctrination and media capabilities still functional, albeit depleted. ISIS has been investing more resources in the cyberspace since its territorial defeat. The cyber realm allows ISIS to work on its funding, indoctrination, spread of propaganda and coordination of its cells. Thanks in part to its cyber capabilities, ISIS networks in Iraq have received in 2019 a constant flow of combatants who were fleeing from the conflict zone in Syria. In fact, ISIS networks in Syria are now reduced if compared to the ones the group has in Iraq. Besides, the Iraqi networks have been providing key material support for ISIS comeback in Syria.[29] The cyberspace has also provided ISIS with the adequate tools to be in touch with the women and children housed in *Al Hawl.* Therefore, the residents have been able to access and create propaganda, text messaging, receive money, and contact facilitators, among others. ISIS solid cyber presence has allowed the group's leadership to sync its current objectives with its fighters, followers and supporters across the prisons and IDP camps in Syria.

Additionally, as mentioned above, Al Baghdadi released an audio clip in September 2019, urging ISIS militants to focus on freeing its detainees and dependents from IDP camps and prisons in Syria and Iraq. Thanks to its cyber capabilities, this message reached Al Hawl's residents and greatly boosted their motivation. Even though ISIS in Northeastern Syria might be currently impaired and unable to take in scores of militants and their family members in case of a prison break, it has already made arrangements to eventually direct them to Idlib province where the group has resources and facilities. In fact, ISIS has been smuggling women and children out of *Al Hawl* for about a year and directing many of them to Idlib. Alternatively, ISIS has also successfully relocated a number of women and children smuggled out of *Al Hawl* to the towns of Deir Al Zor and Raqqa. In the future, if a large prison break happens in ISIS core area, it could be another version of the 'breaking the walls' campaign waged on Baghdadi's orders during 2012 and 2013 in Iraq. An action such as this would be particularly beneficial for ISIS insurgency but catastrophic for the fragile region of Northeastern Syria whose delicate stability has been already eroded during the last year. Moreover, 'Operation Peace Spring' launched by Turkey in Northern Syria in October 2019 has exposed the precariousness of the current security management configuration within camps and prisons manned by SDF in the area.[30]

Given the ongoing critical conditions of the internment camps, if the window of opportunity to process the women and children justly and humanely is missed, the rehabilitation attempt may come too late and many of them may end up as obstinate extremists. ISIS counts on the ineffectiveness of its adversaries in dealing with this situation to go on with its indoctrination campaigns within camps like *Al Hawl*. As a consequence, ISIS might be able to reach one of its core objectives: to prepare, indoctrinate and train its next generation of fighters.

Al Hawl Camp Internal Dynamics and Terrorism Facilitation: A Crime X Terror Nexus

ISIS has realized that it has a singular opportunity to exploit the humanitarian and security crisis in IDP camps and prisons across Northeastern Syria. In the long run, SDF simply does not have the resources to maintain more than a 100,000 people under its custody in a network of detention facilities and IDP camps. Besides, some sources estimate that in *Al Hawl* alone 20,000 of its residents are suspected hard core ISIS militants. Thus, the terror group has been networking effectively within the camp for more than a year. There is an inflow of money for ISIS militants within. These resources often sent by ISIS insurgents help the women to keep the 'caliphate' activities inside the camp: indoctrination, basic services for its members, fulfillment of basic needs not delivered by aid workers and camp authorities, purchase of items such as cell phones, communication lines, weapons, and others. These financial resources also serve to bribe officials, buy counterfeit documents, pay smugglers to move families outside the camp - among other things. ISIS might be gradually setting the stage for a major future breakout of both detained fighters and displaced persons as part of its resurgence campaign in Syria.[31] One particular point that differentiates *Al Hawl* from other IDP Camps in Northeastern Syria, e.g., *Al Roj* and *Ain Issa* (the later collapsed after the Turkish invasion) is that its residents are more connected to ISIS and more radicalized than the ones interned in some other camps. Some sources claim that *Al Hawl* residents are the "ruling class of ISIS". *Al Roj* actually houses a large number of dissidents who openly express their disappointment about ISIS. Women interned in *Al Roj* and *Ain Issa* (before it fell apart) have said that they felt safe and comfortable to dispose of ISIS 'uniform' of black *abaya* and *niqab* for good. Instead they were wearing loose outfits in light colors and even sunglasses.[32]

As the dire situation in *Al Hawl* lingers on, ISIS members within take advantage to indoctrinate, coerce and radicalize other residents. This remodeling of the camp by ISIS radical females has produced a gang-like atmosphere. Their activities clearly look like a deliberate plan since Al Baghdadi had allegedly ordered ISIS females to surrender *en masse* to the SDF in February 2019. He was probably already determined to infiltrate facilities like *Al Hawl*, since his previous experience of recruiting, radicalizing and indoctrinating fellow prisoners at *Camp Bucca* proved to be a success more than a decade earlier.[33]

Meanwhile, the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak has reached Syria since March 2020 and some of *Al Hawl's* residents have started to panic, fearing for their lives. The already grim conditions in the camp might now get even worse. The pandemic has forced the SDF to restrict visits in all IDP camps run by them. However, in the case of *Al Hawl*, the frequent and illicit communications and trade between residents, smugglers and ISIS fighters could surely aggravate the spread of the virus. On the other hand, ISIS has been broadcasting propaganda through its media channels stating that the pandemic is a divine revenge for the Muslims who fell victim of Coalition strikes in Baghouz more than a year ago. Thus, ISIS propaganda presents Coronavirus as a 'soldier of Allah'. Moreover, inside *Al Hawl*, radicalized women have been declaring that the virus does not infect true Muslims like them because they are pious, fear Allah and follow the path laid by Abu Bakr Baghdadi. They claim the only Muslims infected and killed by the virus are the ones who are not true believers.[34]

Since the beginning of 2019, *Al Hawl* Camp has been structured as a two-tier system; one that is stricter for the foreigners housed in the annex and another, much laxer, in the section that houses Iraqis and Syrians. It is worth emphasizing that both sections accommodate mostly ISIS families. In the foreigner's section of the camp, SDF guards noticed that the radicalization towards ISIS is more intense. Eventually this section of the camp would mimic an ISIS territory with ISIS flags flying high and a rigid code of conduct, among other things. It is unusual to find a girl over eight years old without a veil. Some residents behave as if they are still part of *Al Khansa* Brigade, the women-led *Hisba* police that acted during caliphate times. The women indoctrinate the children daily and keep telling them that the SDF killed their fathers and destroyed their homes, fostering hate not only towards the SDF but also directed at everyone they deem to be infidels such as aid workers and NGO personnel. Hence, they have been constantly exposed to an extremist worldview by their ISIS supporting mothers. The children have no choice about their upbringing: they have not been able to be children, there are no playgrounds, no regular schools, no psychological services available, no deradicalization programs for the ones educated in the ISIS system from 2013 to 2019. Furthermore, the women in this sector of the camp created

a sub-section even more radical and violent than the rest of the annex. This new subsection was named '*Jabal Al Baghouz*', which stands for 'the mountain of Baghouz', referring to the very last edge of territory held by ISIS on the banks of Euphrates river where their husbands fought and were defeated by the Coalition troops in March 2019. ISIS militants held in *Al Hawl* believe that '*Jabal Al Baghouz*' is the spot where the caliphate will be reborn. Their collective experience as camp residents under hardships has strengthened their bonds, regardless of their nationalities and past way of life. If released or broken out in the future, they will probably be more committed to ISIS than ever before. The scenario in *Al Hawl* demonstrates the continuing growth of women and their role in jihadist groups, especially within ISIS. This is the place where the seeds of ISIS territorial resurgence have been sown.[35]

Life in the other section of the camp destined for Iraqis and Syrians is less strict even though most are ISIS families. They also receive better health care and services. In that section they are allowed more freedom of movement within the camp although they cannot leave the camp. They can even access the outside world through the use of the hawala money transfer system; mobile phone technology is also allowed in this section so they can communicate with those outside. There has been a constant inflow of money to *Al Hawl*'s ISIS families within this annex through money orders originated overseas and from within Syria. Money has been coming from at least 40 different countries as well as the Syrian province of Idlib and surroundings (Idlib town, Sarmada and Harem, mostly). There are two hawala remittance offices in this part of the camp. These money orders come through a well-established local hawala system authorized by the camp authorities. The authorities, in turn, control how much money the residents receive monthly as the SDF guards have access to the ledgers. Hawala employees within the camp claim they receive dozens of remittances daily and an estimate sum of between US$ 15,000 to US$ 20,000 USD per month is destined for the ISIS resident families. When analyzing the remittances, one can see that approximately 60% of the total value received each month in *Al Hawl* is coming from Turkey. This fact does not mean that the money is originating from Turkey, but rather that the country might be a transit point for money orders and also a way to disguise the country of origin. The camp administration usually does not allow any individual to receive more than US$300 at once. In case the total sum received in a given transaction is over this limit, SDF allegedly keep the excess to be returned to the owner the following month. SDF argues that this policy is aimed at discouraging the residents from hiring smugglers to illegally take them out of the camp. It is worth noting that some countries criminalize money remittances to *Al Hawl*'s residents as terrorism financing based on their counterterrorism laws. Therefore, some relatives back home have been afraid of sending money through both the legal channels—such as *PayPal* and other apps—and the irregular hawala system. This situation enables ISIS insurgents outside the camp to aid the women who have no other option but to turn to ISIS for support. Furthermore, in an effort to curb illegal money remittances to camp residents, the US Treasury has recently (July 2020) sanctioned individuals and hawala offices both in *Al Hawl* and inside Turkey for providing financial support for ISIS.[36]

Not all camp residents are ISIS militants or ISIS families. Apart from those few original camp inhabitants who are simply IDP, there are others who were coerced into ISIS through forced marriages with fighters. There are also those who later became disillusioned with ISIS and just want to go home. Some authors claim that in the year 2020 a growing number of women have become tired, disappointed and have lost the passion for ISIS now that they realized its leadership used them only to advance their ideological goals. According to some reports, loyalty towards ISIS has been falling steadily in 2020. Many women do not believe in ISIS anymore and no longer want to be part of it.[37]

The women who are willing to go home have been increasingly seeking the services of human smugglers to be taken out of the camp with their children. Most of their home countries will not repatriate them due to their domestic policies. Smuggling in and out of the camp happens on a daily basis. All sorts of goods have been brought in as well as residents have been smuggled out of the camp through arrangements that include bribing SDF guards to allow them out, followed by an onward overland travel to places such as Deir Al Zour or even as far as Idlib province in Northwestern Syria.[38] All these smuggling enterprises have encouraged the smugglers to set up their 'businesses' in the vicinity of the camp so they can promptly access their clients' needs and approach the guards that partner with them more easily and frequently. Consequently, crime and

the 'shadow economy' have progressively taken its grip not only around the camp and into *Al Hawl*'s structure, but also in the adjacent region.[39] It should be noted that both sections of the camp have taken advantage of these criminal dynamics.[40]

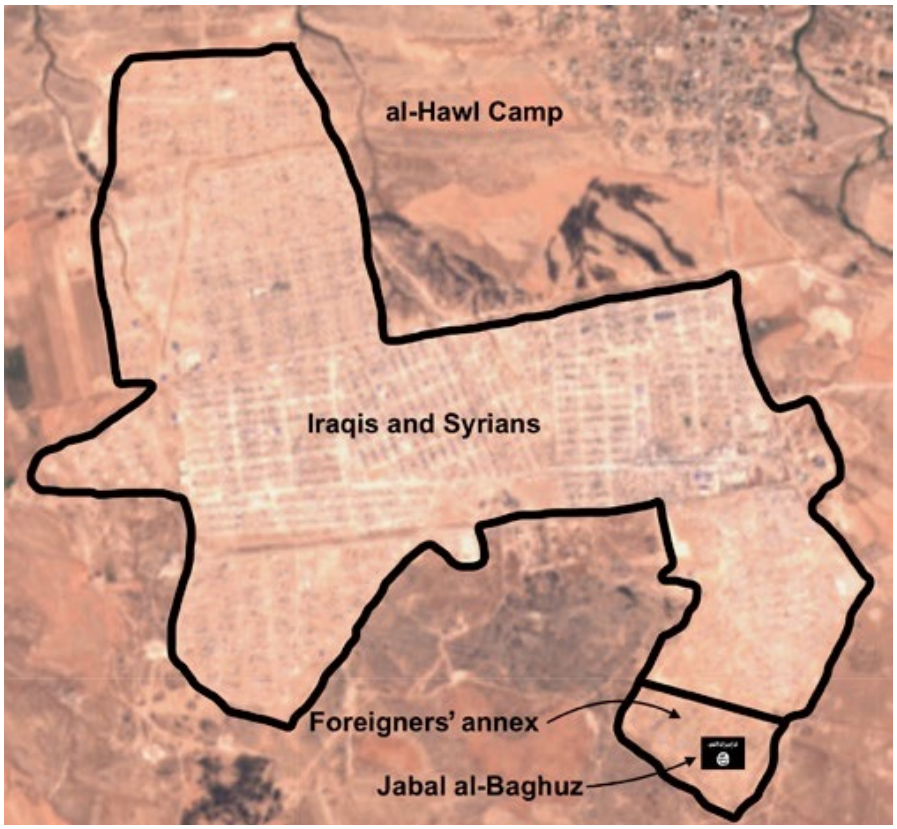

Figure 4: *Al Hawl Camp*. 2019. Source: Zelin (2019)

The cyberspace and particularly social media have helped ISIS women at *Al Hawl* to spread propaganda, work on fundraising and also engage in smuggling of all sorts. In the past, during the territorial phase of ISIS, women were generally excluded from producing and/or participating in propaganda created by its media outlets. Nowadays, in the insurgency/post-territorial phase, the women of ISIS have taken prominence in the online campaigns since they have been creating and spreading their own propaganda material and cyber actions. Around June 2019, pro-ISIS media channels in social media have started disseminating propaganda material from *Al Hawl*, e.g., videos of women pledging loyalty to Baghdadi, women and children raising an ISIS flag inside camp, children inside camp chanting pro-ISIS slogans, etc. The women within *Al Hawl* competently manage accounts on an array of social media platforms, but most frequently *Telegram*, *Facebook* and *Twitter*. Whenever their accounts are shut down by a social media provider due to extremism content offenses, they quickly create several new ones, using disposable email accounts. Moreover, at around that same time (June 2019) supporters of ISIS launched campaigns on *Telegram* to raise funds and to advertise the presence of ISIS in *Al Hawl*. Calls for liberating the camp's population within *Telegram* channels have also surfaced.[41]

One example is the *Telegram* channel 'Justice for Sisters' created by ISIS supporters in June 2019 that used to post messages in Arabic, English and German. This channel would call for donations to support ISIS women in *Al Hawl* via *PayPal*. By the time this account was aired, there were already several *PayPal* accounts links posted on this channel. A video message requesting donations from Muslims posted in its very beginning showed four women holding cardboards written in the languages above that read: "To the monotheists in all parts of the World: take us out of *Al Hawl Camp*". This campaign has raised thousands of euros in a few days. This can be explained by the large amount of people subscribing to this channel within the first days it was created. Among

other things, this channel had clear instructions for users to avoid detection by authorities and *PayPal* IT managers. *Telegram* removed the channel a month later. However, other channels with the same objectives and links to *PayPal* accounts for collecting donations have popped up on *Telegram* as well as on other social media platforms. In July, ISIS supporters created several *Telegram* channels titled '*Kafel*' to offer all sorts of support for ISIS families in *Al Hawl*, including calls for Muslims to 'free the prisoners'. The plea for their release is constant in these channels. In spite of *Telegram* IT management's efforts to repeatedly take down these channels - it has deleted the original ones in Arabic and French - ISIS supporters and members have not only recreated and renamed them 'Islamic *Kafel* for after Deletion' but have also taken measures to secure these communications. All these channels have enabled some online crowd funding campaigns that have managed to raise thousands of US dollars in a short amount of time. Other crowd funding efforts have clearly urged people to raise funds for ISIS families so they could afford smugglers to help them escape. To avoid being taken down, they have made attempts to disguise and dissimulate the aim of the fundraising adopting labels such as 'Honeymoon in Vienna' or an invite for a boxing event, among others.[42]

According to this author's sources and fieldwork, it is still unclear how often these crowdfunding campaigns are successful and exactly how many women have benefited from it and have managed to escape from the camp by bribing guards. It should be taken into consideration that most of the successful smuggling of persons' arrangements in Syria actually do not happen online. They may start online, through the first contacts between the 'client' and the smuggler, but they go on and develop outside of cyberspace. Mostly because the parties involved already know that the scrutiny on terrorists' communications is routine for intelligence agencies and social media service providers.[43] Besides, results from fieldwork and subsequent interviews revealed that, since mid-2019, there have been numerous reports of scams involving fake smugglers who offer their services on the Internet. A similar claim was made by Vera Mironova whose reports in her Twitter account depict fake smugglers deceiving women in *Al Hawl*.[44] These scammers claim they can take people out of *Al Hawl* and also out of Syria, demanding that their prospective clients pay them upfront a percentage of their fees. The scammers appear to be very knowledgeable about the smuggling routes and their practicalities. They usually make promises that seem credible and solid, therefore very convincing; once the victims wire the money to them, they disappear, and the victims of the scam never hear of them again. Every now and then women within *Al Hawl* fall prey to such bogus schemes and are deceived by false promises. This fact might explain two current trends: first, why several of the residents who want to escape have been resorting to the smugglers that are introduced by people who know them. And, second, the increasing numbers of middlemen both among the Kurdish and the women within the camp who are able to connect prospective clients with smuggling networks outside the wire.[45]

When Crime and Terror Converge: How ISIS Takes Advantage of Human Smuggling in Syria

Since the second half of 2019, there has been an increasing number of escapes from SDF-run IDP camps and detention facilities across Northeastern Syria. Authors usually claim that this is a result of the US administration's decision to pull back its special operations forces from the area and the Turkish invasion of SDF-held territory. The subsequent loss of US influence in the region impacted negatively on the SDF's ability to ensure that both ISIS male prisoners and ISIS wives would be securely held in the camps and prisons.[46]

Law enforcement investigations have revealed that terrorists and their families have taken advantage of established migrant smuggling routes that have been set up in the region since 2011. Migrant smuggling follows the same logic as other transnational criminal markets: supply and demand. The core of this business is to circumvent existing regulations and thus facilitate irregular border crossings. There are several routes out of Syria and the Middle East that have been used by tens of thousands of refugees bound mostly for Europe. Smugglers advertise their services in places where migrants and displaced people can be easily reached such as social media networks, refugee camps and diaspora communities. Besides, smugglers do not mind helping terrorists to move across borders as long as they pay them well.[47] Therefore, when human smuggling is

exploited by terrorists, it becomes one of the numerous manifestations where crime and terrorism converge, either as a deliberate material support for terrorism or as an unintentional support. Terrorist groups, ISIS included, take advantage of illicit human smuggling to advance their strategic objectives. In the case of ISIS, this connection is used to enable the resurgence of its caliphate by sending its fighters, families and facilitators to safe zones or to places where they can coordinate and plot future terror attacks. Hence ISIS needs to coordinate both the relocation of its fighters as well as their families held in facilities like *Al Hawl.* As a result, partnering with human smuggling networks became a pillar for this strategy. It is worth mentioning that this author's fieldwork suggests that thus far, ISIS relies on pre-existing human smuggling networks rather than running its own; although it does have its own 'smugglers of choice'.

Some migrant smuggling networks that do not involve online transactions have been uncovered in recent years. They are made up of routes that seem to be counterintuitive: Syrian, Iraqi and Eastern African nationals have been smuggled to Europe and the USA through South Asian and Latin American countries, using counterfeit and stolen or fraudulently obtained European (mainly) passports and visas. These routes are beneficial for terrorists and criminals alike since they provide covert and illogical itineraries that baffle authorities worldwide. When originated in Northeastern Syria, these schemes usually involve the participation of SDF personnel who help with the overland escort of the 'clients', often as far as the borders of Turkey, Iraq or Lebanon. From there, they take commercial airlines to Latin America, Southeast Asia, and East Africa and then to Europe or the USA. A year ago, the cost of an escape from *Al Hawl* to the borders of Turkey usually started at around US$ 3,000 to US$ 5,000 excluding the expected bribes. Meanwhile, the costs to the Iraqi and Lebanese borders have always fluctuated widely. However, they are eventually doubled if the 'client' needs a doctored passport. As for the ongoing travel out of the Middle East, the costs vary greatly.[48] Nowadays, the costs have climbed steeply, especially due to the increasing awareness by law enforcement agencies about the destination countries as well as the number of people involved in the smuggling schemes. More people involved means an increasing amount of people to be bribed. Also, the growing chaos in Syria and the neighboring region, combined with the impact imposed by COVID-19 related travel restrictions even inside Syria have also contributed to this increase of costs. All these facts have been extensively used by smugglers in their narrative to justify to desperate people within the camps why their services have now a higher fee. Besides, it is not unusual for greedy human traffickers eager to exact an extortionate fee to exaggerate to their clients the increasing difficulties in completing a journey due to travel constraints.[49]

Upon analyzing several human trafficking cases, it can be easily seen that the key to a successful transnational human smuggling plan is the combination of a high-quality forged/adulterated/stolen/fraudulently obtained travel document and a reliable route. Skilled smugglers usually have a portfolio of routes and a range of travel documents to offer to their clients. However, the type of route and the quality of the travel document to be used by the migrant will depend on how much money the clients want to pay for the arrangement provided by the criminal organization. The more they pay, the better the quality of the documents and routes. The smugglers handle the necessary documents in support of the fraudulent passports provided, visas needed, the overland travel arrangements, the flight tickets and the lodging along the route.[50]

High-quality document forgery requires technical skills and know-how. The transnational smugglers that offer their services in Syria have to resort to specialized professionals who manufacture and supply travel and identification documents. Thus, the smugglers usually source these documents from others instead of manufacturing the documents themselves. There are a few hubs of document forgery that have been identified as suppliers for Syrian migrants. The main hubs of passport/visa procurement—for the routes to Europe that go through South Asian and South American countries—are based in Turkey, Thailand, Brazil and Paraguay. Despite the prevalence of forged travel documents in this market, it's been increasingly common to abuse genuine passports that were either stolen or sold by the bearers themselves (the bearers sell their own passport and report it stolen). In such cases, the genuine passports are used for impersonation by 'look-a-likes' in which the smuggled migrants travel with passports that belong to persons who resemble them. This has been used more recently due to the fact that some countries have introduced more advanced techniques for document fraud detection. For the same reason, the technique of replacing the passport photo by the migrant's one has

not been used much lately. Instead, the forgers substitute the whole bio-data page. In some cases, this is done with the help of corrupted government officials. However, techniques for adulterating a passport/ID abound. There are several other methods of doing it.[51]

Document forgers operate in different ways. Some forgers work individually, and their business is local supplying the documents for local people. Others work in groups or networks and are structured as a transnational criminal enterprise. Yet others work directly with a transnational crime organization of another sort. The networked document forgery organizations are usually comprised of people of various nationalities who work in a coordinated fashion through established forgery syndicates across different countries. Both situations can be seen in the case of Syrian migrants since 2011. The organizations that work on the routes involving South American and South Asian destinations are usually based in the hubs mentioned in the paragraph above. Generally speaking, document forgers do not specialize in one type of document. Rather, they supply a range of travel and identity documents according to their clients' needs. It is worth noting that passport and visa forgery commonly go hand in hand. In terms of advertising their products, these groups usually adopt one of two options: they advertise them on the Internet, either through social media platforms or through an illicit online store hosted on the Dark Web; or, they work directly with the smugglers tailoring the documents to their needs; avoiding, in such cases, the use of social media or the Internet to do business. Additionally, several investigations have found that these travel documents and visas can be used again and again after being returned to the smugglers' network. This is especially true with the higher-quality forged documents as well as visas. Whenever the smuggling network wants to re-use a passport or visa, they usually send the passport/visa/passport pages through regular mail back to its origin or to another destination operated by the network. This *modus operandi* has often been observed in the case of routes out of Syria.[52]

Considering the type and quality of the route, law enforcement investigations have acknowledged that criminals engaged in transnational smuggling of people often manage to change their routes looking for a combination that offers the least resistance. When they realize that a certain country is controlling better its land, maritime borders and airports they quickly shift their routes and flight hubs. Migrant smuggling often uses a combination of air, land and sea travel. Smugglers constantly test and adapt the routes, especially the air ones as the state control tends to be more dynamic in these routes. The most successful routes are used for larger groups. Besides, there are a number of cases of 'route testing' uncovered by investigations in which the persons (smugglers) responsible for checking the routes have travelled a few dozen times within a year, to the same transit country, using the same routes in and out, just to ensure the suitability of the itinerary.[53]

One of the routes that has been used quite successfully by transnational smugglers to take Syrian migrants to Europe has relied on South American countries as a jumping point on their way to their European destination. This route is manned by criminal organizations based in Turkey and South America (particularly in Brazil). First, the smugglers take their clients from several regions in Syria (rural and urban environments), including IDP and refugee camps. Then—following the logic described above—the migrants are first driven overland to Turkey, Lebanon or Iraq (Kurdistan region) from where they fly mainly (but not exclusively) to Dubai, Addis Ababa or to Istanbul. Right after, they take a flight to a South American country (generally Brazil, as São Paulo is the main airport hub within the continent). Once in South America, they are handed counterfeit/doctored/stolen European Union countries' passports for their onward air travel to the European continent. By the time they arrive in South America they are usually carrying their Syrian passports. However, some already leave the Middle East with a fraudulent European passport. At that point, they have dozens of international airports to choose from for their flight to Europe. The amount of money the migrants pay to the smugglers in these routes has been varying frequently because the routes' safety has been constantly shifting since 2011 due to preventive measures put in place by local authorities. This is especially true for the air hubs. Besides, the smugglers have been offering their clients different types of accommodation, mainly in the smuggling hubs of Brazil and Turkey. The clients can choose between 'safe places' or regular hotels. 'Safe places' other than regular hotels command a higher smuggling fee. Additionally, if the amount of bribes to be paid to state officials becomes higher, so will the costs for the client. Furthermore, through this author's sources and fieldwork it could be seen that over time there has been an increase in the use of better-quality passports, either forged or fraudulently

obtained ones, on these routes. This means that there has been a gradual increase in the fees charged by the smugglers. In 2019, the average going rate was between 5,000 and 12,000 euros. Nowadays the costs can get as high as twice that amount.[54]

Another route to smuggle Syrians into Europe that has been recently uncovered involves countries in Southeast Asia. This is also a counterintuitive route. The smugglers are European citizens with Syrian origins. They look for their clients in Syria and offer them a route that first goes overland to Lebanon or Turkey and then by airplane to Malaysia, then onto Singapore and after that to a European country. The smugglers arrange the migrant's accommodations *en route* and provide them with counterfeit European passports once they are out of the Middle East. Smugglers that work on this route have used more frequently the *Viber* social media platform for communicating with their clients. Malaysia seems to be the place in which the smugglers have their main base and network within Southeast Asia. From Kuala Lumpur, depending on the smuggler/client arrangement, the smugglers may or may not escort the migrants between Malaysia and Singapore, in order to ease this 'tricky' part of the route. Singaporean airport surveillance and scrutiny are said to be stricter. Some even speculate that the smugglers choose to insert Singapore as part of the route in order to allow the migrants to have a Singaporean stamp on their passports aiming at conferring the fake passport with more legitimacy for a later 'easier' entry through migration in Europe. Throughout 2019, the migrants paid an average of 5,000 to 10,000 euros for these services.[55]

Furthermore, ISIS members have resorted to smugglers not only to flee the conflict zone either from detention facilities or from desert hideouts. They also resort to smugglers to be able to get to a place/country in which they can rebuild their terrorist cells. Sources, interviews and field work have revealed that a number of ISIS facilitators who are neither Syrian nor Iraqi citizens have fled the Syrian/Iraqi conflict zone to either neighboring countries or other continents. This includes recruiters, media experts, instructors, logisticians and others who want to stay alive, reconnect with their communities, rebuild their networks and wait for a better opportunity to get back to Syria or Iraq and resume their ISIS caliphate objectives. It should be underlined that the ISIS terrorists who hold those skills are key to ISIS's resurgence as they were part of the administration during ISIS's caliphate times. However, it is still unclear whether this move is part of a bigger strategy outlined by ISIS leadership, or they simply did that due to their better connections with people who could safely take them out of the conflict zone. Moreover, based on this author's experience, quite a few of these ISIS members who in addition hold dual citizenship (e.g., a Western country plus a Middle Eastern/Northern African one) might have chosen to stay in the neighboring region instead of making their way back to the West. This is because remaining closer to ISIS former territory might simply facilitate acts of resource coordination and the establishment of the necessary local connections. After all, going back to the West would probably not serve the purpose of accelerating the rebuild of ISIS's caliphate. Finally, through field research it could be verified that indeed some of these ISIS members who hold dual citizenship have fled Syria and Iraq into Lebanon and Turkey. There they joined family or friends who can provide safe havens and reinsert them into a normal life thus providing them with a cover while away from ISIS territory.[56]

Concluding Remarks

Despite a number of law enforcement investigations in multiple countries since 2011 that led to the arrest of dozens of smugglers and their middlemen, many of the routes and their forged travel document hubs are still active today. This author's fieldwork suggests that the criminal organizations that manage the routes/hubs have proven to be resilient and do not get deterred by a temporary fracture of their structure. The middlemen are easily replaced and their logistics can be efficiently rebuilt again over time.[57]

Thus, countering illegal smuggling of people is never easy. Improved border enforcements only result in displacement of smuggling routes to different border areas, smuggling mechanisms and procedures. These border enforcement measures have not reduced the number of smuggled migrants or the size of the problem. Smugglers have benefited from the inadequate concept adopted by most countries to neutralize it: targeting the routes (border enforcement) instead of targeting the hubs (leadership, finance, logistics). Besides, migrant

smuggling is somehow risk-free for the high-level smugglers who rarely travel with the migrants they smuggle as this job is oft done by low-level members of the criminal organization.[58] However, some successful counter-smuggling investigations have proved that if the smuggler's finance and logistics hubs are thoroughly scrutinized, there is a high chance that the leadership will be caught. An extensive and recent investigation coordinated by the Brazilian Federal Police in close cooperation with US law enforcement agencies and prosecution authorities led to the disruption and dismantling of an international human smuggling organization based in Brazil. This organization has been responsible for the illicit smuggling of scores of individuals, including suspected terrorists from East Africa and the Middle East, into Brazil and eventually into the US and Canada. The organization's inventive and dynamic leadership was arrested and charged in Brazil: Abdifatah Hussein Ahmed (a Somalian national), Abdesalem Martani (an Algerian national) and Mohsen Khademi Manesh (an Iranian national). Equally important, among the migrants smuggled by this criminal organization there were a few suspected Islamist terrorists possibly linked to Al Shabaab, who were arrested in Panamá and Costa Rica after transiting through Brazil.[59] Another recent, far-reaching and successful investigation was also conducted by the Brazilian Federal Police in cooperation with the US Department of Homeland Security and simultaneously carried out in 20 countries. It resulting in dozens of arrests including the one criminal considered to be the most ingenious and successful global human smuggler of our times: the Bengali national Saifullah al Mamun. He controlled an intercontinental smuggling network based in more than 20 countries. This investigation revealed that the smuggling organization has laundered at least US$ 10 million in Brazil between 2014 and 2019, using sophisticated strategies to conceal the movement of its funds. Once more, targeting the smugglers' finance and logistics hubs has proven to be vital for the dismantling of a criminal enterprise.[60]

ISIS has ultimately benefited from these established migrant smuggling networks in the Middle East, especially in Syria. It has moved some of its women and children out of *Al Hawl* and also managed to get some of its combatants out of the country's prisons into places where its cells are better structured such as in the cities of Deir Al Zour, Raqqa, Idlib and several rural spots in the central and southeastern Syrian desert. ISIS likewise has been successful in smuggling its fighters and facilitators out of Syria to Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and beyond. ISIS depends both on criminal networks and criminal 'in-house' capabilities to fuel its insurgency in Syria and Iraq and to extend its grip far beyond the conflict zone.[61] Moreover, as long as the overall living conditions in *Al Hawl* remain dire, the chances that *Al Hawl* will remain an incubator of grievances and radical ideologies that will benefit ISIS's future resurgence remains high. There are over 11,000 foreign women and children that have not been repatriated to their home countries, plus all the Iraqi and Syrian residents that cannot return to their villages.

Socio-politically speaking, Syria has a barely functional government and it will probably remain unstable for the foreseeable future. Bashar Al Assad's regime does not control parts of the country and it is still too weak to assert itself on some of the provinces where it claims to have regained authority. IDP camps are far from being the government's priority. As for Iraq, apart from the Kurdistan region in the north, the rest of the country has also not seen stability for a number of years. The country remains politically volatile and the population unsure about what the future holds for them. Consequently, both countries have been intensely exploited by criminals and terrorists.

States that are crippled by bad governance, abuse of power, weak institutions, absence of internal controls and lack of accountability become vulnerable to constant and deep infiltration by terrorist groups and organized crime. Both thrive in establishing their base of operations in conflict zones and in failing and/or failed states where crime and terror converge more frequently. For terrorists and organized crime, the worse a state's governance, the better for their illegal enterprises. That is why ISIS has been aiming to disrupt reconstruction and stability efforts in both Iraq and Syria ever since it took power, and even more so now during its new insurgency phase. It seems that the governments of war-torn Syria and Iraq cannot revert this alone. The international community has yet to figure out how to properly assist them. One likely first step would be to address the root causes and grievances that made terrorism and organized crime flourish so intensely. A deep look at *Al Hawl Camp* dynamics can provide some answers in this direction since it is a microcosm that undoubtedly mirrors the whole region and its challenges.

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[54] Notes from the field.

[55] Youjin, Low. 'Swedish man jailed for helping Syrian pair try to sneak through Changi airport with fake passports'. Today. 2019. URL: https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/swedish-man-jailed-helping-syrian-pair-try-sneak-through-changi-airport-fake-passports; UNODC. 'Facilitators of Smuggling of Migrants in Southeast Asia: Fraudulent Documents, Money Laundering and Corruption'. 2019. URL: https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific//Publications/2019/UNODC_Facilitators_of_Smuggling_of_Migrants_in_Southeast_Asia.pdf

[56] Notes from the field.

[57] Notes from the field.

[58] Notes from the field.

[59] As an example of a recent successful law enforcement investigation that involved the smuggling of Islamist terrorists from Africa, through Brazil onto the US and Canada, see these links: http://www.pf.gov.br/imprensa/noticias/2019/08/policia-federal-deflagra-operacao-big-five-em-combate-a-exploracao-de-migrantes-em-sao-paulo and https://noticias.r7.com/sao-paulo/pf-inicia-operacao-de-combate-ao-contrabando-de-migrantes-20082019; https://politica.estadao.com.br/blogs/fausto-macedo/pf-poe-operacao-big-five-contra-esquema-de-ilegais-nos-eua/; https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/international-law-enforcement-cooperation-leads-brazilian-takedown-significant-human; https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/international-law-enforcement-effort-leads-brazilian-takedown-significant-human; https://migrantes-otro-mundo.elclip.org/un-negocio-cruel/un-negocio-cruel.html; https://www.jusbrasil.com.br/diarios/261598145/trf-3-judicial-i-capital-sp-13-09-2019-pg-608?ref=topic-lawsuit

[60] For more on the investigation see URL: https://politica.estadao.com.br/blogs/fausto-macedo/do-bras-bangales-cobrava-r-47-mil-para-contrabandear-migrantes-aos-eua/; http://www.pf.gov.br/imprensa/noticias/2019/10/policia-federal-deflagra-operacao-contra-o-contrabando-de-migrantes-e-lavagem-de-dinheiro; https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/human-smuggler-indicted-us-charges-and-arrested-part-brazilian-takedown-significant

[61] Notes from the field.

The Use of Terrorist Tools by Criminal Organizations: The Case of the Brazilian Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC)

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Abstract

The use of guerrilla and terrorist tactics by criminal gangs is not new or rare. However, there is very little research regarding the use of terrorist tools and strategies, such as the construction of narratives and ideology, the use of propaganda, violent communication and psychological warfare, the use of the Internet or even the inclusion of religious references in the rituals of criminal gangs. In this sense, the Brazilian prison gang PCC (First Command of the Capital or Primeiro Comando da Capital, in Portuguese), deemed by many the largest and most dangerous criminal organisation on the continent, presents a unique case that deserves closer investigation. With its evolving sophistication, transnationalization and presence in not only all South American countries but also other continents, there has been considerable debate regarding the best way to classify and define this group. Most approaches have proven to be inadequate to analyse a group which manifests so many stages and facets, depending upon the region of activity and the perspective of the observer. Nevertheless, looking at PCC's history and evolution during its nearly three decades of existence, one may conclude that the concept of "third-generation gangs" offers particularly useful parameters for analysing the terrorist tools employed by the group, i.e., its: 1) politicisation; 2) sophistication; and 3) internationalisation. The use of these parameters of analysis to study the PCC not only helps shed light on organized crime in the region but also dispels some common clichés regarding the operations of Brazilian criminal groups – which are often viewed, especially when studied by foreigners, in a rather monolithic manner. Based on the notion of the crime-terror nexus, the objectives of this article are two-fold: First, to present the wide range of strategies – normally associated with terrorists – used by the PCC and second, using the parameters of the "third-generation gang" concept, to demonstrate that the Brazilian group has become something bigger and more complex than a conventional criminal organisation.

Keywords: Terrorist tactics, organised crime, 3rd generation gangs, PCC, Brazil

Introduction

Over the last three decades, much has been written about the so-called convergence between criminal and terrorist organizations. However, authors are still struggling to define concepts, which often makes the debate "tedious and inconclusive".[1] Arriving at a definition becomes even trickier when we try to analyse organizations that are hybrid [2] and located around the centre of Makarenko's crime-terror continuum.[3] In this perspective, some terrorist entities become more and more involved in criminal activities to the point that their political motivations and ideology become secondary and they increasingly resemble a criminal organisation. Or, conversely, criminal organisations, such as cartels or the PCC (First Command of the Capital/Primeiro Comando da Capital in Portuguese), can transform and reach an ideological or politicization level, which moves them beyond the centre of Makarenko's spectrum, as they begin to exhibit characteristics predominantly associated with terrorist groups. In this regard, there seems to be an important and complex question of gradation that, obviously related to the very controversial definitions of terrorism and organised crime, still needs to be further dissected. In other words, at what point can criminal organisations that use ideological discourse or terrorist tactics be labelled 'terrorists'?

Although the use of terrorist tactics by criminal groups is not uncommon,[4] this article seeks to demonstrate that the Brazilian criminal organisation PCC stands out for having a wider terrorist toolbox. It also employs an ideological narrative to challenge what it calls the "oppressive state"[5] and takes advantage of the Internet and technological innovations for propaganda, violent communication and psychological warfare [6] in order to

intimidate the government while also creating brand symbols, mottos and rituals. In addition to characteristics normally associated with terrorist groups, the PCC also stands out for its longevity and peculiarities. With nearly 30 years of existence, the group has gone through various phases and cannot be viewed as monolithic. It has different characteristics in each of the 26 Brazilian federal states in which it is present, and it likewise acquires and exhibits new nuances and characteristics as it moves into neighboring countries, such as Bolivia or Paraguay.[7]

On the other hand, perhaps its main complexity derives from its nature as a prison gang, whose top leaders are imprisoned and face severe restrictions in their communications.[8] Despite its ability to circumvent such difficulties, through bribes and taking advantage of the deficiencies of an already-overcrowded and precarious penitentiary system, this dynamic often negatively influences the top-down flow of commands, besides hindering an accurate interpretation and analysis by law enforcement officers regarding what happens outside, on the streets of Brazil. Due to its current more horizontal structure, many of PCC's violent actions outside the prison take place at the initiative of lower-level members who are out on the streets. It seems that these cells or "departments" of the group's external structure are not always able to obtain clear endorsement from the confined leadership for their plans and attacks. Thus, this complex dynamic between the organization's internal and external dimensions (i.e., between inmates and members who are out of prison) makes it difficult to determine PCC's motivations and objectives; for instance, when the group, or a cell acting on behalf of the group, attempts to explode a car bomb at the São Paulo forum.[9]

The PCC is therefore very hard to define. As noted by Feltrán,[10] the perception of the group changes depending on the perspective from which one observes it. Whereas ethnographic research carried out in prisons and in communities ideologically dominated by the group leads to the identification of a brotherhood, investigations carried out by police and prosecutors has led them to see a business structure or a criminal network. Metaphors such as "crime masonry", [11] "crime syndicate"[12] or a kind of criminal co-op and "model of criminal cooperation"[13] are often used to describe the PCC. In a similar vein, none of the concepts and "labels" – such as transnational criminal organisation, terrorist group, insurgency, criminal insurgency or third-generation gang – seem sufficient to define and capture the PCC in all its complexity. Nonetheless, Sullivan's analytical criteria in constructing his concept of "third-generation gangs"[14] – i.e., politicisation, sophistication and internationalisation – provide useful parameters for analysing PCC's evolution and set it apart from other Brazilian groups. These criteria also help in drawing parallels between PCC's strategies and those often employed by terrorists, by identifying the terrorist "tools" used, consciously and voluntarily *or* unconsciously and involuntarily,[15] by the Brazilian organization.

Sullivan's concept goes through the evolution of urban street gangs to show that many contemporary organizations have reached new levels of complexity, becoming quasi-terrorist. Thus, in the first generation, local and unsophisticated gangs were devoid of effective leadership and focused on dominating their territory for the practice of committing petty crimes. With the second generation came drug trafficking groups that, with an entrepreneurial vision of market control, proved more cohesive and exhibited more centralized forms of leadership. These could occasionally present some level of politicization of objectives, operate in another country and conduct more sophisticated operations with the eventual use of terrorist tactics. The third generation includes organizations that not only seek profit but are involved with more politicized objectives, with systematic transnational activity and sophisticated operations. The third generation therefore stands out for its high levels of (i) politicization, (ii) sophistication and (iii) internationalization. However, it is worth noting that although the idea of gang generations has been frequently used by defence analysts and practitioners, the concept is still underused for crime-terror nexus studies around the world.[16] In order to analyse a strategically important group such as the PCC, this article shall use Sullivan's three-part analytical framework outlined here whilst also proposing adaptations to it. Thus, in addition to further nuancing the idea of sophistication, on which Sullivan's work does not elaborate much, this article proposes the inclusion of the ideological issue within the politicisation aspect. These additions allow for both a deeper and more accurate analysis of the PCC's objectives and narratives.

It is worth noting that the literature on the group is still incipient, with few books and articles published. There is an emphasis on ethnographic research in prisons and on peripheral regions under influence of the group, as well as historical-descriptive approaches to its emergence and growth. With this in mind, this article contributes to these debates by analyzing the PCC's evolution through the lens of the crime-terror nexus and the notion of third-generation gangs, calling attention to aspects still not fully debated in all their complexity. This exploratory approach also seeks to leverage perspectives obtained through the author's professional experience and off-the- record conversations with officials from Brazil's intelligence agency, Federal and Civil police from different regions, prosecutors and penitentiary intelligence, as well as some of the authors referenced here. These conversations have contributed greatly to the drawing of parallels between the actions of PCC and terrorist groups.

How the Definition of Terrorism Impacts the Analysis of Hybrid Groups Such as the PCC

Although there has been much research about the use of criminal activities to finance terrorist organizations, the use of typical terrorist tactics and tools by criminals remains under-researched.[17] There exist a few authors dedicated to analysing the nature of violence practiced by organizations from Latin American countries such as Mexico and Colombia, who debate the appropriateness and usefulness of labelling the extreme violence practiced by some groups as terrorism.[18] However, even though the Brazilian criminal organisation PCC has become more transnational and achieved prominence amongst South American criminal groups,[19] very little study has been dedicated to analyzing its use of strategies that are commonly associated with terrorist organizations.

It is important to note that, in general, there is no consensus on the use of terrorist tactics by criminals in other parts of the world. In the Mexican case, for example, there is a great deal of controversy in the literature and amongst practitioners. While some authors claim that the violence of cartels can be characterised as terrorism,[20] others debate the usefulness of labelling them as terrorist organizations despite admitting to the complexity of the topic.[21] Most reject the label of terrorism for cartel violence, however, due to the absence of a political or ideological motivation in some of these organizations – even when they recognise the presence of a certain degree of politicization in the immediate objectives of attacks which employ terrorist tactics.[22] In this sense, Mexican groups – or even the PCC, as we shall discuss – do utilize "terrorist tactics" to intimidate the government into either taking action or reversing political decisions. This is nevertheless done with a final and more important objective of safeguarding profits earned from their criminal activities, or preventing the isolation of prison leaders which would disrupt the organization's chain of command and control. To use Schmid's words,[23] acts of terrorism must be "predominantly of political nature", and there is a crucial gradation issue in this debate.

It is thus necessary to briefly discuss the controversial topic of the definition of terrorism, in particular the differentiation between what is meant in this article by terrorist tactics and the phenomenon of terrorism itself. In this sense, this article claims that while criminal organizations such as the PCC do employ strategies normally associated with terrorist groups—which are not only restricted to operational features and guerrilla tactics—it also argues that the use of such strategies is not sufficient to label them as terrorists. As Phillips [24] aptly sums up, despite the controversy around the elements making up the definition of terrorism, there are three terms that figure in most definitions worldwide, according to a study by Schmid and Jongman [25]: 1) violence; 2) the intention to generate fear or terror, generally toward a wide audience; and 3) political motivations.

In the PCC's case, the presence of violence in most of its strategies is uncontroversial. The second element—the intention to generate terror or fear in a wider public than the immediate target—is also a crucial aspect of terrorism. It is necessary, therefore, that terrorist violence also have the intention of sending a message, frightening and influencing others. The mediate target of terrorist acts is usually the general public, but some definitions accept that the audience may be narrower and more specific, such as a specific religious group, the government, or even a specific section of the population. And as this article shall explain, the PCC utilizes not

only terrorist operational tactics—something we also see in other criminal groups—but also (surprisingly) tactics borrowed from a wider terrorist toolkit, including several nonoperational strategies commonly used by terrorists. In addition to attacking politicians, police officers and public transportation, i.e., methods the wider public is more familiar with although these have been used sporadically throughout its history, the PCC often uses extreme violence to send messages to adversaries, potential recruits and the government, always with the intention of instilling fear and exerting influence.

The third element—political motivation—is the most difficult to identify as a constant factor in the history of this Brazilian group, and it is equally difficult to locate consistently in criminal groups from countries such as Mexico. Motivation is essential in the characterization of terrorism, without which we would probably be dealing with ordinary crime in most cases. Thus, terrorism and political violence will always be intimately associated. We usually think of political motivation as being linked to a group's primordial objectives, so intuitively we expect ambitious projects involving the overthrow of a government and its ideology, the founding of a separate state, or the change of highly relevant governmental policies.[26] However, what we see in the case of the PCC and other criminal groups is that the use of violence has an intermediate and ultimate goal of guaranteeing the continuation of criminal activities, removing competition, intimidating criminal prosecutions and making a profit. It is in order to achieve these goals that the PCC reacts to particular public policies or state agents, temporarily implementing violent action with immediate and somewhat "politicized" objectives, such as the change of a specific aspect of prison policy. In this sense, the PCC does not generally have ambitious political aspirations. Instead of overthrowing the government or acquiring political power, its objectives are limited to forcing the state to leave it alone so as to keep on profiting from criminal activities, especially drug trafficking and armed robberies. It is precisely in the moments in which the state's response to crime impacts the organization's leadership and activities that the PCC uses political violence, or at the very least achieves its immediate objectives in a politicized manner. Therefore, while most of the drug-related violence in countries such as Brazil and Mexico is not terrorism as usually defined, there are sporadic incidents that can be categorized as making use of terrorist tactics. As Phillips [27] contends, any action that encompasses two elements of the consensus definition of terrorism, e.g. the use of violence in order to strike fear into others beyond the immediate victims, can be categorized as making use of terrorist tactics. In other words, even if an action might not be technically called terrorism because it lacks high-level political motivation, it still makes sense to categorize such violence as 'terrorist-like' or 'quasi-terrorist'.

It is exactly in moments in which the group decides to confront the state directly and violently—resembling groups from the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro and the cartels in Mexico—that some argue [2] that its violence and strategies can be explained using the notion of criminal insurgency.[29] Although the idea of criminal insurgency seems to make sense when applied to the territorial logic of Rio's criminal groups, such as the Red Command, it is usually a concept of little utility for the PCC, whose dynamics rarely and in few places resemble the clichés about the violence of Rio's favelas, stereotypes that are often reinforced by blockbuster movies such as City of God or Elite Squad. Indeed, if there is one thing that holds true for organized criminal groups in Brazil it is that they do not all behave like those that operate in Rio, especially when it comes to the control of territory. Furthermore, when applied to the analysis of criminal groups, the term "insurgency" presents a certain degree of inadequacy that is also related to the element of motivation. Insurgencies generally have characteristics that criminals do not share, such as the objective of removing or replacing the national government through asymmetric armed conflict waging.[30] In Rio's favelas, although criminals often defy the state and the federal government, the conflict arises much more from territorial disputes over areas used for the drug trade than from any intrinsically political interests of the traffickers. Brazil's organized crime scenario lacks efforts to delegitimize and/or substitute the government.

The PCC seems unique for several reasons. First, because the debate on the characterization of Brazilian narcotrafficking organizations as terrorists takes on nuances that differ from those concerning, for example, the Mexican and Colombian cases. In Brazil, there is little inclination – whether from the press, academia, security agencies or politicians [31] – to label the violence practiced by domestic criminal groups as 'terrorism'. Furthermore, debates around the use of guerrilla and terrorist tactics by the PCC already encounter a practical

barrier. The Brazilian Anti-Terrorism Act (Law 13260/2016) – drafted with little internal debate and under a lot of international pressure at the time of the Olympics 2016 – ended up excluding the political motivation of the perpetrator from its definition of terrorist acts. Such omission is due to a series of historical and political factors,[32] made worse by a moment of extreme political polarization in which the Brazilian government faced adversities in multiple spheres. The country was under a lot of pressure from the UN and the FATF (Financial Action Task Force), which called for it to abide by international guidelines that recommended the approval of national anti-terrorist laws in order to allow countries across the globe to cooperate effectively in countering the threat of terrorism. Since 2013, the country also dealt with massive political protests which, despite lacking clear leadership or a well-defined political agenda, contested expenditures on mega-events such as the Olympic Games and which were often characterised by violence and depredation.[33] To make matters worse, the President at the time—the leftist Dilma Rousseff—found herself in the final stretch of an impeachment process that led her out of office about a month after the law was passed.

The unusual absence of a political incentive in the law's list of motivations was most certainly related to natural fears and conspiracy theories emerging in such troubled and politically polarized times. Such was the scenario in which the legal definition of terrorism was hastily constructed in Brazil. In addition to fears that the law would be used in the future against political opponents or demonstrations, there was a concern within the leftist government base itself, historically against the approval of a terrorism law in the country, that it could be used to persecute social movements, especially those seeking land reform. For this reason, the government approved an article that prohibited the framing of violent acts by social movements deemed legitimate as terrorist. This decision moved away from the initial, more technical spirit of the law, which aimed to consider as terrorist any actor that practised violence as was stated in the original legal definition of terrorism. While there are amendment proposals to the current anti-terrorist law—in an attempt to both repeal this article and include the element of political motivation—it remains in force with the peculiarities mentioned here; defining terrorism as the "practice of violent acts motivated by xenophobia or discrimination or prejudice of race, colour, ethnicity and religion, when committed with the purpose of causing social or generalized terror, exposing people, property, public peace or public safety."[34] The legal definition of terrorism in Brazil is an issue precisely because the political element is one of the most mentioned and almost "consensual" aspects amongst definitions of terrorism adopted by governments and scholars worldwide.[35] As a result, even if we understand that the PCC's violence seeks to intimidate or force the state into doing or not doing something, or, in other words, even if we accept that its violence is underpinned by political objectives, given the legal definition of terrorism in Brazil, the PCC would still not be classified as a terrorist group.

Almost Three Decades of PCC History

In order to fully grasp the use of terrorist tools by the PCC, it is important to first understand the circumstances of its emergence and its evolution to the present, along with the challenges and uncertainties it has been confronted in all these years. In early 2019, both the entire first echelon of the PCC's leadership and part of its lower-level right-hand men were finally transferred from São Paulo's prison system to the Federal Penitentiary System.[36] Once there, these prisoners finally stopped having physical contact with their lawyers and family members, who had been traditionally used for communications as well as for the group's criminal logistics.[37] According to prison intelligence officials, such a strategy seems to have, at least temporarily, interrupted the communication and command network of the organisation, causing numerous problems for the group. Thus, unlike in the case of previous prison transfers which had been manoeuvred by the PCC, the transfer of the group's leadership into the Federal Penitentiary System disrupted the effective communication of directives from the leadership to its operatives.

The period that stretches from the group's foundation to the turn of the century may be considered a stage of ideological dissemination (see Figure 1). The group arose formally in 1993 as a consequence of persistent problems faced not only by São Paulo, but also by the rest of Brazil. In the early 1990s, the prison system was already suffering from a chronic lack of structure in what were overcrowded facilities, as well as insufficient,

ill-prepared, corrupt and violent prison officers.[38] Moreover, the state's inability to guarantee order and the physical integrity of prisoners was rampant, especially when it came to the protection of inmates against rival groups. The regulation of relations between detainees and the organization proposed by the PCC caught the inmates' attention because they touched upon demands that the state had failed to meet.[39] Rebellions and ensuing violent repression created the feeling among prisoners that they needed to come together; that their enemy was an "unjust and oppressive" state. On the outside, in less favoured peripheries, the inefficiency in providing the most basic services—needs often met by criminals—and the violent confrontation between police and criminals, or between rival gangs themselves, produced countless innocent victims. All of this helped facilitate the recruitment of members by organized criminal groups.[40]

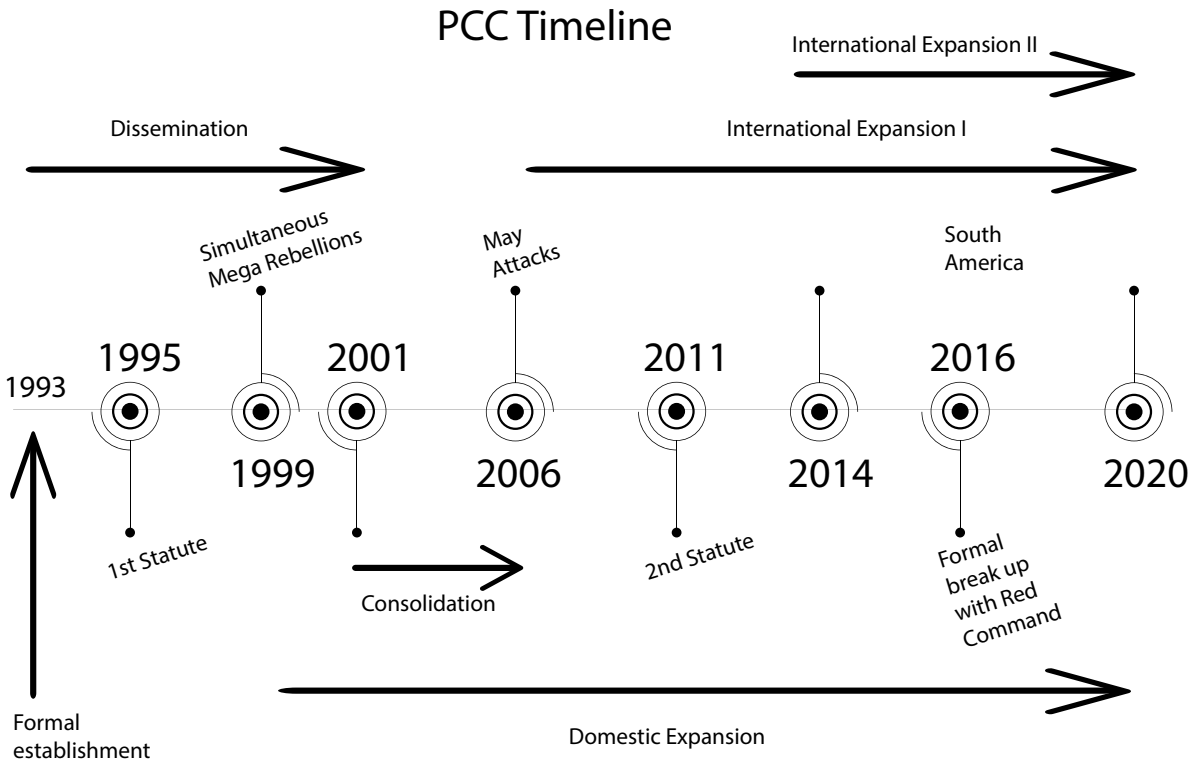

Figure 1- Timeline of PCC's Evolution [43]

In this environment, the PCC was astute in articulating a narrative that not only reflected the inmates' situation but also matched the dissatisfaction of that part of the population living, without great prospects, outside the "promising" world of crime. In this context, slogans such as "a brother does not kill a brother" and "crime must unite" become part of the discourse and ideology responsible for the rapid expansion of the group in the most developed state of Brazil (São Paulo), as well as some of its neighbouring states, over a period of just five years.[41] Beyond the ideological aspect, which was essential in the beginning, other factors may be pointed out to explain the organization's rapid expansion – first in its region of origin, and then in the entire country as well as abroad. The PCC built its reputation through extreme violence, beheadings and even cannibalism aimed at intimidating both the state and its rivals – and it worked. Rival groups that did not give in to the ideology and the new rules dictated by the PCC – which would in return take care of inmates' interests and families – were quickly "persuaded" through violence. A combination of force, intimidation and ideology thus explains how at the turn of the century a group initiated by fewer than 20 inmates already dominated the prison system in São Paulo as well as other Brazilian states.[42]

The second stage goes from the turn of the century until mid-2006 and marks the consolidation and transformation of the organisation, which, unlike what we saw in the first phase, now adopted international drug trafficking as its main source of income. At this moment, it is important to remember that Rio's strongest

criminal group, the Red Command and its leader "Fernandinho Beira-Mar", were the main focus of Brazilian authorities, which allowed the PCC to grow under the radar, in terms of federal law enforcement efforts. Additionally, for a few authors,[44] many of the changes seen in the PCC in this stage would have stemmed from the influence of members of leftist terrorist organizations imprisoned in Brazil. One example of this would be the Chilean, Mauricio Norambuena, a historical leader of the leftist insurgent group *Frente Patriótica Manuel Rodríguez* (Patriotic Front Manuel Rodríguez), which maintained contacts with the PCC leadership since 1999. Although this supposition is an object of controversy among government security agents,[45] the fact is that, as argued by Christino and Tognolli,[46] by coincidence or not, the organization became much more sophisticated in terms of its structure and modus operandi during this period. In those authors' opinion, these adjustments would not have been possible without external influence, and it is worth noting the similarities between the organizational structure implemented by the PCC at this stage and that of several leftist terrorist organizations from previous decades. Around the same time, the group also began utilizing typical terrorist tools to pressure the government, such as the use of the press as a weapon of propaganda, kidnappings, the assassination of judges and attempts to blow up public buildings. This phase of power consolidation is marked by national prison rebellions and the use of terrorist and guerrilla tactics, with emphasis on attacks on public places, attempts to use car bombs, the kidnapping of a journalist from the country's largest media conglomerate [47] and, obviously, the notorious attacks of May 2006, a real campaign of "terrorist attacks". In this "terrorist campaign" alone, at least 300 people were killed, including policemen, criminals and innocent civilians.[48]

The group's new leadership from the turn of the century onwards started being especially represented by the figure that, according to officials and researchers, is the group's greatest expression of command to this day – a detainee of Bolivian descent, Marcos Willians Herbas Camacho, alias Marcola. Pragmatic and demonstrating an entrepreneurial vision of business, Marcola seemed to agree with violent and direct confrontation only in exceptional situations, or, at times, when he had no option but to manage crises initiated without his blessings. [49] At this point, the PCC already sought a national hegemony of prison control as well as the wholesale of drugs entering Brazil. With this in mind, Marcola decentralised the organisation, creating "departments" with specific functions, along the lines of a company, horizontalizing the organisation chart and giving more autonomy to managers working on the streets.[50]

The following years were characterised by three stages that, although distinct, often overlap. These can be categorised as: (i) international expansion I, (ii) domestic expansion, and (iii) international expansion II. Taking advantage of the reputation earned in the criminal world due to the concessions made by the state and by simplifying recruitment rules—which involved strict security guidelines and which was traditionally done through a "baptism"[51]—the PCC inaugurated a national and largescale expansion in approximately 1999 [49]. At the same time, around 2006,[52] it also initiated its international expansion towards marijuana and cocaine producing centres, especially Bolivia and Paraguay, seeking to eliminate intermediaries between the group and producers. This largely allowed the PCC to control the entry of drugs into Brazil. In the regulatory realm, the PCC also modified and widened its control of life within prisons, clearly taking the place of the state in the regulation of prison routine(s) and trying to take control of violence amongst criminals themselves. Acting as a business, PCC started working as a regulatory agency, mediating conflicts and disputes between criminals inside and outside of prison, and always remaining faithful to the narrative that crime needs to unite against the state and that "a brother does not kill a brother".[53] Behind this so-called "pacification" and "awareness" is the perception that stability and predictability of relationships, coupled with less overt confrontations with the state, would maximise drug profits.[54] Once it controlled some of the most convenient border drug routes, the PCC managed to acquire prominence in the wholesale of drugs in Brazil,[55] moving on to the second stage of its international expansion (international expansion towards Europe and Africa – shown as "international expansion II" in Figure 1). Starting around 2014, according to Manso and Dias, the PCC started getting more directly involved with the shipping of cocaine abroad. It is, in fact, at about this time that Brazilian Federal Police operations began to detect the organization behind large cocaine shipments to other continents, mainly through Brazilian ports, establishing partnerships with European mafias and other organizations with international reach. There is no longer any doubt that the PCC has also taken a leading role in sending cocaine to other continents,[56] as will be seen in the next sections. The sections that follow will

detail, through Sullivan's framework of analysis, all possible parallels between the workings of the PCC and strategies normally associated with terrorists, in addition to better describing it in all its complexity.

Politicization of Objectives and the Importance of Ideology

Sullivan's first parameter for analysing third generations gangs is that of politicization. Within the crime-terror nexus and its application to hybrid groups, perhaps two characteristics garner the most attention when we compare the patterns of violence used by the PCC and other criminal narcotrafficking organizations. The first is the PCC's eventual turn towards terrorist tactics, which is relatively well known to the general public due to the duration, media coverage and scale of its nationwide terror campaigns, such as the one conducted in May 2006. As already discussed above, much of the time when the group has targeted the general population, public buildings, means of transportation or public officials, it seems to have some kind of claim or immediate motivation that was political in nature. In other cases, it has simply sought to retaliate against a specific measure adopted by the state against the group or its leadership. However, as previously asserted, the ultimate goals of using such strategies have always been much more related to ensuring the safety and well-being of PCC's incarcerated leaders and the development of its criminal activities, as opposed to achieving any high-level political goal. However, it is the second characteristic that reveals the PCC's more complex nature and one which is worth adding to Sullivan's original parameter of politicization – that of narrative and ideology. The importance of the narrative and the ideology developed by the organization is often misunderstood or even underestimated by both practitioners and the media. What follows is an engagement with the group's ideological evolution in order to illustrate how studying the PCC's ideology as part of its 'politicization' can help us use the concept of third generation-gangs to further develop our understanding of the crime-terror nexus. In the PCC's case, it is precisely the evolution of its narrative that effectively subverts the profit-ideology dichotomy which supposedly distances criminal groups from terrorist ones in traditional understandings of the crime-terror spectrum (for example, Makarenko's crime-terror continuum).

The literature on the use of violence by the Mexican cartels, for instance, highlights the peculiarities of *La Família Michoacán* cartel, responsible for numerous attacks in the region of the same name, using explosives, beheadings and the killing of civilians with the intention of frightening and intimidating rivals, the state and the population.[57] The group's main features concern its Christian orientation and its self-appointment as a defender and representative of the people of Michoacán. Members of *La Família Michoacán* declare themselves to be legitimate representatives of the people with the mission of defending these people against the injustices, humiliations and oppression of the Mexican state. The PCC in Brazil is comparable and should likewise be seen as a unique and potentially even more complex case, which is why it hardly fits within the categories or metaphors already used to describe it. Brazil currently has about 80 prison gangs, amongst which the PCC is undoubtedly the most prominent one, having overcome its former partner and source of inspiration *Comando Vermelho* (CV or the Red Command in Portuguese). Having emerged in the 1990s, almost 20 years after the CV arose in the neighbouring state of Rio de Janeiro, the PCC developed in a sort of coalition with the CV, mirroring its slogan "Peace, Justice and Freedom". However, at the time the PCC came into being, the CV had already realised the financial potential of the drug world – leaving the PCC to carry the ideological banner of protecting the prison community and their families in what were extremely precarious prison conditions. Referred to as "the family" by inmates, the PCC's reputation as protector quickly made it the "legitimate" representative of the criminal "class".[58] The group's ideas concerning protection against abuse, the lack of structure in prisons and rules of coexistence represented what were essentially the urgent demands of every detainee in the country. In this sense, the appearance of an organization that dictated what was right and wrong, mediated conflicts and exercised a monopoly violence based upon criteria clearly outlined in a statute, responded to the core demands of the hundreds of thousands of inmates in the country.[59] Thus, through its narratives of criminals uniting against the system, the PCC stood apart from other criminal organizations because it was able to embed a sense of legitimacy and even morality into its illicit and violent activities. Functioning at the same time as a crime-regulating agency and a criminal union, the "party" or "family" – other denominations used by its members – created a brotherhood built upon the ideal of mutual assistance while also challenging and defending the

rights of its members against the "oppressive state", supporting prisoners' families and also legally defending prisoners. Furthermore, the idea of a regulated and pacified world of crime, capable of improving the lives of members, their families and neighbourhoods, aligned with an "us versus them" narrative, made it possible for this discourse to resonate with the economically less favoured communities of São Paulo. In this manner, the ideology regulating criminal violence became a necessary evil outside prisons as well, and the appeal of such ideas on the streets worked in favour of PCC's recruitment and rapid growth.[60]

In a short period, the PCC managed to dominate – physically or ideologically – the vast majority of São Paulo's prisons. The proof of the power behind PCC's discourse was made evident by the fact that, even in prisons where "official" members were not in a majority, coexistence was still regulated by the PCC's rules, which thus managed to "politically" dominate prisons.[61] Given the organization's ability to control internal prison violence, the government conveniently and systematically took advantage of this "pacification" and neglected the PCC's growth, denying the organization's existence as long as it could.[62] By the late 1990s, the group was able to pressure the state into revoking measures that went against its leadership's interests. Through the promotion of simultaneous rebellions in various prisons and the exercise of violence against public officials and rivals resisting its rule, the PCC was able to compel the government to grant privileges and transfer important prisoners to more desired prison locations. The classic prison dilemma, also very present in the terrorism and radicalisation debates,[63] refers to the complex decision of whether to separate or bring together more radical leaders and individuals, and it was very well "utilized" by the group. When brought together, the leadership was able to better organize and make plans. When the leadership realized the need to spread their discourse to regions not yet ideologically dominated, the PCC used violence and coercion to politically pressurize the government into transferring specific members to such places. Gradually, the PCC came to dominate the richest state in Brazil and, due to the transfer of its leaders to other state prisons, it was also able to dominate neighbouring states – including those bordering Paraguay, which facilitated the initiation of other criminal projects. The transfer of the PCC's leaders to Rio de Janeiro's prisons brought together the heads of the two largest criminal organisations in Brazil – the PCC and CV. Consequently, with a 20-year delay in relation to the group from Rio, the PCC eventually followed its example and began focussing its external activities on drug trafficking.[64]

It was in this transition phase towards its focus on drugs that the PCC became more sophisticated and used terrorist tactics more often, also combining structural changes with ideological adaptations. Leaving behind a pyramidal organization in favour of a decentralised structure whose "departments" each had a specific function, it started working as a secret criminal network where responsibilities were shared and compartmentalized.[65] Each member would only participate in, and have knowledge of, what was strictly necessary to perform a specific function, so as not to compromise the security of the entire organization in case someone got arrested by the police.[66] The words "unity" and "equality" started being used by criminals in addition to the original motto, "Peace, Justice and Freedom". This reinforced the new leadership's discourse that the PCC would unite and pacify crime, in an administration of progress and shared and divided responsibilities, a brotherhood in which no brother was more important than the other.[67] With the arrival of cell phones and apps, the PCC began to make use of these tools for its propaganda and discourse dissemination. As it expanded rapidly throughout Brazil, its entry into other regions of the country generated bloody conflicts with rival groups and the organization began to portray its violence as a necessary step to raise "awareness" amongst the entire prison community that the union around the "PCC model" was the only alternative against an oppressive state. Leaflets were produced and circulated to portray the group's "occasional" violence as an important step in a necessary revolution.[68]

Still pertaining to the issue of politicisation, it is important to stress that if, on the one hand, the PCC makes use of diverse tactics to politically intimidate the government, on the other, the idea that the group would infiltrate or try to participate more directly in politics is the subject of controversy. Investigations have shown evident cases of sponsorship of candidates for legislative and executive positions at the municipal level, but authors like Feltrán argue that the organization has no real interest in being part of the state structure, since its objective and ideology are precisely that of going against the system. In the opinion of this author, unlike mafias or

groups such as FARC, the PCC does not long for political power and does not see advantages in the infiltration of corrupt agents in the state machinery.[69] However, one must also note that there is evidence that the group has already funded and operated behind NGOs which were supposedly created to defend the human rights of inmates, so as to politically pressure the state against applying more severe penalty regimes. PCC members have also used intimidation and violence against journalists. We even have one case where a human rights NGO was used as a front for the PCC and provided a support structure for its criminal activities.[70]

Sophistication

For Sullivan,[71] one of the factors that differentiates third-generation gangs from "ordinary" criminal groups is their level of sophistication. Although Sullivan does not present many nuances or examples of what he considers an abnormally sophisticated stage for criminal groups, analysing the PCC's case, it is clear that this is a characteristic that functions at different levels and is exhibited in several ways. It is manifest, for example, in its tactical, military, structural and strategic sophistication, as well as in its planning of operations, the use of symbols and rituals, recruiting, propaganda, in its communication of extreme violence as a tactic of psychological warfare, not to mention its infiltration of civil society and the political lobby.

Amongst these aspects, the one that potentially has the greatest relationship with the crime-terror nexus is what can be called operational and tactical sophistication; i.e., the use of guerrilla and terrorist tactics, especially at specific moments in the group's history. As mentioned previously, on several occasions the PCC has used simultaneous rebellions, the assassination of public officials, attacks and violent depredations, and even thrown grenades targeting public buildings full of civilians as a way to pressurize the state into either responding to requests or reversing public policies concerning the prison system.[72] It has also planned rebellions in anticipation of a particular reaction by the state, which resulted in granting it the strategic transfer of leadership figures it was seeking in the first place.[73] Due to the group's complexities, it is important to remember that when it comes to attacks with the greatest potential to injure a large number of civilians, the actions were not always the result of a consensus within the leadership, which has generally diverged when it comes to the issue of using terrorist tactics. There is a lot of uncertainty concerning how and from where orders for such attacks were given, and it has been frequently difficult to specify the motivations and objectives behind such decisions. The PCC is characterized by a confusing flow of commands; there are frequent betrayals and internal struggles for power, and top leaders diverge over the most appropriate strategies for intimidating the government. While some have acted passionately and often out of revenge for police actions, others, who took over command around 2001, have been much more pragmatic and understand that direct confrontation with the state and the use of terrorist tactics could be bad for business.[74] In an example of the use of terrorist and guerrilla tactics under uncertain circumstances, in one of PCC's most emblematic actions, the group kidnapped a journalist from the largest TV network on the continent to have an ideological manifesto read in the network's highest-rating show. This was an attempt to morally justify the famous 'terror campaign' conducted by the group in May 2006. Clearly influenced by various guerrilla manuals such as the one by Carlos Marighella, this kidnapping is a good example of the PCC's reproduction of guerrilla tactics used by Brazilian insurgent groups against the military dictatorship in the 1960s.[75]

Some researchers even attempt to dismiss the importance of the PCC's use of such tactics, arguing that the use of terrorist operational strategies by the group occurred during a very specific and relatively short period of its history. Thus, for these researchers most of the PCC's street attacks and the assassinations of judges or police officers were concentrated between 2006 and 2012. But it is important to stress that the idea that PCC has no longer been conducting attacks targeting the population and the government as it did in May 2006 through to 2012 is only partially true. Certainly, while it never repeated a campaign of attacks with the duration and magnitude of the one conducted in São Paulo 14 years ago, the group still promotes more regionalized waves of attacks in isolated states, as the ones in Minas Gerais and Ceará in 2019 and in Santa Catarina in 2013 and 2014. However, because these attacks have a smaller reach and do not entirely paralyze important cities such as São Paulo, they end up gaining less coverage from the national media and receive no media coverage

whatsoever abroad. However, for some specialists, a decreasing stress on the use of terrorist tactics (although not a complete stop in their use) can be explained by the PCC's leadership arriving at the understanding that using this type of strategy does not pay off, given that it normally provokes an exceedingly harsh state response towards the organization. Thus, although attributing the decrease in terrorist(-type) attacks to a decision by the PCC's top leadership is a reasonable theory (albeit one difficult to confirm), there are other nuances and insights that can be brought into this analysis from the perspective of practitioners. The creation of a federal penitentiary system and an independent intelligence system in 2006 – to "house" those criminal leaders that the Brazilian state systems could no longer handle – was a game changer for the Brazilian state. Whereas the state of São Paulo, the PCC's largest stronghold, did not consent to transferring their most relevant inmates to the federal system until 2012, from the very moment leaders were transferred, the lack of access to cell phones and other difficulties found in federal penitentiaries had a clear impact on the PCC's capacity and disposition to keep on planning and conducting attacks that were terrorist in nature.

Furthermore, originally fighting against the PCC was a regional effort, more concentrated in São Paulo, and with each federal state police conducting investigations with little or no coordination with the police from other states. Over the last decade, with the PCC's national and international expansion, state police corporations were forced to share their intelligence information amongst each other. Moreover, Brazil's Federal Police, which not only functions in a more integrated manner at the national level but also exchanges more information with neighboring countries, started to dedicate significant efforts to combat the organisation. As a result of these factors, several highly sophisticated PCC attacks were prevented by police action, and a few of these were also covered by the media.[76] Therefore, on the one hand terrorist tactics are definitely a part of PCC's toolkit and some evidence seems to suggest that the use of such tactics is sporadic and might be deliberately limited by the leadership to avoid a harsh state response. On the other hand, it would also be correct to say that were it not for effective police intelligence structures disrupting potential and planned attacks we would probably see many more incidents with terrorism-like characteristics used by the PCC.[77]

When it comes to communication, PCC's leadership always managed, before its isolation in the Federal Penitentiary System, to see to it that the necessary messages reached the intended recipients. It should be noted, that what is categorized as 'sophistication' here is not necessarily limited to technological sophistication. Fact is that the organization has always been extremely creative when it comes to communicating. Whether by notes left on pieces of paper hidden in unexpected places, or by bribing penitentiary agents, or by involving a law department whose members were willing to serve as messengers, the fact is that the PCC, more often than not, always found a way to pass orders around, especially before the creation of the Federal Penitentiary System. Having said that, the surprising effectiveness of imprisoned group members in orchestrating complex actions on the streets is directly related to the PCC's use of technological innovation. The arrival of cell phones was especially crucial for the group's strategy. Even though prisoners are not allowed to own mobile phones, a flawed prison system in combination with the presence of corrupt prison officials has enabled the group to set up an impressive communications system. As early as 2000, before the emergence of chat apps, the PCC was able to set up several "telephone exchange" systems managed by members and family outside the prison environment. They were able to improvise conference calls, receive directives from leaders, as well as update imprisoned leaders with information gathered on the streets.[78] Later, once again facilitated by weak oversight in state prisons, improvements in cell phones and apps allowed the group – much like various other terrorist organisations – to start using technological innovations like the Internet, messaging applications and social networks for purposes of propaganda, recruitment and even as a form of violent communication against competitors, the population and the state. The group's extreme violence, both inside and outside prisons, was now filmed, broadcast and shared to other regions of the country, which was surprising since, unlike terrorists, most gangs and criminal groups tend to avoid publicity and do not care much about their reputation.[79] Acting like a "Brazilian Islamic State", the PCC filmed scenes of atrocities against rival groups, which they justified morally through the ideological discourses previously referred to. These videos became commonplace and quickly went viral amongst criminals across the entire country, both inside and outside of prisons. More than a form of intimidation, voluntary or not, the PCC demonstrated its savvy in utilising technological advances to its advantage, increasing the power of its image among criminals. As it became more

capable of forcing the state to comply with its demands using the threat of terrorist-like attacks, it progressively strengthened its recruiting power outside the state of São Paulo.[80] In parallel, it was also skilful in mobilising its brand symbols and strengthening itself in the midst of a rising culture that was distinctly 'anti-system' in peripheral regions. The emergence of cultural expressions glorifying a life of crime—similar to the idea of "narcoculture" in Mexico[81]—and criticising state oppression, helped the PCC to foster an environment to attract not only hardened criminals, but also young people with no prospects of upward social mobility and a history of violence and/or involvement in petty crime. In this regard, music (especially rap and hip hop), Facebook pages, graffiti, tattoos, symbols, gestures and slang became a counterculture framework that spoke to the group's narrative and ideology, progressively expanding its ability to recruit members in Brazil. Its motto and references to the numbers "15-3-3" – an allusion to the order in which the letters P and C appear in the alphabet – came to be seen in all prisons and around the streets of São Paulo. At the same time, one could also see both inmates as well as young people from marginalized areas singing rap songs that emulated the group's statute and anti-oppression discourse. The PCC's narrative thus created a feedback mechanism between a prison counterculture and another that had emerged in the peripheral regions of Brazil,[82] just as the group's internal and external dimensions fed off one another each time a criminal either got arrested or went back to the streets. From its early days, the group also used symbolism to mark the admission of new members into the organisation, a ritual that became known as a "baptism". At the ceremony, the new member—necessarily referred by two members or "godfathers"—listened to the group's history and the articles of its statute, by which he then swore to abide.[83] For Paes & Nunes, similar to "a religious conversion, the baptized brother in the PCC abandoned his unruly individuality to embrace a life dedicated to the community."[84] As with some extremist groups, the baptism represented the prevalence of the collective identity over the individual and a loss of individuality, especially considering that permission to leave the organization is only granted in exceptional circumstances; without permission the member may be punished with death.[85] To give an air of morality to its struggle, the PCC still traditionally includes religious references in many of its meetings and internal guidelines. In many of its meetings, easily found on YouTube, prisoners congregate in the prison yard and, at the end of deliberations filled with references to divine justice, they loudly recite their motto and go-to passages such as "If God is for us, who can be against us?"[86]

On the other hand, once the PCC started focusing on drug trafficking, the organization also underwent a structural sophistication through a decentralization of command, as previously discussed. This also meant adapting its discourse. Faced with the need to expand nationally and internationally, the group was smart enough to relax its strict baptism rules while also limiting the payment of the monthly membership fees to individuals who were outside jail and financing the criminal activities of newly released members,[87] smoothing their re-entry into the world of crime – a true case of upside down "resocialisation". As previously mentioned, the PCC's structural sophistication reached the point of having "departments" with all kinds of purposes, with an emphasis on the "legal department" which is made up of lawyers permanently hired to meet the needs of affiliates and family members, in addition to serving as messengers and, eventually, playing roles in the criminal activities of the group.

Internationalization

As mentioned, many authors and practitioners engaged in fighting the PCC believe that it is currently the largest transnational criminal organisation in Latin America. With an estimated number of over 30,000 baptised members in Brazil alone, Feltrán [88] warns that the number of informal members—former inmates, supporters and collaborators who help and act in coordination with the group on the outskirts of urban centres—is much higher. Operating all over Brazil, there is evidence that it is also present (at various levels) throughout the whole continent, with an emphasis on Paraguay and Bolivia. In addition to being the main concern of most police forces in neighboring countries, informal conversations with police officers from the United States, Mexico, El Salvador, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy show that the expansion of PCC and its virulent ideology in the prisons of other countries is already a matter of growing concern. There is information about foreign prisoners being baptized in the prisons of several countries, including some in Europe,[89] and it is not

rare to find news of baptized foreigners in Brazilian prisons, such as Venezuelans recruited in Northern Brazil. Following a recent visit to Central America, Farah [90] has stated that there is evidence that the PCC has initiated partnerships with groups such as Salvadoran MS-13. Recent Brazilian Federal Police operations confirm that the PCC has trade agreements with the largest European mafias involved in international trafficking to Europe.[91] There are also indications that the criminal network that controls the flow of cocaine through the largest ports in Brazil, especially the Port of Santos, located at the epicentre of the organization's area of influence in the state of São Paulo, is connected to the PCC. This allows the drug exported by the group to reach also Africa and Asia.[92] Finally, there is also reason to believe that the PCC may have established agreements (possibly occasional) with the Lebanese organization Hezbollah, whose global network of contacts would allow the Brazilian group to export to any place on the planet.[93]

The strategic shift to investing in drugs by the PCC quickly led to the conclusion that it was necessary to eliminate intermediaries, especially in Paraguay and Bolivia, so that it could pay less for drugs purchased directly from the producers. In pursuit of establishing hegemony in the wholesale supply of drugs, the PCC's strategy involved controlling strategic points along the border with these two countries and eliminating local drug lords with the use of extreme violence. At the time, the PCC already had members involved in international drug trafficking. Therefore, the presence of members doing business in Paraguay was not new. However, from 2006 onwards,[94] under Marcola's leadership, transactions normally carried out by criminals in their own name, i.e., without representing the organization, began to be replaced by negotiations where the buyer was already ostensibly presenting himself as someone negotiating on behalf of the PCC. This is related to the complex and peculiar way the individual and collective dimensions of the group often get confused. There has always been a fine line separating the individual freedom of members to have their own businesses on the one hand and, on the other hand, the obligation to build up the "family" by using their contacts and networks to do business on behalf of PCC. Contrary to what many reports claim, the PCC never intended to monopolise the drug trade in a country the size of Brazil. Yet, its ambition to create a hegemony of the drugs wholesale would facilitate the regulation of trafficking, with the establishment of rules of (trans-)action, minimum prices and other parameters. Without the territorial logic of domination seen among Rio's groups, the PCC sought to merge a diplomatic search for the implantation of its ideology and rules with coercion and force, making it easier to progressively enter other countries.[95]

Entering Paraguay was crucial. Not only was it one of the two largest marijuana producers in the world alongside Mexico, it was also an important route for cocaine, especially that coming from Bolivian producers,[96] with whom the PCC had negotiated to buy and transport the drug. Christino and Tognolli [97] show how they were granted permission to transport cocaine primarily through Paraguay, even counting on a partnership with the Paraguayan insurgent group *Ejército Popular del Pueblo* (EPP – People's Popular Army in Spanish). In mid-2011, the so-called "Paraguay Project" became public through some of the calls made to the members and a sequence of decisions, which showed that the group would spare no effort to expand internationally. First, the PCC published a new statute in which it expressly stated that the group and its ideas had no territorial boundaries. Simultaneously, the organization began to send key members to negotiate with stakeholders in neighbouring countries, which soon brought desired results, since they were quickly able to acquire arms and drugs for about half the amount of money they had paid before. More importantly, the group embarked on an open offensive to eliminate competition from former drug traffickers at the borders. The same goes for CV—its oldest partner and influencer, which preceded (and inspired) the PCC in the decision to invest in drugs and get closer to producers—initiating a phase of confrontations between the two largest criminal organizations in Brazil.[98]

As explained above, the PCC's entry into neighboring countries occurs both via local penitentiary systems and through the purchase of drugs, which it nowadays negotiates directly with local drug producers.[99] The feedback loop between internal and external dimensions, which was discussed above, repeats itself here. As the group advances on the streets with its illicit transactions and as members get arrested and taken to Paraguayan prisons, the expansion of their ideology and narrative is amplified from within prison walls. Within the prisons, its members also acquire new contacts and channels for weapons and drugs, and this loops back to the

external dimension of the PCC which simultaneously gains strength. Thus, the PCC has quickly managed to be present in all Paraguayan jails, with hundreds of members that include baptized Paraguayans, becoming one of the largest—if not the largest [100]—criminal organization operating in Paraguay, both inside and outside its prisons. Once again within the prison system, the PCC's ideology of unity against what they consider to be injustices, abuses and oppression continues to expand, suggesting that this model can be replicated in any other country, neighboring or not, if it suffers from similar structural problems as Brazil.

Final Remarks

Many of PCC's strategies and tactics undoubtedly fulfil many of the criteria normally used to define terrorism. This confirms the assumption that the Brazilian group, often involuntarily, makes use of a wide range of tools, including those normally associated with terrorists. Given its prison roots, the Brazilian organization is extremely *sui generis* and presents a series of unusual nuances. However, none of the concepts utilized to explain it seems sufficient to fully capture it in all its complexities. Whereas practitioners and researchers have already suggested studying the PCC in the light of the third-generation gang framework,[101] this concept also does not fully capture the multiple facets of the PCC – especially, if we apply the concept of third-generation gangs as it was originally formulated. Indeed, rarely has the group presented high levels of sophistication, internationalisation and politicisation at the *same time*. Thus, the key aim of this article is to recommend ways by which the original three-part framework of analysis of the third-generation gangs concept could be modified in order to make it not only more suitable to analyse the PCC but also allow the concept to be better applied to organizations like the PCC, i.e., those that exhibit a nuanced amalgamation of criminal and terrorist characteristics. This involves including the aspect of ideology into understanding the issue of politicization as well as highlighting the PCC's increasing sophistication which reflects some interesting parallels with innovations adopted by terrorist groups, albeit these crossovers have not been discussed in detail here.

The PCC is living through a period of challenges and uncertainties. As the police seeks to attack its finances and with the communication between external and internal dimensions compromised by the isolation of its leadership in Brazil's federal penitentiaries, the group is now trying to adapt. If history proves anything it is that the recent measure adopted by the state will not eliminate the organization, which is increasingly expanding its horizontal structure towards becoming a flexible criminal network, with its external cells having greater freedom of action. Moreover, the feedback loop between its internal and external dimensions is enhanced by a policy of mass incarceration practised in practically all countries in Latin America. Policies that extend well beyond mere transfers and attempts at isolation urgently need to be considered, given that the PCC seems to have shown the world once more that what happens behind bars hardly ever stays behind bars. How to better handle the prison population – especially when it comes to processes of radicalisation that are terrorism-related, linked to organised crime or is a virulent nexus of both – is one of the most challenging issues for the international community today – and the PCC is arguably one of the best cases to illustrate the full gamut of complexities associated with this challenge.

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Notes

[1] Schmid, Alex P. (2018) 'Revisiting the Relationship between International Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime 22 Years Later'. The Hague: ICCT Research paper. (August), p. 2.

[2] For the purposes of this article, hybrid groups are those that exhibit both characteristics normally attributed to terrorist and criminal organisations.

[3] Makarenko, Tamara (2004). 'The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism'. *Global Crime*. Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 129–145.

[4] Phillips, Brian J. (2018). 'Terrorist Tactics by Criminal Organizations: The Mexican Case in Context'. *Perspectives on Terrorism*. Vol. 12, Issue 1.

[5] Manso, Bruno Paes; Dias, Camila N. (2018). *A Guerra: A Ascensão do PCC e o Mundo do Crime no Brasil*, São Paulo: Todavia.; Biondi, Karina (2018*). Proibido Roubar na Quebrada. Território, Hierarquía e Lei no PCC*, Sâo Paulo: Terceiro Nome; Christino, Marcio; Tognolli, Claudio (2017), *Laços de Sangue. A história secreta do PCC* (3ª ed.), Sâo Paulo: Matrix; Ferreira; Marcos A. (2018), 'Brazilian criminal organizations as transnational violent non-state actors: a case study of the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC)'. *Trends in Organized Crime.* November 2018; Lessing, Benjamin; Willis, Graham D. (2018). 'Legitimacy in criminal governance: managing a drug empire from behind bars'. Comparative Politics Workshop at University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA), Department of Political Science; Denyer Willis, Graham (2015). *The Killing Consensus: police, organized crime, and the regulation of life and death in urban Brazil*. Oakland: University of California Press; Berg, Ryan (2020). 'Breaking out: Brazil's First Capital Command and the emerging prison-based threat'. American Enterprise Institute.

[6] Psychological warfare is a military strategy that is also used by terrorist groups such as the Islamic State. It consists of striking the opponent without the use of force, through techniques that affect them emotionally, usually instilling fear and reducing their willingness to resist. Violent communication is one of the techniques of psychological warfare, in which a group uses images and audio-visual resources to intimidate opponents.

[7] Martens, Juan (2019). Presencia y Actuación del Primer Comando de la Capital (PCC). Implicancias Políticas y Sociales'. *Revista Jurídica del Ministerio Publico*. Edición 10. Diciembre 2019.

[8] There are different regimes and conditions for serving sentences in Brazil. Even in the most corrupt prisons, where prisoners eventually have access to cell phones, there are times when leaders are temporarily isolated in solitary cells.

[9] Christino; Tognolli (2017); Manso; Dias (2018).

[10] FELTRAN, Gabriel. *Irmãos. Uma história do P.C.C.* São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2018.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Manso; Dias (2018).

[13] Manso, Bruno apud Olaya, Angela; Salomon, Josefina (2020). 'PCC and Brazil Government engaged in game of chess'. *Insight Crime.*

[14] Sullivan John P. (1997) 'Third Generation Turf, Cartels, and Street Gangs: Net Warriors'; Sullivan, John P. (2007). 'Maras Morphing: Revisiting Third-Generation Gangs'. *Global Crime*. Vol. 7, no. 3-4 (Feb).

[15] This article does not claim that PCC utilize "terrorist tools" with the intention of mimicking terrorists. In spite of having consciously reproduced some guerrilla tactics used by insurgents (and even discussed it over the phone as emerged from intercepted calls), most terrorist strategies used by the organization and their crime-terror aspects should be better interpreted as "unintended consequences".

[16] Sullivan, John P. (2012). 'A crucible of conflict: Third-Generation Gang Studies Revisited'. *Journal of Gang Research,* Vol. 19, No. 4.

[17] Phillips (2018).

[18] Phillips (2018); Campbell, Howard; Hansen, Tobin (2012). 'Extreme Violence and Terrorism in Mexico'. *Small Wars Journal* August 14; Longmire. Sylvia M; Longmire, John IV (2008). 'Redefining Terrorism: Why Mexican Drug Trafficking Is More Than Just Organized Crime', *Journal of Strategic Security* 1, no. 1), pp. 35–51; Williams, Phil (2012), 'The Terrorism Debate Over Mexican Drug Trafficking Violence', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2, pp. 259–78; Flanigan, Shawn T. (2012) 'Terrorists Next Door? A Comparison of Mexican Drug Cartels and Middle Eastern Terrorist Organizations', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2, pp. 279–294.

[19] Many researchers and practitioners, from Brazil and abroad, who have been investigating the group believe that it is the largest

and most dangerous criminal organization within South America. See: Manso; Dias, (2018) or Sampó, Carolina apud Jose Cueto (2020). Como el Crimen Organizado se apoderó de las rutas más importantes del Narcotráfico en Sudamérica. *BBC News*. 3 March.

[20] Longmire (2008); Howard; Hansen (2012).

[21] Flanigan (2012); Phillips (2018).

[22] Flanigan (2012); Phil Williams (2012). 'The Terrorism Debate Over Mexican Drug Trafficking Violence'. *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Mar. 2012.

[23] Schmid, (2004).

[24] Phillips (2018).

[25] Schmid, Alex P. & Jongman, Albert. *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2005). Actually, as explained by Phillips (2018), the exact terms the referenced authors use are "violence, force," "political," and "fear, terror emphasized."

[26] Phillips (2018).

[27] Ibid.

[28] On criminal insurgency, see: Sullivan, John P. Sullivan; Robert J. Bunker (2012). *Mexico´s Criminal Insurgency.* Bloomington, Universe Inc.; Grillo, Ioan. El Narco: *Inside Mexico's Criminal Insurgency*, New York: Bloomsbury Press.

[29] Robert J. Bunker; John P. Sullivan (2015). 'Criminal Insurgents in Mexico and Latin America'. Bloomington: Universe Inc.; Christian Azevedo (2018). 'Criminal Insurgency in Brazil'. *Small Wars Journal*. Jan. 2018.

[30] Phil Williams (2012).

[31] One of the few exceptions is the governor of Rio de Janeiro, Wilson Witzel, who has been publicly referring to narcotrafficking groups as 'narcoterrorists'. See Ricardo Senra (2019). *Nos EUA, Witzel se descola de Bolsonaro e diz querer ser presidente. BBC*. April 2019.

[32] Debates on terrorism or related activities such as terrorism financing have been controversial in Brazil for quite some time, becoming a kind of taboo. Regardless of the abundant evidence to the contrary, there is still a tendency to deny the existence of activities linked to the "terrorism" in the country. Some even argue that having an anti-terrorism law is unnecessary and harmful. In the short debate that preceded the passing of the law, there were allegations that the small Muslim community in Brazil would be stigmatised, or that the introduction of such a law would have a negative impact on tourism and Brazil's international reputation. Some contended that the law would signal an unrestricted alignment with the US and, consequently, attract transnational terrorism towards Brazil; others maintained that the law was unnecessary due to the country's historical neutrality. It is also important to highlight that several of the leftist leaders forming the government's base in Congress at the time, including then-President Dilma Rousseff, were part of the political and armed opposition to the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1989. Given that many of the current leftist leaders of the country were previously incarcerated and labelled "terrorists" and exiled from Brazil during those 25 years, it was understandable that many members of Congress would resist the creation of an anti-terrorist law. See Lasmar, Jorge M. 'When the Shoe doesn't fit. Brazilian approaches to terrorism and counterterrorism in the post-9/11 era'. In: Michael J. Boyle. *Non-Western Responses to Terrorism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019.

[33] Lasmar (2019).

[34] Brasil. Lei 13.260/2016. Lei de terrorismo. Mar. 2016.

[35] See Alex Schmid (2004). 'Terrorism - The Definitional Problem'. *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*. Vol. 36 Issue 2; Leonard Weinberg; Ami Pedahzur; Sivan Hirsch´Hoefler (2004). The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16:4, pp. 777–794.

[36] The Federal Penitentiary System was created in 2006 for prisoners considered most dangerous by the federal states. Contrary to what was the practice until then in the penitentiary systems of each state, in the federal system the prisoner loses physical contact with family members and lawyers, only getting to speak to them through a glass window with the conversation being recorded.

[37] See Asmann, Parker (2019). 'Brazil Clampdown on Gang-Controlled Prisons Unlikely to Success'. *Insight Crime*. Feb; URL: https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/latest-brazil-prison-crackdown-lacks-long-term-focus/.

[38] Manso; Dias (2018); Feltrán (2018).

[39] Ibid; Willis (2015).

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid; Christino; Tognolli (2017).

[43] Created by the author, based on a literature review and informal conversations with Brazilian Federal Police officers who have been investigating PCC in São Paulo and at the borders with Bolivia and Paraguay. However, dates and periods should not be seen as rigid and static.

[44] Manso; Dias (2018); Christino; Tognolli (2017). In the first phase, PCC had as main funding the monthly fees paid by members and income from bank robberies.

[45] Some prison intelligence and Federal Police officers who have been dealing with PCC believe that there is some exaggeration in this supposed influence. They argue that, in terms of modus operandi, before Norambuena, there were already plans of using car bombs and assassinations coming from more radical founders such as César Augusto "Geleião". This is also discussed by authors such as Christino and Tognolli (2017). Moreover, there are many attacks with no evidence of a top-down command. In addition, several PCC members in the same prison did not like the Chilean insurgent. In this sense, Marcola more likely may have taken strategic advantage of his legend to enhance his own image as an articulate, revolutionary leader. However, there is a consensus that Norambuera exerted some influence when it came to changes in the PCC's structure. See also note [50].

[46] Christino; Tognolli (2017).

[47] Manso; Dias (2018); Christino; Tognolli (2017).

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid. It is important to highlight that this is a controversial interpretation, supported by a few police officers, prosecutors and journalists who investigated the group. However, this interpretation is viewed as simplistic by field researchers who tend to downplay the exclusive importance of personal roles and decisions in bringing about these changes. In this author's opinion, it is indeed reasonable to believe that, even under a different leadership, instead of attributing all changes only to the personal decisions of Marcola, the transformation can be better explained by a combination of internal and external factors. Decentralisation often occurs in a less voluntary and more natural manner, a reflection of an organisation's expansion, combined with external factors. The fight against criminal and terrorist organisations frequently disrupts hierarchical structures, forcing a more horizontal dispersion of leadership functions and leading to the creation of local and regional networks – as, for instance, happened to Al Qaeda after 9/11. Moreover, network researchers, for example, point out that virtual or confined environments (such as prisons) naturally induce groups to create decentralised criminal networks. See, for example: Schneider, Éder; Gonçalves, Sebastián; Iglesias, José Roberto; Cunha, Bruno R (2019). *Dynamic Networks Model Mediated by Confinement*. Applied Network Science. June.

[51] Manso; Dias (2018).

[52] Authors and practitioners differ when it comes to PCC's entry as a "legal entity" abroad. While Paes and Camila appear to understand that it started around 2007, Christino and Tognolli believe it started around 2003. However, most Brazilian federal police officers in the Narcotics Division with whom this author spoke informally tend to agree with Abreu's version, who points to 2006 as the moment when they noticed a change. See: De Abreu, Allan (2017). *Cocaína: A Rota Caipira. O Narcotráfico no Principal Corredor de Drogas do Brasil*. Rio De Janeiro: Editora Record.

[53] Manso; Dias (2018); Feltrán (2018).

[54] Feltrán (2018).

[55] Manso; Dias (2018).

[56] Until recently, it was believed that the PCC was involved only in logistics with regards to the transport of cocaine from producing countries to ports, whereas European mafias were in charge of facilitating the entry of the drugs at European ports. However, some Brazilian Federal police officers involved in investigations over the past two years now believe that a few PCC cells already have the capacity and the necessary contacts to place cocaine on European soil on their own.

[57] Williams (2014); Flanigan (2012).

[58] Feltrán (2018); Manso; Nunes (2018).

[59] Brazil has the world's third-largest prison population with more than 700,000 people. Feltrán (2017); Manso; Nunes (2018).

[60] Biondi (2018); Feltrán (2018). Willis (2015).

[61] Willis (2015); Feltrán (2017); Manso; Nunes (2018). However, according to Brazilian prison intelligence, this was not always observed in other regions of the country, which are culturally very different from the central and southern parts of Brazil. In the

North and in the Northeast regions, the PCC is often seen as an outsider group wanting to impose its will over locals.

[62] Ibid.

[63] How to identify leaders and other individuals with recruiting power is difficult from the outside, regardless of whether one looks at organised crime or terrorist organizations.

[64] Manso; Dias (2018); Christino; Tognolli (2017); Lessing; Willis (2018); Ferreira (2018).

[65] Ibid; Feltrán (2018).

[66] Feltrán (2018).

[67] This decentralization and the brotherhood discourse lead a few fieldwork researchers such as Feltrán (2018) to interpret that there is no well-established leadership within the PCC. In their view, PCC functions more as a "crime masonry", a criminal network formed for mutual aid, without top-down command and control. This perspective is not shared by the majority of practitioners with whom this author has had informal conversations. It also does not seem to be shared by other researchers, since there were circumstances already revealed by investigations in which there were undoubtedly commands originating from the imprisoned leadership. In this author's opinion, there is some confusion between an absence of command and the already mentioned peculiar top-down flow of control which characterizes the PCC.

[68] Manso; Dias (2018).

[69] Feltrán (2017).

[70] Unclassified reports show clear examples of the utilisation of NGOs and lawyers as instruments of political pressure against journalists and the government. Manso; Dias (2018); Christino; Tognolli (2017). However, this is not to say that most Brazilian NGOs defending human rights in prisons are somehow involved with PCC.

[71] Sullivan John P. 'Third Generation Turf, Cartels, and Street Gangs: Net Warriors'. *Transnational Organized Crime*. Vol. 3, No. 3; Sullivan, John P. (2007). 'Maras Morphing: Revisiting Third-Generation Gangs'. *Global Crime*. Feb. 1997.

[72] Manso; Dias (2018); Christino; Tognolli (2017).

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Manso; Dias (2018); Christino; Tognolli (2017).

[76] To cite an example of sophisticated planning and attacks, occasionally with some political connotation, interrupted by preventive police action and prison intelligence: In 2018, there were plans to assassinate public agents and launch car-bomb attacks in public buildings in Brasília, Brazil's federal Capital, during a period of presidential elections — one of the buildings was the headquarters for the National Penitentiary Department (DEPEN). Among the reasons for the actions figured the isolated leaderships' dissatisfaction with restrictions imposed on them in federal prisons, such as the recording of their conversations with family members and lawyers. The intercepted conversations included mentions of guerrilla tactics used in the past by Colombian group FARC. See: Veja (2018). Polícia Federal descobre planos de atentados do PCC em Brasília. October. URL: https://vejasp.abril.com.br/cidades/policia-federal-descobre-planos-de-atentados-do-pcc-em-brasilia.

[77] Another significant example had to do with a plan to liberate the organization's leader, Marcola, estimated by PCC to cost more than 20 million dollars. He was held in a prison, along with other important members, in a city of São Paulo state, with a population of approximately 250,000 inhabitants. The cinematographic plan included the use of hired mercenaries (ex-FARC members and Nigerian militia), two helicopters disguised as police aircrafts for the leadership to escape, a specially armoured truck prepared to break down a prison wall, bypassing internal security and the use of large quantities of .50 anti-aircraft machine guns positioned to close the city's airport and prevent police from leaving their bases and operate its own helicopters. See URL: https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2018/11/plano-de-resgate-de-numero-1-do-pcc-preve-mercenarios-e-helicopteros-em-sp.shtml

[78] See for example, Manso; Dias (2018).

[79] Bruce Hoffman (2006), *Inside Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press).

[80] Manso; Dias (2018); Christino; Tognolli (2017); Feltrán (2017).

[81] See also how Mexican cartels take advantage of countercultural aspects of criminal life and use social media and technology in its favor: Sullivan, John P. (2012). 'Criminal Insurgency: Narcocultura, Social Banditry, and Information Operations', *Small Wars Journal*. December.

[82] Manso; Dias (2018); Feltrán (2017).

[83] Some reports describe the drinking of *cachaça* mixed with blood drops from the freshmen.

[84] Manso; Dias (2018), p. 133 (translated from Portuguese)

[85] According to some Prison System Intelligence officers, in theory only two circumstances would allow "desertion". One is a total commitment to a new "religious life". The other would be to accomplish one last mission, often related to assassinations of state officials such as police officers or prosecutors.

[86] See URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8smAQYqDF7s&feature=youtu.be.

[87] Feltrán (2018).

[88] Ibid. It is important to note that it is hard to provide precise numbers of PCC's members and supporters. Ferreira (2018) argues that, according to wiretapping conducted by Brazilian prosecutors, the PCC has 'baptized' hundreds of thousands of individuals during its history in Brazil, of which around 20,000 are operatives. Most researchers and media usually estimate a number of between 20.000 and 30.000 operatives.

[89] See: Odilla, Fernanda (2018). 'PCC 'batiza' estrangeiros no grupo de olho na expansão do tráfico de drogas na Europa'. BBC. Aug. URL: https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-44857777; Pinheiro, Mirele (2020). 'Investigação aponta que PCC faz batismo na Espanha, Itália e EUA'. Metrópoles. Jan.; URL: https://www.metropoles.com/distrito-federal/investigacao-aponta-que-pcc-faz-batismo-na-espanha-italia-e-eua.

[90] Farah, Douglas apud Pinto, Paulo (2018). 'Facção brasileira na América Central: PCC expande atividades'. Correio Braziliense. April; URL: https://www.correiobraziliense.com.br/app/noticia/politica/2018/04/21/interna_politica,675233/pcc-expande-atividades-para-a-america-central.shtml.

[91] See for instance: Neves, Yuri; Bentacur, Monica. PCC-'Ndrangheta, the International Criminal Alliance Flooding Europe with Cocaine. Insight Crime. Aug; URL: https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/pcc-ndrangheta-criminal-alliance-flooding-europe-cocaine/.

[92] Lasusa, Mike (2016). 'Brazil Is Top Cocaine Transshipment Country for Europe, Africa, Asia'. Insight Crime; URL: https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/brazil-is-top-cocaine-transshipment-country-for-europe-africa-asia/.

[93] This partnership supposedly started with specific symbiotic relations, in which the PCC would guarantee the safety of its members imprisoned in Brazil in exchange for the expansion of contacts and channels for the purchase of arms and the flow of drugs abroad. These connections are currently transforming into more stable and collaborative relationships. See Gurney, Kyra (2014). 'Police Documents Reveal 'Hezbollah Ties' to Brazil's PCC'. Insight Crime. Nov.; URL: https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/police-documents-hezbollah-ties-brazil-pcc/.

[94] Although authors differ on the exact moment in which the "party" or "family" took over business, based on conversations with police officers who investigate narcotraffickers in Brazil, it is safe to say that these changes started to progressively occur sometime between the years 2005 and 2007, as also argued by De Abreu (2017).

[95] Manso; Dias, (2018); Feltrán (2018).

[96] Martens, Juan (2019).

[97] Christino; Tognolli (2017).

[98] Ibid; Manso; Dias, (2018).

[99] Martens, Juan (2019).

[100] Ibid.

[101] See Sullivan, John (2007); Coutinho, Leonardo (2019). 'The Evolution of the Most Lethal Criminal Organization in Brazil', Prism. Vol. 8, No. 1; Carrijo, Alfredo. Countering the PCC: A New Federal Government Approach. Master's Thesis, National Defense University's College of International Security Affairs, 2018.

Cartel-Related Violence in Mexico as Narco-Terrorism or Criminal Insurgency: A Literature Review

by David Teiner

Abstract

The inability of the Mexican state to effectively fight against organized crime and to counter the territorial control of entire regions by criminal cartels has led many studies on organized crime in Mexico to new approaches, with many describing the acts of publicly displayed violence by Mexican cartels as Narco-Terrorism. Concerning the enhanced military capacity of many cartels and their territorial control, some scholars have also claimed that Mexico is experiencing a Criminal Insurgency, while others have criticized this classification for its impreciseness and for the consequences that come with it. Much of this debate continues to focus on the extent to which Mexican cartels are profit-driven and nonpolitical, or whether they have become politicized over time. Some studies avoid this controversy by seeing (Narco-)Terrorism as a tactic used by cartels to intimidate politicians and civil society, to demonstrate strength, and to claim territorial control.

Keywords: Mexico, Narco-Terrorism, Criminal Insurgency, Organized Crime, War on Drugs, Cartels, CDS, CJNG

Introduction

After abolishing the one-party state of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) and pushing forward the process of democratization in 2000, Mexico experienced an unforeseeable rise of organized crime that resulted in unseen levels of horrific violence against civil society and the state and between the criminal cartels fighting for dominance to control drug trafficking routes.[1] Several historical developments and geographical prerequisites also led to the surge in criminality that Mexico is experiencing at present. Firstly, Mexico's geographical location predestines the country as a drug-trafficking route, since nearly every legal or illegal transfer of goods from South America to the United States (USA) goes through Mexico.[2] During the Nixon-initiated *War on Drugs*, the United States managed to block the Caribbean smuggling routes that were frequently used by Colombian drug trafficking organizations (DTO) in the 1980s, which led to the relocation of their trafficking routes through Mexico and then resulted in the tremendous growth of Mexican DTOs.[3] Secondly, also geographically determined, Mexico is split by two massive mountain ranges that reach from the country's north to its south and make it difficult to implement policies and enforce the rule of law in many rural areas.[4] This has contributed to inefficient public services, widespread poverty, drug abuse, and social and political exclusion in these areas.[5] As people in these regions felt abandoned and saw impunity for crimes due to non-existing or corrupt law enforcement agencies, it is not surprising that such regions as Michoacán are some of the areas that are most affected by criminal cartels today.[6]

Cartels already existed before Mexico transitioned to a multi-party system. The PRI-government, military, and law enforcement were undoubtedly pervaded by corruption, which led to illicit arrangements between state officials and mainly the Sinaloa cartel, but also to a relatively peaceful coexistence between organized crime syndicates and the government.[7] These arrangements were dissolved as the PRI was removed from government in 2000.[8] Since then, criminal cartels have competed for domination of smuggling routes through Mexico, but also diversified their criminal activities to arms trading, human trafficking, kidnapping, and extortion.[9] As organized crime got out of control and increased steadily, the then newly elected President Felipe Calderón declared in 2006 that his government would fight the cartels with military force.[10] During his eight-year presidency, the cartels resisted this military approach with success. The battle led to circa 83,000 casualties between 2006 and 2012.[11] As the violence increased even further after Calderón's military approach, most

studies on the topic, as well as most Mexican journalists, concluded that these offensives led to more violence as the cartels extended their military capacities during this period and committed even more acts of exaggerated brutality in public spaces.[12] As the cartels are still thriving, the death toll does as well, and 2019 sets a depressing record for the highest homicide rates in Mexico in the 21st century.[13] Some of the biggest cartels in existence at present are the *Sinaloa Cartel*, the *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación* (CJNG), the *Cártel de Santa Rosa Lima* (CSRL), the *Juarez Cartel*, the *Gulf Cartel*, the *Los Zetas*, the *Los Caballeros Templarios Cartel* and the *Beltran-Leyva Organization*.[14]

Cartel-Related Violence as Narco-Terrorism

Since cartel-related violence in Mexico skyrocketed in the 2000s and 2010s, and the number of casualties rose tremendously, most cartels have become increasingly brutal, and many journalists, politicians, and researchers have described the cartels' use of publicly performed excessive violence as terrorism. This has given rise to an ongoing debate about the applicability of the concept of terrorism to Mexican cartels. One of the most recent examples of how this controversy has had an impact on politics was an announcement made by US president Donald Trump, describing Mexican cartels as terrorist groups.[15] Escalante Gonzalbo discussed in detail in his article "Narco-terrorismo: la fábrica de la opinion pública"[16] the strategies behind the use of the term narco-terrorism by politicians, and how the term has helped the USA in particular in recent decades to create an abstract image of an enemy that facilitates military interventions.

The General Debate on Narco-Terrorism

The original term *Narco-Terrorism* was coined in 1983 by former Peruvian president Belaunde Terry, who used it to refer to orchestrated attacks by organized crime groups (OCG) on anti-narcotics law enforcement agents in his country.[17] Since then, the term has been used to describe FARC-EP's terrorist attacks in Colombia and has become part of broader academic debates in which the term has also included other terrorist organizations and even governments participating in drug trafficking to reach political goals.[18] Combs & Slann defined Narco-Terrorism in their encyclopedia of terrorism as an "alliance between drug producers and an insurgent group carrying out terrorist attacks".[19] Another definition focusing on DTOs and their violent behavior describes Narco-Terrorism as the "use of terror tactics by the narco-traffickers and drug lords to protect their illegal business".[20] Other definitions have highlighted the involvement of terrorist organizations and insurgent groups in drug trafficking for financial survival and the funding of terrorist attacks.[21] Some authors have chosen comparative approaches to point out similarities between DTOs and terrorist organizations. Lee controversially concluded that both types of organizations only differ in their motives, which are political for terrorist organizations and profit-orientated for DTOs.[22] The dual use of the term Narco-Terrorism to describe both the drug traffickers' use of terrorist tactics on the one hand and the involvement of terrorist or insurgent groups in drug trafficking to fund their attacks on the other hand has caused a high level of confusion that was concisely summarized by Schmid: "The vague narco-terrorism formula with its implicit call to fuse the 'war on drugs' and the 'war on terror' might offer a misleading intellectual roadmap to address the problem of terrorism".[23] Miller and Damask further criticized Narco-Terrorism as a "political myth based on a stereotypic view of the Andean drug trade, peasant insurgency and the relationships between them".[24] Criticizing the consequences of attributing Narco-Terrorism on DTOs or terrorist groups, Gomis argued that "this simplistic label often overestimates the importance of the drug trade in funding terrorism, and the use of terrorist tactics by drug traffickers".[25] In summary, the general debate on Narco-Terrorism has produced two different types of the phenomenon: criminal organizations using terrorist tactics to secure or expand their illicit business and insurgent organizations, terrorist groups, or governments involved in drug trafficking to achieve their political goals. Both types of Narco-Terrorism can be applied to many organizations that are not limited to specific countries or regions.

To provide an overview of possible connections between organized crime and terrorism and to take a broader

perspective on the topic, Makarenko[26] presented a plausible illustration of the *Crime-Terror Continuum*. She identified seven forms that a criminal or terrorist organization can take between the ends of organized crime and terrorism. Most of the forms in this continuum can be connected to the debate on Narco-Terrorism. The definitions of Narco-Terrorism presented above show that the general debate has covered most of the continuum. The involvement of terrorist groups in "criminal activities for operational purposes"[27] has been examined, but the "use of terror tactics for operational purposes"[28] by OCGs. Phillips[29] also pointed out the general differences between criminal organizations and (violent) political organizations. To analyze motivations and external influences on both types of organizations, he distinguished between *incentives* and *market*.[30] While political organizations offer their members *purposive incentives*, criminal organizations offer *material incentives*.[31] The *market* that influences both types of organizations is the *illicit goods market* for criminal organizations while for political organizations that *market* consists of *ideas and public opinion*.[32] Both discussions about *incentives* and *markets* for both types of organizations can often be found in the debates on Narco-Terrorism, which are outlined hereafter.

Narco-Terrorism in Mexico

Despite the wide-ranging criticism and lack of clarity concerning how Narco-Terrorism should be defined and used in academia, many studies have employed the term to describe the violent behavior of criminal cartels in Mexico and their public displays of excessive brutality. As the Mexican cartels gained strength, some researchers were unsatisfied by just classifying them as purely criminal organizations, as these concepts did not seem to suit these groups anymore while the usual countermeasures had also been proven ineffective.

One of the earliest studies that put Mexican cartels in the context of the debate about Narco-Terrorism was conducted by Knowles. He argued that Mexican cartels serve as the prime example of contemporary Narco-Terrorism, a term he defined as the "organized employment of violence against the local populace, the security forces and government to intimidate anyone contemplating resistance to drug trafficking".[33] During the same year, Longmire and Longmire suggested a classification of cartels as terrorist organizations on the ground that "tactics, strategy, organization, and even (to a limited extent) the goals of the Mexican drug cartels are perfectly consistent with those of recognized terrorist organizations".[34] This view was shared by other studies that argued that the developments in Mexico had led to a struggle for territorial control between cartels and the state and between individual cartels, "resulting in an unprecedented escalation of drug-related violence that qualifies as narcoterrorism".[35] While Haupt arrived at similar conclusions about the classification of Mexican cartels he emphasizes one key similarity between cartels and terrorist organizations: both "oppose nation-state sovereignty"[36]. He also identified one important difference, namely that "profit is the driving force behind a DTO, whereas terrorist organizations have political or ideological motivations".[37]

Political Motivation and Violent Communication

The key difference regarding the motivations of DTOs and terrorist organizations pervades nearly every in-depth comparison. While some argue that it preludes classifying the cartels' excessive use of violence as part of public displays as (Narco-)Terrorism, others point out that there are forms of terrorism that are neither politically nor ideologically driven and that some cartels have become to a certain extent politicized. Most of the later discussion concerning whether the cartels' violence qualifies as (Narco-) Terrorism or not revolves around this academic debate.

Academics such as Williams[38], Shirk and Wallman[39], and Beittel[40] focused on the lack of ideology or political goals of cartels, which they saw as a criterion that excluded cartel-violence from being classified as (Narco-)Terrorism. The line of argumentation that terrorism is not necessarily based on political or ideological motives was summarized by Meschoulam[41], who draws on the extensive review on definitions of terrorism by Schmid and Jongman[42]. He argues that prior studies have shown that "motivation is mentioned in ap-

proximately 65% of definitions"[43] of terrorism and that many researchers have broadened their definitions of terrorism and added economic incentives to the types of motivations thereof. Meschoulam notes that the "line between economics and politics becomes blurred"[44] in the Mexican context and classifies cartel-related violence as "quasi-terrorist acts".[45]

Some researchers have acknowledged an existing lack of clear political or ideological goals held by the cartels but have also argued that their public display of violence is like that of terrorist organizations. Phillips and Ríos[46] published a study focusing on these so-called *Narco-Messages*, as part of which they also outlined a new theoretical framework to explain the professionalized violent communication of Mexican cartels. In this context, Garcia-Cervantes[47] presented an approach of using participatory visual methods to analyze forms of cartel-related violent communications carried out by Mexican cartels. Although she advocated the collection of data on violence as part of her approach, Garcia-Cervantes recognized that this approach could endanger participants.[48] Campbell argues that what he considers to be *Narco-Propaganda*, is the "quasi-ideological expression of criminal organizations"[49] and that Mexican cartels "should therefore be treated analytically as political entities and their narco-propaganda as powerful new form of political discourse".[50] This also makes it possible to classify their publicly communicated violence as terrorism. As a form of signature or to disseminate a message, most Mexican cartels leave different symbols next to their victims or prepare them in a specific way to communicate publicly through these.[51] These messages serve to intimidate rival cartels, politicians, law enforcement agencies, and Mexican civilians as well as to indicate territorial control over a certain area.[52] Regarding the rapidly increasing brutality of narco-messages through violence, the media plays an important role, as it gives "more airtime to stories about exceptional brutality".[53] Since such messages can in most cases be assigned to a specific cartel, many studies discussed the symbolic character of the cartels' violence.[54] Etter and Lehmuth also referred to the public and symbolic character of Mexican cartel-related violence to argue that it is justified to classify it as a form of terrorism.[55]

An argument against the classification of cartel-related violence as terrorism was presented by Kan, who uses the common counterargument of the cartels lacking a necessary ideology while also arguing that "less than ten percent of the deaths in Mexico have been agents of the state"[56] and that the "majority of violence is generated between and within cartels".[57] Kan concludes that the number of state-related victims would be significantly higher if an insurgency by cartels against the Mexican state were to take place.[58] Like Kan, Lessing chose an empirical approach, whereby he created categories to classify the violence of DTOs in Colombia (1986–93), Brazil (2007–11), and Mexico (2008–11).[59] His findings showed that statistically "terror tactics […] were indeed far more prominent in Colombia than Mexico or Brazil".[60]

Terrorism as a Tactic

One line of research focuses solely upon the violent behavior of Mexican cartels without directly classifying them as terrorist organizations, nor labeling their members as terrorists in a traditional sense. The focus of these studies is on the use of tactics and whether they fulfill the criteria to be classified as being of a terrorist nature. Curran[61] uses a definition of terrorism which includes nonpolitical terrorism and argues that "the fact cartels systematically employ violence for the express purpose of intimidating or coercing particular segments of the Mexican population provides strong evidence that these organizations are, in fact, engaging in terrorism".[62] Mullins and Wither point in a similar direction as they claim that "organized crime groups also utilize tactics of terrorism when it suits their purposes".[63] According to Shaw and Mahadevan[64], the use of excessive violence and symbolic killings can also be a strategy used by the cartels to gain control over towns and villages in Mexico. To achieve their goal of gaining and holding territorial control, Mexican cartels have "developed an extensive in-house terrorism capacity".[65] Furthermore, Duran-Martinez has shown that cartel-related "violence becomes visible and frequent when trafficking organizations compete and the state security apparatus is fragmented".[66]

Phillips[67] claims that there have been prior cases where criminal organizations have adopted terrorist tactics, meaning that the phenomenon is not entirely new, but that "the violence in Mexico is relatively unique

for its scale".[68] In his study, Phillips describes "bombings, violent communication, and attacks against politicians"[69] as terrorist tactics that have not only been adopted by Mexican cartels, but also by criminal organizations in Brazil, Colombia, Italy, and Russia. Martin conducted similar research in his comparative analysis on criminal dissident terrorism, which included Abu Sayyaf, the Tamil Tigers, as well as Italian organized crime, the Russian mafia, and many others, whereby just Mexican and Colombian DTOs' uses of violence were classified as Narco-Terrorism.[70] Campbell and Hansen described three dimensions of Narco-Terrorism. They identify its use in a "struggle for regional political control"[71], as a "practice ordered by cartel leaders"[72] to avoid "spontaneous violence by foot soldiers"[73] and as an "expansion strategy from solely drug trafficking to other kinds of organized crime".[74] Salt further states that "cartels can be said to have a dual nature"[75], as "sometimes they act like terrorists in terms of their operational and tactical level behavior, and the rest of the time they act as businessmen".[76] He concludes that the "lines between terrorism and crime become blurred in practice".[77]

The Concept of a Criminal Insurgency

Throughout the debate concerning how to categorize Mexican cartels regarding their territorial control, their professional armament, and their evolving public use of violence in large quantities, the term *Criminal Insurgency* has become increasingly popular in the academic field. While other slightly different conceptions of this phenomenon, such as *Commercial Insurgency*[78] and *Narco-Insurgency*[79] have also been acknowledged, Criminal Insurgency remained the most referred to, and vividly discussed, conceptual framework in debates on Mexican cartels. Most of the works that have endorsed this term and sharpened the concept behind it have been published by Bunker and Sullivan. Academics like Correa-Carbrera[80] and investigative journalists like Hernández[81], Osoro[82], or Grillo[83] provided extensive and deep insights into Mexican cartels' strategies and dynamics of violence and thereby helped to further improve the concept. This debate, too, did not take place exclusively between academics. In 2010, the then–US Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, described the situation in Mexico with regard to organized crime as "what we would consider an insurgency".[84] Felipe Calderón, with his military approach against the cartels, thought similarly to Clinton. However, his successor, Enrique Peña Nieto, (EPN) deviated from this strategy. EPN also opposed negotiating with cartel leaders but wanted to strengthen the police forces to counter the cartels through law enforcement.[85] The approaches of both presidents have been extensively reviewed in Fazio's "Estado de emergencia: De la guerra de Calderón a la guerra de Peña Nieto".[86] Both approaches to Nieto's successor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) deviated even further from the military approach.[87] He promised social change that would curb organized crime in Mexico. AMLO's approach refuses to treat the situation in Mexico as an insurgency or view cartels as terrorist organizations. However, it has also become the subject of considerable criticism.[88] Although most of the scientific publications on criminal insurgency are focused on Mexico, the concept has also been applied in other cases, such as the Brazilian *Comando Vermelho*[89] or conflicts in the Niger Delta, which were referred to as *Petro-Insurgency*.[90]

Outline and Context of the Concept

The initial publication that proposed the term *Criminal Insurgency* as a conceptual framework was put together by Sullivan and Elkus.[91] They built their argument upon Metz's[92] work, who argued that 21st-century insurgent movements do not necessarily need political reasons to exist nor make ideological demands, but will try to weaken the state they operate in and "provide utilitarian social goods, form narratives of power and rebellion and act as 'post-modern social bandits' to gain support and legitimacy within their own organizations and the geographic areas they control".[93]

As Bunker[94] puts it, the controversy surrounding the existence or nonexistence Criminal Insurgencies in both the Mexican and/or other contexts can be split into modernist and postmodernist academic factions. From a modernist perspective, OCGs cannot be motivated by political or ideological goals. They compete with

other OCGs for dominance in illicit markets and do not target nation-states.[95] As these groups should not be considered as insurgent movements or terrorist organizations, they are best combatted by law enforcement, rather than by military means.[96] From a postmodernist point of view, OCGs can directly target the state, challenge it effectively and create "areas of impunity"[97] to freely engage in illicit trade or in influencing and extorting civil society.[98] The question of whether these groups are formally politicized or not is answered by their *de facto* politicization, as they oppose state sovereignty by creating areas in which they can withdraw from legal prosecution and in this regard become similar to localized warlords.[99] Proponents of Criminal Insurgency include military responses in their sets of recommendations.[100]

Sullivan[101] also presented a framework to differentiate between levels of *criminal insurgencies*. He defines *local insurgencies* as being the *first level*, whereby a criminal group tries to create areas of impunity to maximize its profit. The *second level* is characterised by the term *battle for the parallel state*, whereby criminal groups fight for control over specific areas. The *third level* is defined by the term *combating the state*, whereby criminal groups directly target state officials to intimidate them and/or retaliate for offensives made against them. The fourth and last level of a Criminal Insurgency is reached when *the state implodes*, which means that the state is incapable of responding to the criminality and violence conducted by criminal groups.[102] The possibility of this last scenario was particularly discussed by Grayson[103] and Morton.[104]

The participating violent non-state actors in a Criminal Insurgency can in most cases be described as criminal gangs or cartels. Bunker and Sullivan[105] introduced a new typology for criminal cartels that includes three different phases a cartel can be in. A *1st Phase Cartel* is defined as an *aggressive competitor*, one which takes criminal activities to a professional level with high scales of profit that are in many cases derived from drug trafficking. The model is exemplified by Pablo Escobar's *Medellín* cartel. A *2nd Phase Cartel* is described as being a *subtle co-opter*, one that seeks invisibility for its more advanced criminal activities; it also works in a network-based rather than in a hierarchical manner. Its structure partially stems from historical experiences, whereby the hierarchically structured Medellín cartel directly attacked the Colombian state and fell apart after the hunt and death of Pablo Escobar. The clustered leadership of this type of cartel makes countermeasures against it complicated. Examples for this type of cartel are the Colombian *Cali* cartel and many of the Mexican drug cartels. A *3rd Phase Cartel* is characterised as being a *Criminal State Successor*. It successfully challenges the state for territorial control and poses a threat to its sovereignty. Such a cartel has not developed yet, but Bunker[106] argues that hybrid forms of the 2nd and 3rd phases can be found in the Mexican Criminal Insurgency.

Although the term *Criminal Insurgency* is one of the most commonly used phrases in the debate about Mexican cartels and their struggle for territorial control accompanied by rapidly increasing violence, similar terms have also gained attention. The popularity of the term *Criminal Insurgency* may derive from its elaborated and broad conceptual basis, whereas studies that introduced and employed other terms focused on one or more specific factors related to Mexican politics, the cartels, or the dynamics of violence. For instance, in the case of *Narco-Insurgency*, Brands[107] and Yeh[108] focused on the topic of widespread corruption in Mexico, which continues to result in recurring failures in fighting the cartels. The expression *Commercial Insurgency* was coined by Metz, who described it as a "quasi-political distortion of materialism"[109], which is dedicated to the acquisition of wealth and often determined by geography. Palma[110] adopted this concept and declared the profit-motivated nature of Mexican cartels to be one of the most important factors while the cartels' establishment of transnational networks and the expansion of their military capacities enables them to continue with their criminal activities, even though the Mexican state responds with counter-insurgency measures. Fitzpatrick[111] applied the concept *Commercial Insurgency* to the Los Zetas cartel and proved it to be a reliable tool for the analysis of Mexican cartels. However, he also pointed out that a counter-insurgency framework based on the concept still needs to be developed.

Those criticizing the application of the concept of Criminal Insurgency to the Mexican case argue whether the cartels and the country meet the elaborated characteristics of an insurgency.[112] Corcoran also claimed that "traditional insurgency depends on a coherent alternative to the government"[113], thus presenting another key difference, namely that cartels "spend more time alienating hearts and minds than winning them".[114]

Shirk[115] referred to the key difference that Mexican cartels are not politically motivated and therefore should not be considered insurgent movements, nor terrorists. Shirk and Wallman concluded that a "distortion of definitions and typologies leads to imprecise analysis, inaccurate conclusions, and potentially harmful policies".[116]

Mexican Cartels as Political Entities

As shown in the previous debate about Narco-Terrorism, political motivation plays a crucial role in the classification of Mexican cartels as terrorist organizations. The same applies to designating Mexican cartels as insurgent movements and to describing Mexico's condition as a Criminal Insurgency, due to the traditional conceptions of insurgencies and insurgent movements as ones whose central motives are political or ideological.[117] The debate on Criminal Insurgency in Mexico is therefore also dominated by discussions about the politicization of the cartels and the necessity and the general importance of political motives and ideologies for insurgent movements. Various studies conducted research on the interdependent relationship between Mexican politics and the dynamics of cartel-related violence.[118] Barnes has focused specifically on the relationship between politics and criminal violence, arguing that the study of violence of criminal organizations should be more integrated into research on political violence since the criminal organizations to which Barnes referred in his study openly compete with the state they operate in, which "heightened levels of violence in many contexts and allowed these organizations to gather significant political authority".[119]

As also shown in the debate on *narco-terrorism*, most Mexican cartels employ terrorist tactics to evoke fear among their rivals, civil society, and Mexican politicians. In the context of the politicization of cartels, violent communication becomes particularly relevant if the disseminated messages follow an ideology. The cartel *Los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán* (Knights Templar) is arguably the most politicized cartel in Mexico. Its propaganda contains large amounts of evangelical messages and political motives.[120] The Knights Templar's ideology has been described as *Narco-Evangelicalism*[121], which can be seen as a spiritual movement with political motivations[122]. However, its members have also been described as *pseudo-Christian cultists* who declared the former leader of the *La Familia Michoacán Cartel Nazario Moreno González* their saint.[123]

For Sullivan[124], communication via excessive violence is only one part of the propaganda efforts employed by Mexican cartels, especially the Knights Templar. In addition, roadblocks (*narcobloqueos*), public banners (*narcomantas*), graffiti (*narcopintas*), demonstrations (*manefestacions*) and communiqués (*narcomensajes*) are professionally used to show strength and claim territorial control.[125] The Knights Templar Cartel has also been discussed in the context of *social banditry*, whereby "criminals portray themselves as heroically fighting against an unjust system".[126] The cartel continuously tries to create and manipulate narratives about it, the state and other cartels, to legitimize criminal and violent behavior and enhance political and social control.[127]

Following Grynkewich[128], who argued that several insurgent movements provide social services to enhance support and sympathy for the group and to take away legitimacy from the state the group operates in, Flanigan[129] showed – in comparison to Middle Eastern terrorist organizations – that some cartels like the Knights Templar provide social services as a strategy to gain acceptance and create loyalty in their local communities. In a subsequent study, Flanigan[130] covered the full scope of the Knights Templar's provision of social services and their involvement in territorial governance. While most cartels provide very limited and short-term support for civil society (giveaways of toys, food or clothes), the Knights Templar engage more extensively in the provision of social services, such as offering low-interest loans and running several rehabilitation centers for drug addicts.[131]

If the lack of politicization is one of the few things that excludes cartels from being classified as insurgent movements, the involvement of the Knights Templar in administrative or governmental activities becomes increasingly significant, since the group challenges the state, not only militarily, but also in terms of legitimacy when replacing governmental functions.[132] For instance, it was proven that the cartel regulates the price of agricultural products, gives out licenses for foresting activities, grants permits for festivals and other events,

and also established a parallel justice system with its own criminal investigations, prosecution, jurisdiction and execution of judgments.[133] Chard claims that political motivations do not only take place on a level of strategic considerations but that some of the formerly strong cartels are "now split by policy".[134] A study that partially conducted research on cartel-governance in Mexico also found that cartels behave in a more friendly manner towards citizens the more their territorial control is secured.[135] As well as the Knights Templar Cartel, the Sinaloa Cartel is also working on its public perception by building schools, hospitals, and other forms of infrastructure in its territories. This is making the cartel quite popular so that many young people want to become part of the cartel.[136]

In addition to the provision of social services, the development of a so-called *Narcocultura*, which is described as a popular Mexican cultural movement that has been "built upon the aesthetics, personalities, and history of the drug war"[137], is partially responsible for the popularity of some cartels, their leaders and crimes they commit. Some academics claim that the popularity of cartel leaders can partially be traced back to popular Mexican rebels, such as *Emiliano Zapata Salazar*, one of the leaders of the Mexican revolution - the person after whom the so-called *Zapatista* movement was named, which fought the Mexican state in the 1990s and which still makes political demands.[138] The glorification of cartel leaders in films and music and the popularity of spiritual figures like *Santa Muerte* and Jesús Malverde, a drug trafficker's saint, are also key factors for the establishment of a *Narcocultura*.[139] Along with aspects of *social banditry*, the promotion of spiritual figures that are connected with drug trafficking or death and a popular culture that glorifies drug cartels and their leaders are among the sophisticated strategies used by Mexican cartels to gain support from civil society to boost their political power and legitimacy.[140]

The Future of the Narco-Terrorism Debate and the Concept of Criminal Insurgency

The future developments of Mexico's cartels and the dynamics of their violence against one other, the state and civil society, remain very uncertain and hard to predict. The conceptual debates about Narco-Terrorism and Criminal Insurgency and future developments of the Mexican cartels are mutually dependent. If the cartels intensify their engagement in shaping Mexican politics, targeting politicians and state institutions, and replacing functions of the state to gain support and legitimacy among civil society, the future of Mexico will be more defined by insurgency than by organized crime. If the cartels step back from engaging in these fields, advocates of traditional law enforcement will argue that cartels are best fought with measures from the toolkit of countering organized crime. Mexico's future will depend on the success or failure of the state's responses to the cartels and if the government chooses approaches from counterinsurgency or counterterrorism or if it will rely on recommendations that support strengthening Mexican law enforcement over military approaches. Both sides have influential advocates and opponents in politics and science.

Recent developments indicate that Mexican civilians actively participate in fighting the cartels for various reasons. The rise and establishment of private militias (*policia popular*) in Mexico to fight the cartels and their partial success show the important role that civil society can play in fighting organized crime.[141] Regional ethnic autonomy institutions also challenged the cartels and tried to protect areas that were highly affected by organized crime.[142] However, the Mexican government has yet to develop a coherent response to these militias and decide if or how these groups should be addressed in its strategy to counter the cartels.[143]

Future developments in Mexico are also dependent on the dynamics of conflicts between cartels. Most of the cartels have diversified the fields of their criminal activity from solely drug trafficking to other forms of profitable illicit businesses.[144] One of the most recent shifts in the *modus operandi* of the cartels has been toward a major engagement in fuel-theft.[145] This shift has led to changes in inter-cartel conflicts since it has partially relocated from the United States-Mexico border to the center of the country, where mainly two cartels – the CSRL and the CJNG – fight for dominance in this field.[146] After succeeding the Sinaloa cartel as the strongest cartel with the highest military capacity, the CJNG will continue to play a key role in the future of debates concerning whether concepts from terrorism, insurgency, or conflict studies apply to Mexican cartels.[147]

These debates, in part, will partially be shaped by the future behavior of the CJNG and other strong cartels, especially and if they become as politicized as the Knights Templar and continue to utilize terrorist tactics to violently communicate with chosen audiences.

Conclusion

The objective of this Literature Review was to give a comprehensive overview of the research that has been conducted on classifying Mexican cartel-related violence as Narco-Terrorism. Several studies suggest that Mexico is currently experiencing a Criminal Insurgency. This literature review aimed to present the arguments of both advocates and critics of the concepts of Narco-Terrorism and Criminal Insurgency.

It has been shown that the original debate on Narco-Terrorism arose in South America and led to some confusion due to its ambiguity. *Narco-Terrorism* was used to characterize DTOs' use of terrorist tactics to protect their illicit businesses on the one hand, but also to describe terrorist groups that participated in drug trafficking to fund terrorist attacks or to ensure their financial survival. Therefore, some criticized the term *Narco-Terrorism* for merging the *War on Drugs* and the *War on Terror*, something that could lead to misguided conclusions as to how to respond to both DTOs and terrorist groups appropriately. The debate on Narco-Terrorism relocated to Mexico in approximately 2008 when some authors began to claim that the strategies, tactics, and organizational structures of some Mexican cartels were nearly identical to those of some terrorist organizations. However, in the ensuing debate about Narco-Terrorism in Mexico, many researchers argued that the cartels were lacking any form of ideology or political motivation, thus excluding them from being considered terrorists.

The need to have ideological reasons or a political motive to commit terrorist attacks then became the main subject of the discussion about Narco-Terrorism. Some stated that only 65% of definitions of terrorism even include what motivates terrorist groups, while other proponents of Narco-Terrorism argued that the publicly displayed violence of Mexican cartels serves them as Narco-Propaganda and that they should, therefore, be treated as political entities. Critics responded to the aforesaid arguments by stating that the main targets of Mexican cartels have so far not been civilians or state officials, but members of rival cartels. They argued that not all terrorist groups violently compete with one another and that confrontation with other terrorist groups is never their main goal. Since the theoretical debates about Narco-Terrorism in Mexico did not leave much space to argue, many studies described public cartel-related violence as terrorist tactics employed by cartels and avoided classifying cartels as terrorist organizations. In this context, some argued that some OCGs, like the Italian or Russian Mafia, also employed terrorist tactics, but were not classified as terrorist groups.

The concept of the existence of a state of *Criminal Insurgency* in Mexico divided those analyzing the cartels into two main factions, which Bunker called *modernists* and *postmodernists*. While modernists argue that OCGs do not develop political goals nor challenge the state directly and are best met by law enforcement, the postmodernist view is built upon the assumption that 21st-century insurgent movements do not necessarily need political motivation. From this perspective, many cartels are *de facto* politicized, because they oppose the sovereignty of the state, thus becoming threats to national security that must be dealt with by military force. When proponents of the existence of a *Criminal Insurgency* in Mexico elaborated the concept, they presented three levels thereof, namely a state of *local insurgency*, a *battle for the parallel state,* and a final stage where *the state implodes*. In addition, they presented ideal types of three different generations of cartels. A first-generation cartel was given the description *aggressive competitor* and was exemplified by the *Medellín Cartel*. A second-generation cartel is a *subtle co-opter* that has learned from the decline of the Medellín Cartel, as illustrated by the *Cali Cartel*. A third-generation cartel is a *criminal state successor*, a type of cartel that is at present merely fictional but that has partially developed in Mexico. Critics of the concept of *Criminal Insurgency* claimed that for a state of insurgency to exist, movements or organizations must offer a coherent alternative to the government, which Mexican cartels do not. They also argued that, in contrast to many known insurgent movements, Mexican cartels do not try to win the hearts and minds of civil society.

The debate about Criminal Insurgency then went in a similar direction as the one on Narco-Terrorism. This led to many studies analyzing the goal and impact of Narco-Messages as well as to studies on the politicization of some cartels. Studies on cartel banners, graffiti, demonstrations, communiqués, and the preparation of victims bearing a cartel's signature argued that such Narco-Messages are intended to show the strength of a certain cartel or to claim territorial control. Studies on the politicization of Mexican cartels have concluded that the Knights Templar Cartel is one of the most politicized, spreading evangelical messages and openly communicating its political goals and perceptions of justice. Some even described the cartel as a spiritual or occult movement with political motivations. Some cartels sophistically try to manipulate narratives about themselves by using spiritual figures of a Mexican Narcocultura-background. They also offer social services like low-interest loans to portray themselves as social bandits to gain legitimacy and greater support from civil society. The cartels' usurpation of some traditional state functions indicates that they partially seek to replace the state in their territories. This could strengthen those who argue in favor of the existence of politicized Mexican cartels and therefore a Criminal Insurgency, trying to provide an alternative to the Mexican state.

The future of both the Narco-Terrorism and Criminal Insurgency debates will partially depend on the future behavior of the Mexican state as well as the one of certain cartels. For instance, the Mexican government needs to decide how it is going to handle the development of civil militias fighting the cartels. These vigilante groups may represent a chance to effectively counter the cartels but they lack legitimacy. If one cartel becomes more powerful than the others and develops political motivations, the advocates of the existence of a Criminal Insurgency in Mexico will become stronger in the academic debate. The CJNG cartel, with its strong military capabilities, is currently one of the best candidates to become the dominant cartel in Mexico. Since academic debates on the topic have partially shaped actual responses to Mexican cartels in the past, researchers should be aware of the potential influence their studies can have. What makes the debates on Narco-Terrorism and Criminal Insurgency special is the multidisciplinary nature of the various perspectives.[148] The possibility that contributions can come from Terrorism Studies, Insurgency Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, and Criminology is theoretically fruitful for finding more adequate solutions to the crisis presented by the presence and power of organized crime groups in Mexico.

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Network vs. Network: Countering Crime-Terror by Combining the Strengths of Law Enforcement, Military and Academia

by Christian Vianna de Azevedo & Sara Pollak Dudley

Abstract

Can we tackle the crime-terror nexus in a new and meaningful way? The nexus between transnational crime and terrorism manifests itself in several ways, and for this reason, it is complex and dynamic. The fall of the Soviet Union and the birth of the information age in the late 21th Century manifested in an increase of the intersection between crime and terrorism. Broad international efforts to disrupt terrorism over the last ten years generated sweeping changes in the application of military force, brought changes to legal frameworks for law enforcement and focused academic study on the essence and motivations of terrorist groups. In this article we discuss the changing world context of terrorism, the underpinnings of academic research on the crime-terror nexus and the influence of corruption and globalization. As practitioners, we then outline the challenges and frustrations of working in this field. We present a model to illustrate that bringing together the resources of law enforcement, academia, and the military can provide a structurally coherent instrument with which to challenge the ever-changing perplexities of this problem set.

Keywords: Crime-terror nexus, transnational organized crime, terrorism, corruption, law enforcement, military, academia.

Introduction

After nearly two decades of efforts to combat terrorism following the spectacular attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001, the array of actors—both state and non-state—challenging the post-World War II international order and Western democracies grows.[1] Since 9/11, the broad international efforts to disrupt terrorism generated sweeping changes in the use of military force as well as leading to transformations for the legal frameworks applicable to law enforcement agencies. It also led to a surge of academic studies on the drivers and motivations of terrorist groups. For some Western democracies, most notably the United States and European countries, the terrorism threat appears to be losing importance as great power strategic competition reappears, changing national security priorities.[2] In the case of the United States, for instance, this new security focus found its expression in a revision of the National Defense Strategy. However, not only for the US, but also for some other Western democracies, some of the defense protocols have shifted their main emphasis away from violent extremist organizations (VEOs) and terrorism.[3]

However, the interplay between revisionist nations, rogue regimes, and VEOs must be targeted systematically by states who wish to uphold the legal frameworks of world order created after the Second World War. Challenging this hitherto accepted order, revisionist states and rogue regimes have leveraged conflicts in the Middle East and the terrorist groups that originate in that region. Looking ahead, a 'terror only' lens obfuscates the complexity of the current problem set. Revisionist states declare that their foreign policy seeks change in the international order's *status quo* in a significant way. They adopt a revisionist objective because they see an opportunity to achieve it. Important for our consideration is that they employ a set of strategies that includes the clandestine undermining of existing rules and practices and other actions short of war, including the use of terrorist and transnational criminal proxies. We consider a rogue regime/state to be one that perpetually demonstrates internationally unaccepted behavior. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that rogue behavior is also a matter of perspective. Irrational state behavior that defies norms and rules that the international community deem to be not normal affect the challenging state's credibility. The credibility of rogue regimes amongst international state actors is typically low, in part due to their sponsorship of known terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations. Consequently, such regimes become the outcasts of the international system.

However, a complete shift toward focusing only on rogue states would undermine the gains of the counterterrorism efforts that exposed links between corruption, transnational organized criminals [4] and terrorist networks. Recognizing this threefold nexus and countering the existing financial ties is important. This article focuses on countering illicit financing drawn from the authors shared experiences of working together in the field on a tour of duty. However, all the considerations explored within this article relate to countering terrorism facilitation as a whole. The corruption, criminal, and terrorist networks that support revisionist governments, rogue regimes, and violent extremist organizations respectively, all require financial support as the lifeblood for their activities. Far from being defeated, the main terrorist networks upon which the international community has focused until now also function as conduits for illicit financing. To address the threat from such networks, as a counterbalance, a partnership between the military, law enforcement, and academia is called for. Combining the respective strengths of each of these communities into a nexus can offer a powerful instrument for analysis and response. (see Figure 1).

Methodology

We intend to approach the subject under consideration from a practitioner's standpoint. One of the authors comes from a military background and has focused on counterterrorism and finance while the other, with a law enforcement background, focuses on counterterrorism and countering transnational organized crime. Both authors have benefited greatly in their careers from their contacts with academia. A tour of duty in which we served together combating these challenging networks allowed for the development of the basic concepts presented here. Understanding and mapping the power of these illicit network connections internationally challenged us to try to find a more efficient way to target such a broad threat spectrum. We came to agree that money and financing tie these malicious networks together.

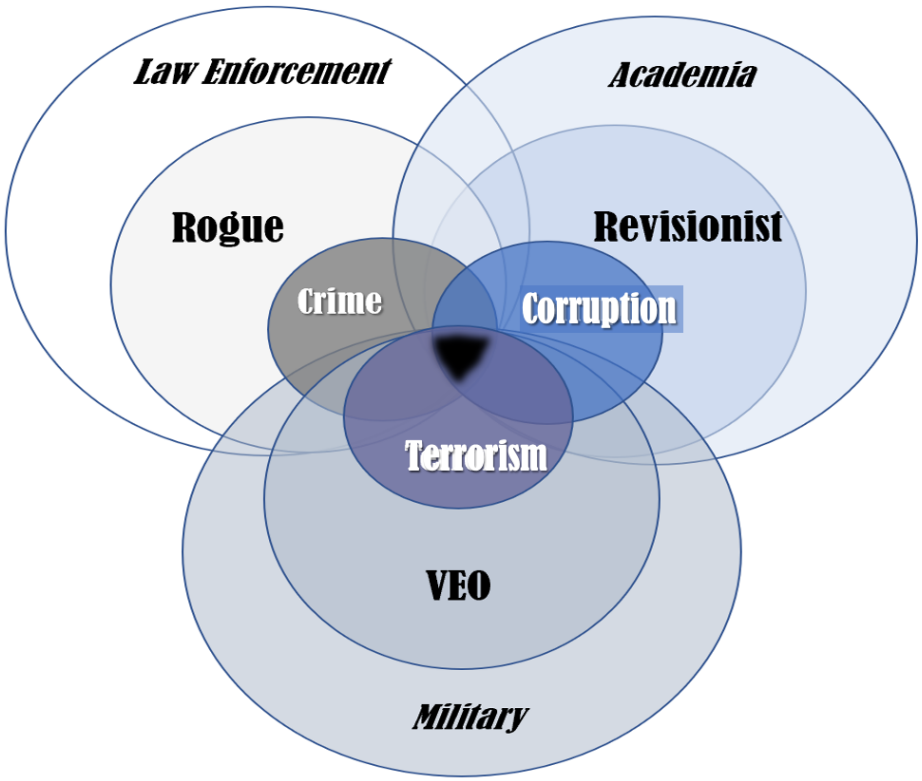

Figure 1

The structure of this article is as follows. After a brief review of the existing literature on the crime-terror nexus and the growth of this nexus by globalization, we outline the pitfalls and challenges involved in fighting this threefold threat. We explore the growing academic body of work on the subject and the increasing international recognition of the cancerous nature of corruption—a cause championed by James Wolfensohn when serving as president of the World Bank.[5]

Having built this foundation we set out, utilizing personal experience, to propose a model to tackle the convoluted and tangled conundrum of illicit financing. Based on admittedly anecdotal evidence only, we believe that corruption is the first condition permitting the growth of crime- and terror organization within a given state. Our experiences belie a simple one-to-one relationship between just crime and terror networks. In conclusion, we suggest that a powerful alliance of law enforcement, military, and academia can tackle the crime-terror-corruption nexus.

Crime and Terror Nexus: Brief Theoretical Considerations

The nexus between transnational crime [6] and terrorism [7] manifests itself in several ways and is complex and dynamic. In law enforcement, when we find ties between transnational crime and terrorism, we also find a range of peripheral and facilitating illicit activities orbiting around this relationship. These relationships will materialize in different ways since different regions have distinct characteristics (political, geographical, religious, and others). The display of distinct patterns in the relationships also depends on whether the nexus relates to an organization itself or a transaction between two independent groups. The crime-terror nexus manifests itself in two main ways: through the transactional nexus and through the organizational nexus.[8]

Transactional Nexus

Generally, the transactional nexus involves the combination of a criminal organization and a terrorist group to execute specific operational tasks. This 'coming together' materializes in basically two forms: a basic alliance or an appropriation of tactics through organizational learning. The alliances do not generally translate into a long-term relationship due to the vulnerabilities posed by permanent association.[9] Alliances typically happen when either the terrorist or the criminal group requires access to specialized knowledge (e.g., money laundering), specialized service (e.g., counterfeiting), operational support (e.g., access to a smuggling network) or financial support (e.g., money transfers, access to markets).[10]

The appropriation of tactics involves the ability of either the criminal or terrorist group to learn how to integrate the tactics of the other more effectively, developing in-house capabilities for its own purpose. For example, a terror group gets involved in profitable criminal activities (e.g., drug trafficking, arms trafficking, extortion) to enable the financing of its terrorist operations and political goals. Conversely, a criminal organization might learn how to conduct terrorist acts to elicit fear within the segment of society it wants to influence or control. [11]

Organizational Nexus

As for the organizational nexus, it occurs when the criminal and the terrorist activities occupy the same time and space. When the nexus emerges as an organizational one, there exist variations in the extent to which the activities overlap. The analysis of an organizational nexus can be broken down into the categories of integration, hybrid, transformation, and black hole.[12]

Integration appears in two distinct situations. The first one results from an alliance that evolves to the extent that the criminal and terrorist organizations merge into one. The second one occurs with the targeted recruitment of criminals into a terrorist cell to obtain greater tactical capabilities within a short time frame. Such targeted recruitment is not merely about mobilizing individuals with a criminal background. Instead this action intends to integrate a radicalized group of experienced criminals, generally the ones that already operate in the terrorist's

immediate community.[13]

The hybrid type of nexus occurs with a fundamental shift in the core purpose of a group. A hybrid group will feature simultaneously ideological and economic motivations by conducting terrorist attacks while also engaging in profitable criminal enterprises. In such a situation, the group in question qualifies as criminal or terrorist. Hybrid groups represent those with the highest potential of being overlooked by both anti-crime and counterterrorism agencies.[14]

Transformation, an evolutionary form of the nexus, occurs when a terrorist or criminal group evolves both organizationally and operationally to fully adopt the fundamentals of the other group. The transformation manifests when the essential aims and motivations of the group change to the point that the original *raison d'être* ceases to exist. Ultimately, a terrorist group reorients to become a criminal organization or vice versa.[15]

The "Black Hole Syndrome" describes an extreme environment that is the perfect breeding ground for many forms of the crime-terror nexus. Generally associated with a geographically defined area that lacks governance and security, territorial rule in these areas defaults to the groups that controls the illicit economy and people. The 'Black Hole' fosters the worst-case scenario for the nexus manifestation. The convergence of crime and terror networks perpetuates the extremely insecure conditions of a region where groups vie for the control of economic or political power through the spread of violence and an array of criminal activities.[16]

Each of these theoretical concepts outlines the underpinning motivations encouraging the crime-terror partnership. Applied operationally, the transactional nexus results in more tangible and discrete actions between groups. Hence, efforts to thwart the financing involved in these partnerships stand greater chances of success when it comes to dismantling or disrupting them. Crime and terror groups that merge organizationally provide significantly more challenges to efforts to break them up. A specific analysis of this effect in Europe revealed a merger of criminals and terrorist not by groups but by more powerful social networks.[17] By definition, these organizations now have merged illicit capabilities and demand a similar application of combined tools by authorities to find, isolate and counter them. Targeting the financing of these groups with combined expertise allows for the application of criminal and counterterrorism laws as well.[18]

Globalization, Corruption and Fragile States: An Interplay that Intensifies the Crime and Terror Nexus

Most scholars argue that the fall of the Soviet Union and the birth of the global information age enabled an increase in the intersection(s) between crime and terrorism.[19] The end of the Cold War and the consequent decline in state-sponsored terrorism paved the way for the expansion of alternative sources of financing for terrorist groups and insurgent movements. Criminal financial sources such as drug trafficking, smuggling, extortion, and the like provided insurgents with the needed financial resources to maintain permanent armies of foot soldiers. Standing forces require weapons, supplies, food, and a payroll for salaries. Additionally, terrorist groups need funding resources to acquire illicit supplies and service (e.g., falsified documents, cross-border movement of agents, smuggler support, firearms, and explosives).[20]

At the dawn of the 1990s, most terrorist groups had started to develop know-how about engaging in criminal activities geared toward supporting operational financing. The post-Cold War era, along with the subsequent rise of intra-state tensions around the world, regional wars, and advances in globalization, have exacerbated the conditions that have driven the already flourishing association between terrorist and criminal groups. As a result, modern terrorists have long realized the necessity of possessing a diversified portfolio of sources of financial income. They recognize that relying on a single flow of funding, such as state sponsorship or charities, can pose an unacceptable risk to the organization. If authorities isolate and close the single channel of funding or it becomes hampered for any other reason, the organization's financial structure collapses.

Globalization adds additional complexity to the equation. Since the mid-nineties, the global environment has evolved at an impressive rate, enlarging, accelerating, expanding, and disseminating everything. There is a

growing consensus among public policymakers, academic researchers, and diverse professionals that the world has advanced to the point in which global governance has become overwhelmed.[21] Elements that cause this difficulty in governance include rapid developments in information technology, communications, physical transport, demography, and additional advances that have greatly expanded the transnational integration of peoples, economies, and markets.[22]

This technological development has transformed people's routines, making their lives more comfortable and their businesses more profitable. However, this leap of technologies also disadvantages regulatory communities as it hyper-enables capabilities that can be used for 'dark side' behaviors, support, and financing. It was precisely this undesirable transnational integration of illicit flows that led to the term "deviant globalization" being coined.[23] In this regard, criminals and terrorists benefit from advances in technology-induced globalization and exploit not only the numerous gaps in legislation but also the capacity and scope of law enforcement in each country in which they carry out their illicit activities. Illicit actors take advantage of the growing integration of markets, in which they benefit from the progressive acceleration of technologies in terms of communications, transportation, and financial systems.[24]

In periods of disruptive innovation, the governing mechanisms of the world become vulnerable to manipulation as progress moves faster than bureaucracy. Therefore, lagging governance on part of the authorities leaves populations increasingly exposed to terrorist and criminal activities.[25] Following the Second World War, most of us lived in a relatively balanced world, with global tensions, in general, manageable and international borders by and large respected. However, recent history has shown that criminal organizations such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) and terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are capable of successfully destabilizing a state internally and creating disturbances beyond its borders. In this large-scale context, both transnational organized criminals and terrorists need a set of conditions to enable them to thrive. Corruption offers the first condition underlying almost all advances in crime and terror in a given state.

In the academic field, Louise Shelley introduced corruption as the backbone of every kind of relationship that exists between contemporary crime and terrorism. With emphasis often placed on cases of corruption by state employees, she noted the presence of widespread corruption across politically weak and failed states. These states demonstrate little to no capacity or political will to prevent the spread of corruption. Corruption has thrived in our world, and with the arrival of the information age, it continues to exceed the levels previously seen. This uncontrolled advance of corruption fosters criminal enterprises as well as terrorist activities. Ultimately, it also nourishes the relationship between crime and terrorism.[26]

Corruption thus exists as an underlying condition for the increase in crime and terrorism, along with other variables to strengthen it. Weak and failed states represent a variable that both criminal and terrorist groups exploit for their purposes. A power vacuum develops once the state's governing bodies allow the rule of law to become subverted by corruption. When the state does not exercise power over all of its territory, criminals, insurgents, and terrorists take advantage of the vacuum left by the state and occupy it. Consequently, they establish themselves, recruit, train, expand and consolidate their illegal activities.[27] Corruption in such cases generates the 'black hole syndrome' discussed above.

Weak and failed states are an alarming phenomenon.[28] Already severely weakened by bad governance, corruption, weak institutions, the abuse of power and the absence of internal controls, such states become vulnerable to deep penetrations by terrorism and organized crime. Foundations of commerce based on illicit activities erode such states further and can cause them to collapse, dragging their populations into poverty and miserable conditions. However, poverty alone does not lead people to become terrorists and criminals. The combination of poverty, poor governance, weak institutions, abuse of power, corruption, and lack of accountability make a country susceptible to all kinds of terrorist and organized criminal groups.[29] Severing the financing derived from illicit commerce represents the most direct way to address this vortex.

With globalization, country borders have become more permeable in order to benefit trade. However, money, weapons, and people now also move faster across unregulated borders. The numerous tax and customs

incentives, as well as the increasing promotion of international trade, intensify the already colossal transnational movement of goods. This avalanche of trade and the resulting pressure exerted on state controls also fuel corruption and the state's indulgence. Most border controls have become weaker, signaling a progressive retreat of state controls.[30]

As practitioners, our experiences confirm that organized criminal and terrorist groups thrive on establishing their bases of operations in conflict regions, failed states, or poorly policed border areas, especially today when these conditions help foster their strength. For them, the worse a state's governance, the better for their illicit activities. Consequently, most criminals and terrorists have no interest in a stable state; on the contrary, they prefer to destabilize the state and its structures, either for their own financial profit or for ideological reasons. Additional consideration should also be given to the fact that current advances in technology allow criminals and terrorists to outsource specific processes of their illicit activities globally, depending on their needs. If specific transactions necessitate a solid banking system or a stable state structure for a portion of their scheme, they simply resort to environments that can provide these benefits without having to abandon their base of operations in the weak or collapsing state in which they have taken roots.[31] Witnessing the proliferation and spread of bad actor capabilities and expertise in this way also motivated our proposed means to challenge them.

Finally, the variable of "network" permeates not only the most successful criminal and terrorist organizations but also characterizes their dynamic relationships. Until the 21st century, most criminal and terrorist groups tended to be organized hierarchically. This hierarchy provided its members with a clear understanding of the organization's mission, as well as setting the rules, limits, and goals for business objectives. A hierarchically structured organization, led by an autocratic leader, incorporates what is an often a rigid "command and control" structure in terms of how the organization functions.[32]

In contrast, a networked organization can take many forms and pursue multiple and even conflicting goals. A network divides its tasks among its various members. There is no "command and control" structure, but rather relationships emerge, based on transactions. Eventually, this organizational architecture guarantees efficiency to the network. By promoting quick communication and coordination between its parts, this structure allows for operational viability while maintaining its ability to perform functions covertly. The dispersed and loose transactional relationships also become less detectable for public authorities. Furthermore, criminal networks benefit from all the other variables discussed in the preceding paragraphs: globalization, technological advances, illicit global markets, internet communications, weak/collapsing/bankrupt states, conflict zones, and corruption.[33]

Therefore, it is necessary to mention that, despite the benefits of globalization, contemporary terrorists and the new generation of transnational criminals are not merely a globalized variant of their predecessors. Their criminal enterprises do not just represent a conventional criminal structure on a larger scale. On the contrary, they have developed in a way that now mirrors the elaborate architecture and organizational structures of modern global companies. The mentality, operations, financial structure, and goals of transnational criminal organizations now display capabilities many steps ahead of their 20th century predecessors. These groups smartly create networks, quickly outsource, and competently develop local leadership to successfully manage their human resources. This network structure allows organizational cells to operate with autonomy and resourcefulness. Therefore, they do not need interaction with the upper echelons of the leadership and may have only limited contact with senior leaders. In this way, these organizations can play an influential role in corrupting global markets if they find enough room to flourish locally. Given the organic growth from within a vacuum or local gap, they become capable of undermining the stability of states. At the same time, such organizations represent a severe threat to public security and intelligence agencies, as their multidimensionality makes them difficult to monitor.[34]

The purpose of the discussion thus far was to acknowledge and highlight the research describing the main characteristics that distinguish the nexus between crime and terrorism today. The arguments presented are a synthesis of the ideas currently adopted by some of the most respected scholars and professionals in the field. These two previous sections intended to illustrate how the academic work in this field influences us as

practitioners who are operationally engaged in combating these groups. Our underlying belief in the centrality of the academic and research community becomes a critical piece in our proposal on how to counter this nexus more effectively.

Fighting the Nexus: Frustrations, Obstacles, and Pitfalls

The crime-terror nexus alone does not represent the ultimate adversary to decent state behavior. Crime, corruption, and terror networks function with impunity inside self-sustaining and supportive relationships, be they transactional or organizational in a globalized context. These networks continue to weave themselves together to maximize combined strengths and minimize individual weaknesses, given technological advances and self-interested motivations.

Perhaps the most elaborate and eloquent of these manifestations remains that of the Lebanese Hezbollah. Considered everything ranging from a political entity to a transnational organized criminal group, a social service provider to a terrorist organization, the "Party of God" manifests the nexus in every way laid out in the theoretical section of this article. Transactional, integrated, hybrid in parts, transformational, functioning in 'black holes', the Lebanese Hezbollah exists globally with a broad network of operations generating diversified funding mechanisms that take advantage of the legal, regulatory or moral gaps and in its areas of operations.

Illicit actors who operate on such a grand scale accomplish their goals and thrive within areas that represent gaps and seams spanning the metaphoric to physical dimensions of regulation, leadership, and territory. Breaking down the challenges involved in dealing with criminal-terrorist nexus groups in line with these three dimensions adds more credence to the construction of a means to dismantle them.

Regulatory Gaps

Finding a common string to pull together the totality of these networks brings us back to the critical role that financing plays in supporting illicit activities. Because the US dollar functions as the primary world reserve currency for international trade, the laws governing the banking system in the US ripple throughout the whole world. Given the August 2017 directive of the US Congress in the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (Public Law No. 115-44) (CAATSA) to develop a National Strategy for Combating Terrorist and Illicit Financing, the attempts to starve terrorists and supporting networks of their funding remain an uphill struggle. Great success stories of freezing and seizing tens of millions of dollars of associated terrorist assets are featured in books such as *Treasury's War* by Juan Zarate. However, the international community writ large remains stymied in the effective utilization of combating the financing of terrorism (CFT) and anti-money laundering (AML) regulatory instruments and has not managed to change the trajectory of terrorist and transnational criminal organizational successes.

It must be noted, that while the application of Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act does allow for the successful freezing of financial assets outside the territory of the United States, politically, it requires tempered use given the brusque response of Allied countries that might see their financial institutions affected.[35] Due to the political nature of some of these direct banking actions via Section 311, foreign governments attempting to motivate the US Treasury to act with this legal tool on their behalf often must find other means to strike at the terrorist financing they come across. An example are the litigation strategies used, both internationally and within the United States, by the *Shurat HaDin,* an Israeli Law Center against banks, businesses, charitable organizations and other entities found to be involved in funding terrorism activities related primarily to Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.[36]

To contemplate the challenges of combating the financing of the crime-terror nexus, simply by looking at the means by which terrorist groups raise funds complicates the model since terror funding is not necessarily linked to a predicate crime. Addressing illicit criminal financing at a minimum requires a crime to occur in

order to generate the illicit funding, giving regulatory and policing activities at least one starting point from which to find the funding. The terrorist model of funding determines the means of denial required. The three primary models of terrorism finance are the donor-model (Al-Qaeda) that collects money from sympathetic patrons; the state-sponsorship-model (Hezbollah) that receives funding from a foreign government; and the territorial-model (ISIS) that raises funds from black market sales, local taxation, population extortion and bank seizures.[37] Criminal, corruption and terrorist networks utilize a wide range of everchanging and morphing means to transfer value around the globe. These illicit actors exploit pathways offering the least regulatory resistance based on denial mechanisms utilized to counter their fundraising model. Until the development of the territorial model utilized by ISIS, the primary means to restrict fundraising revolved around the intelligence-driven mapping of terrorist funding networks through the international financial system that sought to deny access to finances via sanctions, bad actor listings, and state to state pressure. While the United States has codified laws to address terrorism financing, the rest of the world varies in its position on the subject.

International organizations from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) passing through the UN Security Council and the Egmont group, all reiterate and champion guidelines highlighting the critical role that CFT should play in safeguarding not only the global financial system but also citizen around the world. Nevertheless, none of these organizations wields enforcement mechanisms strong enough to inoculate the global financial system from illicit actor challenges via existing organizational structures and market incentives. To illustrate these systemic weaknesses, in 2018, after the fall of ISIS, Forbes estimated the annual income of the ten wealthiest terrorist organizations at over US $ 3.6 billion, with the deadliest terrorist organizations also being the wealthiest.[38] This assessment estimated the annual income of Hezbollah topping the list at US $ 1.1 billion, with ISIS falling from a high of US $3 billion a year to US $ 200 million after the physical collapse of the caliphate. With estimated annual incomes in these ranges and undetermined residual/stored savings for each group, the detection, prosecution, and indictment of the entities moving and storing this amount of assets appears to be grossly under resourced. Organizational and structural improvements to the international AML/CFT architecture must be developed to move from guidance and resolutions at the international level to executable deter, defeat, freeze, and seize actions. Additionally, the international community must bundle the requisite informational data and research skillsets, intelligence, and law enforcement expertise in strategic groups to allow for the development of greater capabilities.

Moving from structural CFT organization issues to considering compliance challenges, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2462 demands the continued compliance with these issues by the international community. The UNSCR, dated March 28, 2019, *reiterates*, *reminds*, and *encourages* the application of CFT programs. The resolution *notes with concern* that member states have been falling short of their responsibilities as they have not effectively enacted or enforced the prohibition outlined in the post-9/11 UNSCR 1373-paragraph 1(d): [39]

> d) Prohibit their nationals or any persons and entities within their territories from making any funds, financial assets or economic resources or financial or other related services available, directly or indirectly, for the benefit of persons who commit or attempt to commit or facilitate or participate in the commission of terrorist acts, of entities owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by such persons and of persons and entities acting on behalf of or at the direction of such persons (*UNSCR 1373 September 28, 2001*).

The agreed-upon statement in paragraph 1(d) acknowledges that compliance with the basic tenets of CFT remains lacking more than 8 years after the resolution passed. Moreover, this document highlights the increasing challenges for compliance in this arena, given the increased complexities in international funding networks. It *seriously notes* and then *further notes with grave concern* that terrorist organizations continue to raise funds through a wide and far-ranging variety of both legal and illicit means. Further, it also highlights the crime-terror-drug nexus stating its *concern* on how terrorism benefits from existing transnational criminal networks in its financing or via logistical support. Perhaps most importantly, regarding considerations that generate actual effects, the newer UNSCR 2046 again references the original UNSCR 1373 decision to criminalize CFT actions. It also highlights that coordinated and timely information sharing from local and international law

mechanisms must exist to counter the financing of terrorism.[40] Perhaps, in looking at it more objectively, the cancer of corruption might explain some of the complications involved and the slow action of governments, businesses, and citizenry to crack down on illicit financing of terrorism and organized crime.

Leadership

By the end of the 20th century, police agencies and armed forces in many countries conducted successful operations which dismantled influential criminal and terrorist organizations by capturing or killing their high-level leaders. As hierarchical criminal organizations, once these groups lost their top leaders, they tended to fall apart. However, faced with the loss of leadership, often less-qualified leaders emerged who could not keep the structure of the criminal organization together and ended up losing strict controls amid internal fights and external pressures. This scenario of targeting leadership risks the fragmentation of the original command and control structure, thus compelling mid-level leaders to search for alternative ways to conduct their criminal business. This situation ends up forcing them to disperse into a "network" model which allows these mid-level leaders and their loyal associates to stay in business. Given this natural dispersion, an ad-hoc, obscure, and complex environment gradually emerged, which is the current challenge faced by security agencies.[41]

The 'network effect' of autonomous criminal organizations creates new relationships between terrorists, criminals, and entrepreneurs who orbit around the margins of the licit economy. These organizations recruit qualified and capable people, knowledgeable in their operating environments. This human resource focus allows for a mastery of local rules, laws, and regulations, and the subsequent application of these to their advantage. This forward-leaning recruitment also fosters the vast use of emerging technologies via the Internet and the Dark Web, as well as the development of virtual, crypto, and person-to-person (P2P) financial instruments. For all these reasons, criminal networks with an entrepreneurial flare are currently fomenting a real nightmare for public security.[42]

Territory

Aggravating the situation outlined above, the origins of terrorist and illicit funding from both legal and illegal means often extend beyond the borders of a single state. Structurally, the required combination of cooperation between international political, banking, financial, and other at-risk entities along with the protection of individual rights by national sovereignties create challenges when it comes to addressing the complex nature of these transregional terrorists and criminal organizations that cross borders. These illicit non-state actors nest in border regions and amongst vulnerable populations to take advantage of gaps and seams in regulatory frameworks between national organizations.

Border regions can be broadly analyzed in two categories: areas with an agglomeration of people and informal commerce/black economy or remote and distant areas, subject to precarious state controls and insufficient policing. History has shown that overcrowded borders, informal trade, and loosened controls factor into levels of local corruption and bribery required to support fluidity in illicit network trade and trafficking. Consequently, paired with the growth in these cross-border activities, areas of this nature are likely to become increasingly tense. Border region instability, underpinned by corruption, also dramatically increases frictions between neighboring states. In the category of the remote and distant border areas, the 'black hole' described earlier is especially noteworthy; poor state control enables criminals and terrorists here to determine their routes and strengthen their logistics without the need for much support.[43]

The fleeting nature of physical borders with the combination of globalization and Internet information age also represents an exploitable 'territory' seam. Many support functions for illicit actors may now be 'borderless' as they transition to technologies that reside only in electrons and the cloud, thus confounding the application of specific state regulations or statutes.

Countering the Nexus Effectively

To counter the complexity of these international threat networks, we must employ an equally powerful network. In this section, we propose a different construct to address the criminal, corruption, and terrorist networks that continue to generate the frustrations and challenges outlined above. Following a similar schematic to that of the illicit actors, this proposal draws upon the strengths and experiences of three good acting communities to minimize their weaknesses and gain greater effectiveness when confronting this new crime-corruption-terror spectrum. To generate the full picture, we suggest that the three layers of all three conceptual constructs be overlaid in order to illuminate not only the overlaps but also the center to be targeted.

While the continued implementation of levers of national power [44] by liberal nation-states intends to positively change the behavior of illicit actors, as a community, we fail to acknowledge that efforts toward shoring up our weaknesses might give us a more effective means to stunt the growth of hyper-enabled illicit networks. Criminal networks target differences between law enforcement authorities and jurisdictions. Terror networks embed in and promote lawless territories and use violence to spur vulnerable populations to fight. Corruption networks eat away at the rule of law and foundational institutions across the board within nation-states. The advent of the information age and globalization brings easy access and transparency of exploitable gaps and seams in the ever adaptable and changing illicit architecture. Thus, the community must become more predictive and less reactive to take away the upper hand from the bad actors. To do so, a combined law enforcement, military, and academia-based cooperation construct between countries can buttress weaknesses in the current international structure. Complete international expertise cannot be accomplished singularly by one country alone.

The Crime, Corruption and Terror Nexus

The threefold intersection of these types of actors is perhaps clearest in the case of the Lebanese Hezbollah.[45] Groups that are solvent because of their successful criminal activities, groups that are allowed to operate by corrupt governments, and groups able to carry out terrorist acts on behalf of proxy donors lie squarely in the powerful black shaded intersection of these networks (Figure 2). As noted previously, the groups that operate across these functions as hybrids represent those that are not only the hardest to prosecute but are also often overlooked. The cooperation between crime, corruption, and terror networks requires focused analysis.

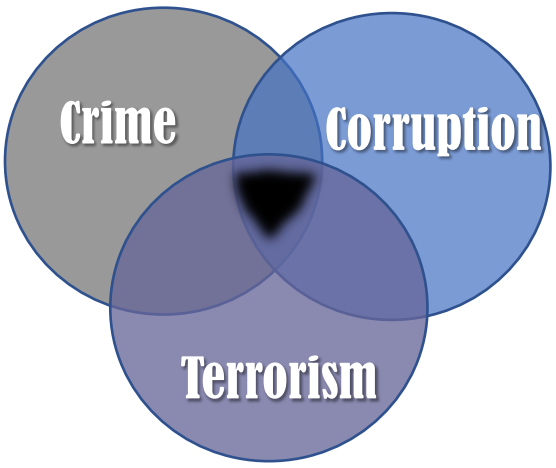

Figure 2

The worst-case scenario develops when the visual representation depicts more of a single (blackened) circle, as the goals of these three networks progressively converge. Finally, we need to consider whether a hybrid form emerges in situations in which criminal and corruption networks pull closer together whilst pushing the high-risk terrorist networks out of the nexus when there is a decreased need for cooperating with the latter. In this regard, OECD could utilize their 2017 assessment of the terrorist, corruption and criminal exploitation of natural resources as a benchmark.[46] The future requirement to monitor, assess, and then act on these eventualities needs a supply of specific actors with the required national skillsets as well as international cooperation to accomplish this task. The known intersection that links these elements together are the financial and economic crossovers that exist between them.

Revisionist, Rogue, and Violent Extremist Nexus

As in the case of the overlaps between crime, corruption and terrorism, the bigger the single (blackened) circle in the visual representation the worse the scenario regarding the convergence between rogue, revisionist and violent extremist organisations (VEOs) as this depicts a greater meeting of goals and interests, making the nexus more difficult to untangle (see Figure 3).

The primary intent of the CAATSA in the United States—apart from combating terrorist and illicit financing—is actioning sanctions against revisionist states (e.g. Russia) and rogue regimes (Iran and North Korea).[47] This law works off the fact that US sanctioning exert significant influence due to the global reach of US dollar transactions. In other words, although this is a United States specific law, it clearly affects the world banking system as a whole. Additionally, with the revival of old geopolitical rivalries, Cold War-era power plays are back in international relations.[48] When one adds China into this mix as a revisionist nation, the collective disruptive power of these three categories along with the fact that each category includes some pivotal international players, effectively pulls the world back from what was once seen as an undisputedly progressive post-Cold War liberal order.

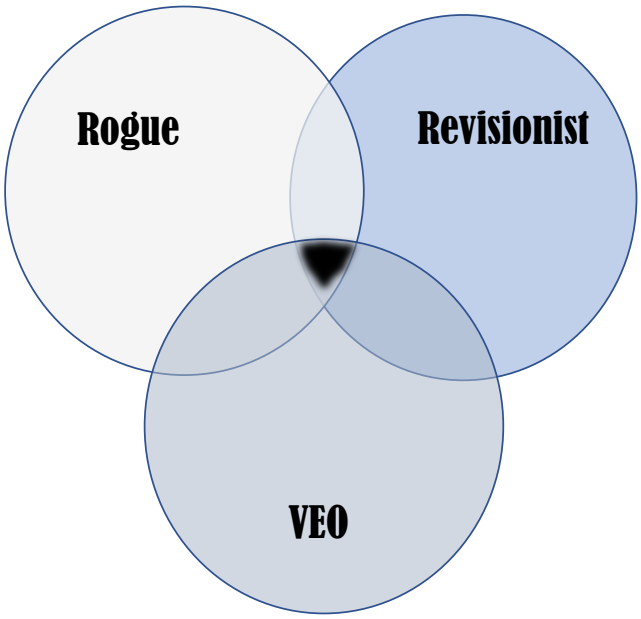

Figure 3

From a pro-democracy stance, China and Russia both walk fine lines ranging from outright to mild proxy support of rogue regimes like North Korea [49], Iran [50], Syria [51] and Venezuela [52]. Of course, we cannot reduce these relationships to a basic confrontation with U.S. and Western countries. However, such support for rogue regimes can be clearly located in their foreign policy stances and is apparently contributing to their

geopolitical aims. Furthermore, Russia and Iran support varying degrees of (what Western-oriented nations would consider) violent extremist organizations to fuel a number of conflicts.[53][54] Finally, violent extremist organizations garner monetary and technical support from all revisionist and rogue regimes if their endgame aligns with that of certain state actors.

Revisionist states and rogue regimes seek to allow for, or maintain, the longevity of their domestic political structures. Common goals and long-term gamesmanship increase the propensity for all three actors to work together in order to threaten or even overthrow the current world order. The economic strength of the liberal world currently stands as the only bulwark against a fuller convergence of this nexus and once again places finance at its center.

Law Enforcement, Military and Academia

The foundational reason why we propose an alliance to counter terrorism that includes law enforcement (LE), military and academia is because we draw from our own positive experience serving together in the field. In our experience, LE and military communities bring the specialized operational and tactical skills most closely associated with the criminal and terrorist groups. But this skillset is greatly bolstered by the addition of detailed academic research on all the theoretical concepts involved in these relationships. We do recognize that other organizations such as the Financial Intelligence Units (FIU), national intelligence agencies and the private sector's financial institutions, just to mention a few, are also key partners and essential for an ideal interagency working environment. However, in our experience the cooperation of just these three sectors already represents a great improvement in countering the financing of terrorism (see Figure 4).

As discussed earlier, it is the vein of corruption and illicit finance that provides the lifeblood by which illicit actors prosper, both locally and internationally. Corruption targets the pillars of state security by challenging the rule of law, institutions such as the army, the police, the judiciary, and the defense sectors as corruption progressively weakens states.[55] These functional areas represent specific spaces upon which to focus corrective action and garner synergy amongst good actors who are intent upon drying up the financial flows that hold crime and terror, empowered by corruption, together.

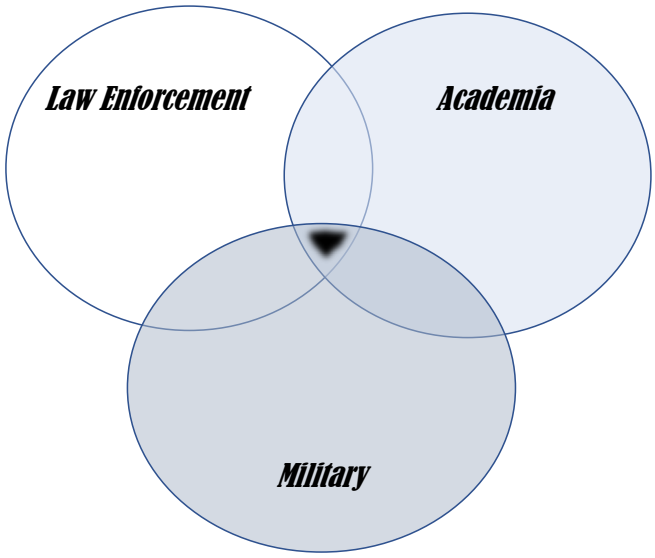

Figure 4

We suggest that the merger of these circles is similar to the 'find, fix, and finish' process utilized within a military targeting context. With long-term expertise in regions, states, ideologies, groups, and even specific individuals, academia and research communities become a critical enabler for following the money flow.

Countering current international security and financial threats requires not only learning from the successful practices used against terror networks but also acknowledging continuing weaknesses and failures.

For both the military and law enforcement, captured enemy materials provide information and reveal the inner workings of terrorist activities. Academia and think tank research partners become paramount in helping to identify, illicit groups or criminal individuals. The analysis of research-based empirical evidence then allows to mobilize military and law enforcement resources to target these illicit groups and malevolent individuals. One of the key utilities of captured enemy material collection and analysis is to provide information that is suitable and useful for future law enforcement action followed by successful legal prosecution. A key challenge to successful legal prosecution is the jurisdictional limitation placed upon judicial processes. Given these jurisdictional and prosecution challenges, generating academically researched, legally grounded reports and militarily supported prosecution packages offer law enforcement a credible way to leverage the now exposed gaps and seams. Additionally, this partnership brings together the required expertise to support non-kinetic options to counter the financing of threats by making clear the linkages between violent extremist organizations and their sponsor states. A weakness in the current counterterrorism model that stunts its ability to address the broader problem remains its proclivity for choosing kinetic military-force as the 'finish' option. To reiterate then, this proposed partnership would directly correct this weakness.

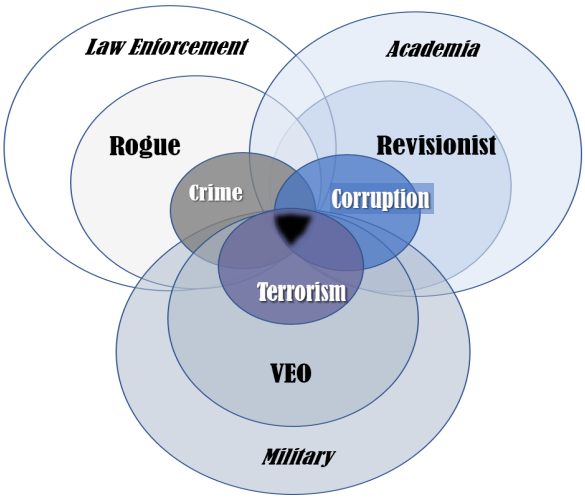

Figure 5

Combining the three layers of the three nexuses illustrates how the focused efforts of these functional areas (i.e., law enforcement, military and academia) ought to tackle the combined, overlapping threat(s) posed by the two bad actor nexuses (see Figure 5). Cooperation and delineation of primary tasks amongst functional areas must occur to optimize the ability to counter the current strength of illicit actors (as illustrated in Figure 5). The diagram above is intended to be dynamic and fluid. Thus, each functional area of expertise assumes primary responsibility for the part of the criminal, corruption, and terrorist nexus most closely aligned with its expertise and authority in a given case or circumstance, which could be related to specific mandates, countries of operation or shape of alliances. Depending on these circumstances, the balance of knowledge and expertise of law enforcement, military and academia will vary among the subjects (crime, corruption and terrorism) and actors (VEO, rogue and revisionist) and thus enrich the counter-threat actions.

The constantly developing operational capacities of law enforcement and the military, combined with a concomitant growth in their mandates is what gives shape to the dynamic and consistently evolving relationship between the two. Moreover, not only are there clear overlaps between all three functional areas, it is also important to underscore that these overlaps are dynamic. This means that there are no fixed roles for the actors involved in this partnership because as the time and space they work and interact in are constantly changing so too are the dynamics of their role(s) and relationship(s). In other words, roles are adjusted according to the

requirements, challenges and limitations of the case being addressed. It is important to note that the bad nexuses are also in constant flux and evolution. This also serves to impact the ways in which the law enforcement-military-academic partnership evolves as it responds to new challenges presented by shifts in the bad nexuses. Thus, a key feature of our proposed model is to acknowledge this fluidity in all three nexuses and to build into our analysis this dynamism of challenges, roles and responses.

Our own experience in a particular law enforcement-military-academia partnership established for a four months long period within a tour of duty is an example of how this model can work. Among other counterterrorism financing cases, we solidified an effort toward mapping and trying to locate critical evidence linked to the Lebanese Hezbollah's financing of terrorism. The primary motive behind this effort was to collect useful data that could be leveraged for criminal prosecution. Data on individuals and cells internationally affiliated with (or orbiting around) Hezbollah and its facilitators were collected from two main sources: from the military in the declared theater of active armed conflict and from a variety of law enforcement investigations and operations in different theaters.

The initial collection effort was followed by in-depth discussions which also involved multiple academic subject matter experts with the aim of devising a mindset and shaping a framework to understanding what would be the best way to approach a mass of (mainly) digital data. In the end, we obtained positive results thanks to the constant information sharing and the assistance of subject matter experts who provided context and helped deepen our understanding of Hezbollah.

In another scenario, upon returning from deployment, the established relationship (law enforcement, military, academia) allowed for the integration of these actors at an event with an academic subject matter expert on Hezbollah, Dr. Matthew Levitt. His recently release dataset, the Lebanese Hezbollah Select Worldwide Activities interactive map [56] builds upon his published book and represents the first-ever publicly available, interactive map and timeline of Hezbollah-related events to date. This Hezbollah related timeline and map website were first presented as a test demo to law enforcement, military and other interested interagency partners. This fact represented the epitome of how deep academic research amplifies the operational potential of both the LE and military communities when closely partnered, which in the case of countering Hezbollah will surely enhance the capabilities of the state actors involved.

Based on this experience, the recommendation of the authors then is that international bodies such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund establish regional "deployment" type environments for one-year rotations, representing a sabbatical for the academic practitioner and an operational assignment for the LE and military members. Participating countries would rotate hosting the group of regionally affiliated team members possessing the requisite authorities to appropriately action financial revelations made by the group. Something of this nature would be particularly helpful with respect to the case of Hezbollah. A regional group formed from the tri-border region of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil and external practitioners concerned with Hezbollah's financing activities could focus concerted effort on tracing funding raised in and/or passing through that area. This effort would provide direct support to the Counter-Hezbollah International Partnership (CHIP) built to target Hezbollah financiers and unite the international community in aggressively pursuing these funding streams.[56]

To encourage and strengthen shared purpose partnerships of this nature between academia, law enforcement and the military, we suggest addressing four basic requirements of successful group dynamics to break down barriers that exist across not just the individual communities but also at the international level. First, the groups must *know each other* to improve connections and synergy among them. The establishment of continuous relationships allows for increased trust and understanding of capabilities and weaknesses or blind spots between functional areas. Knowing partner players helps to break down barriers and improve connections, address weaknesses, and generate synergies amongst team members as they assess and target the threat.

Second, *efficient communication channels* must encourage information sharing and effective cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors, such as academia and private sector researchers that operate at different levels (local, regional, national and international). A focus on communication ensures

inclusion, openness, and captures the energy of shared purpose. Operational-level sharing must drive this synergy. Practitioners at the operational level can maximize the value of a common picture unobscured by any strategic differences. When taking credit for success becomes unimportant, all groups succeed.

Third, it is necessary to *formulate strategies, roles, and protocols* for the combined work. Protocols and strategies define mechanisms that will guide cooperation, coordination, and information sharing among these three functional areas. The goal of establishing roles and responsibilities is to provide clear guidelines on what is expected of each of the cooperating actors to ensure the best possible results. Clarity of purpose and contribution also encourages participative behaviors because it provides a sense of specific responsibility and belonging in the larger group.

Finally, it is important to *support participative leadership* by organizing regular azimuth checks to fine-tune protocols, strategies, and tactics. Additionally, the group must adjust and recalibrate direction during a collaborative investigative action that involves operational tasks, fieldwork, and academic research. These regular meetings not only increase the prospects of a better work outcome but also boost the level of trust among the members involved. These azimuth checks enhance the understanding of how effective cooperation and information sharing play into facilitating each of the actors' functional jobs.

Conclusion

Understanding and then aligning the strengths of law enforcement, military resources and academia to address triple nexus between crime, terror and corruption can create synergies that ultimately can counter the challenge of the criminal, corruption and terrorist networks. To enable this community of cooperation, all partners must become more attuned to the potential within each functional expertise. Exposure to the benefits of cross-functional operational teams, continued academic education within law enforcement and the military, as well as broadening assignments across governments and public domains, fosters this whole-of-nation response to the illicit marketplaces and finances of the world. The growing crime and terror convergence fueled by corruption ought to contend with an equally powerful combined partnership of military, law enforcement and academia.

N.B.: The opinions expressed and the arguments employed here are entirely those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the United States Military or the Brazilian Federal Police.

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Bibliography: Terrorism and Organized Crime in Latin America

Compiled and selected by David Teiner

Abstract

This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies, and other resources on the intersections of terrorism and organized crime in Latin America. It includes publications on numerous insurgent groups in Latin America that are relevant to studies on the links between terrorism and organized crime in the region. Well-known examples are groups such as the FARC and ELN in Colombia, the Shining Path of Peru, but also Mexican criminal organizations such as the Cártel de Sinaloa (CDS) or the Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG). Wherever relevant to the terrorism-organized crime nexus, publications on violent gangs and criminal cartels from various other Latin American countries are also included.

Keywords: bibliography; resources; literature; crime-terror nexus; FARC, ELN, Shining Path, CDS, CJNG

NB: All websites were last visited on 30.07.2020 – See also Note for the Reader at the end of this literature list.

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About the Compiler: **David Teiner** *is a student of Political Science and Sociology at the University of Trier. He is currently writing his master's thesis, which is designed to make use of various insights from rebel governance studies for the analysis of Islamic State governance in Iraq and Syria. E-Mail: david.teiner@gmx.de*

Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 28 Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

So many books are published on terrorism- and counterterrorism-related subjects that it is difficult to catch up on a large backlog of monographs and edited volumes received for review. In order to deal with this backlog, this column of capsule reviews consists of short single paragraph overviews and Tables of Contents of 28 books, including also several books published less recently but still meriting attention. Some of the new books will be reviewed in future issues of 'Perspectives on Terrorism' as stand-alone reviews. The books are listed topically.

Terrorism – General

Albrecht Schnabel and Rohan Gunaratna (Eds.), ***Wars from Within: Understanding and Managing Insurgent Movements*** (London, England, UK: Imperial College Press/Distributed by Singapore/Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing, 2015), 496 pp., US $ 165.30 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-7832-6556-5.

The contributors to this volume (which is a revised and updated edition of a 2006 volume) apply a highly interesting, comprehensive and multidisciplinary, functional and regional approach to examining the types, characteristics and threats posed by insurgent movements around the world and the response measures employed in countering them. The case studies include Albanian Liberation Armies, religious extremists in India's Punjab and Northeast, the Sri Lankan LTTE, insurgencies in Indonesia, the Lebanese Hizballah, and al Qaida. What is especially important about the functional and regional chapters is that they highlight the factors and conditions involved in the life cycles and phases of insurgent campaigns, such as how to assess the legitimacy of insurgencies, classifying the moral justifications for an insurgency's proclaimed grievances, objectives and activities, and the components, challenges and timings for effective intervention by third parties for conflict resolution to take place, including consolidating a peace process in the post-conflict phase. Dr. Gunaratna is head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) and professor of security studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Dr. Schnabel was a senior fellow in the Research Division of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Switzerland; currently he is with the Berghof Foundation in Germany.

Table of Contents: **Introduction**; The Challenge of Contemporary Insurgencies; **Part One: Classification of Insurgencies**; Ethnic Terrorism and Insurgencies; Religious Insurgencies; Ideological Insurgencies; The Internet – A Force Multiplier for Modern Insurgencies; **Part Two: Insurgencies in Europe, Asia and the Middle East: Experiences, Lessons and Recommendations**; Insurgencies in the Balkans: Albanian Liberation Armies; India – The Defeat of Religious Extremist Terror in Punjab; Conflict to Co-option? Experiences of Dealing with the Insurgencies in India's Northeast; The Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka; Democratization versus Violence – Terrorist and Insurgent Challenges to Indonesia; Hezbollah; Al-Qaeda al-Jihad – A Global Insurgency in the Early 21st Century; **Conclusion**; Meeting the Challenge of Contemporary Insurgencies.

Elena Mastors and Rhea Siers (Eds.), ***The Theory and Practice of Terrorism: Alternative Paths of Inquiry*** (New York, NY: Nova Publishers, 2017), 250 pp., US $ 160.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5361-0424-0.

The contributors to this volume discuss innovative ways to employ alternative analyses in the discipline of terrorism and counterterrorism studies. This is done by exploring gaps in the discipline and how addressing them can contribute to upgraded understanding of these issues. Some of the identified gaps include the way female terrorism is studied, the need to address the root causes of inter-group conflict, understanding the

behaviors of terrorist group members, and how to address radicalization into terrorism at its early stages. Several alternative theoretical frameworks are proposed, such as multi-pronged approaches that target a group's leadership, mid-level operatives, criminal enterprises and psychological vulnerabilities, and drawing on the organizational and behavioral sciences to analyze how terrorist groups operate. Both editors are Lecturers in Global Security Studies, John's Hopkins University.

Table of Contents: Gaps in the Study of Terrorism; Terrorist Criminal Enterprises; Lessons from the Demise of the Abu Nidal Organization; Reverse Use of Organizational Development Theory: A Unique Methodology for Analyzing and Disrupting Terrorist Organizations; Securing the Heartland: An Integrative Approach; The Challenge of Intelligence Analysis for Terrorism: A Simulation; Mass mediated Misconceptions of Female Terrorists; Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism; Terrorism's Root Causes: Presenting Alternatives to Counter-Terrorism Strategies Not Justification for Terrorism; Evaluating the Social Conditions Encouraging Hypermasculinity That Lead to Joining and Engaging in Terrorist Groups; Zuhd: The Role of Asceticism in Islamist Extremism.

Radicalization and Countering Violent Extremism

Majeed Khader, Neo Loo Seng, Jethro Tan, Damien D. Cheong, and Jeffrey Chin (Eds.), ***Learning From Violent Extremist Attacks: Behavioural Sciences Insights for Practitioners and Policymakers*** (Singapore and Hackensack, NJ: 2019), 648 pp., US $ 187.69 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-9-8132-7543-0.

The contributors to this edited volume apply a multidisciplinary behavioral sciences approach to examine the threat of violent extremism, with a primary focus on East Asia. To examine this issue, the authors draw on the disciplines of psychology, sociology, history, political science, technology and communications. Some of the questions explored include how law enforcement agencies can learn from past attacks to prepare to respond to future attacks, and what are best practices in countering violent extremism, such as Singapore's psychological, social, and religious rehabilitation programs. One of this volume's unique social science features is the introductory chapter's table that lists the research questions and their corresponding relevant chapters – a feature that is rarely included in comparable edited volumes to guide the contributors' analyses. These and other features make this volume an important contribution to the literature on the behavioral science components of violent extremism and the measures required in response. Dr. Khader is Director of the Home Team Behavioural Sciences Centre (HTBSC), under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), and Chief Police Psychologist. Dr. Neo is Principal Behavioural Sciences Research Analyst with the HTSBC at the MHA. Dr. Tan is a Senior Researcher with the HTBSC. Mr. Cheong is a Research Fellow at the National Security Studies Programme (NSSP), S. Rajaratham School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. Mr. Chin is Senior Psychologist at the HTSBC, and Senior Psychologist with the Police Psychological Services Division.

Table of Contents: Learning from Violent Extremist Attacks: An Introduction; **LEARNING TO DEAL WITH VIOLENT EXTREMISTS**; **Section 1: Insights from Regional Violent Extremist Developments**; Terrorist Attacks in Indonesia: Insights for Practitioners and Policymakers; Confronting the Threat of an ISIS Province in Mindanao; Insights for Practitioners and Policymakers from the Marawi Siege, May-October 2017; **Section 2: Insights for the Identification of Violent Extremists**; Threat Assessment of Violent Extremism: Considerations and Applications; Leveraging Smart Technology for Better Counter-Terrorism Intelligence; A Common Framework for Pre-Radicalisation Indicators; Five Things to know about Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism; Lone Wolf Violent Extremism and Mental Illness: Learning Lessons from an Asian Perspective; **Section 3: Insights for Community Level Interventions**; The 4M Strategy of Combating Violent Extremism: An Analysis; Bystander Interventions to Prevent Radicalisation; The Inseparable Brothers-in-Arms: Understanding the Instrumentality of Violent Extremism in Strengthening Intergroup Conflict; Engaging Youths in Counter-Violent Extremism (CVE) Initiatives; **Section 4: Insights for Dealing with**

At-Risk Population; At-Risk and Radicalised Singaporean Youths: Themes Observed and Considerations for a Youth-Centric Rehabilitation Framework; Understanding Intergroup Contact on Terrorist Prisoners in Indonesia; In the Search of Home: Tackling Support for ISIS Ideology Among Ordinary People; **LEARNING TO RESPOND TO VIOLENT EXTREMIST ATTACKS**; **Section 5: Strategies to Build Resilience**; Preparing for the Day After Terror: Five Things to Do to Build National Resilience; Psychological First Aid: Addressing Worldwide Challenges for Implementation in an Asian Context; Responding to a Violent Extremist Attack: Insights from the 2016 Orlando Shooting Incident; Against the Norm: The Act of Helping During Violent Extremist Attacks; **Section 6: Strategies to Build Cyber Psychological Resilience**; Managing Social Media in the Event of a Terror Attack; Media Effects within the Context of Violent Extremism in the Post-9/11 Era; Social Media in Response after an Attack: Perspectives from the Jakarta Bombings; Fake News After a Terror Attack: Psychological Vulnerabilities Exploited by Fake News Creators; **Section 7: Strategies to Build Emergency Preparedness**; Emergency Preparedness Towards Terror Attacks in Singapore; The Looming, the Creeping, and the Black Swan: Modern Crises and Recommendations for Building Resilience; Striking the Right Balance in Relation to Target Hardening; Risk and Crisis Management during a Major Terror Attack: Singapore's Approach; **Section 8: Strategies to Build Communal Harmony**; The Effects of Religious Fundamentalism on Communal Harmony; How Can Right-Wing Extremism Exacerbate Islamophobia After a Jihadi Attack? Insights from Europe; Islamophobia and its Aftermath: Strategies to Manage Islamophobia.

Sophia Moskalenko and Clark McCauley, *Radicalization to Terrorism: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 276 pp., US $ 79.95 [Hardcover], US $ 19.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-1908-6258-9.

An authoritative, concise yet comprehensive account of the radicalization pathways into terrorism by two leading academic experts on this subject. Also discussed are the nature of terrorism and the individuals who become terrorists, whether as lone actors or as part of groups, and how to prevent radicalization into terrorism and promote disengagement from terrorism. The volume's 13 parts and accompanying short chapters are written in an easily understandable and engaging format, making this an ideal resource for courses on terrorism and counterterrorism. Dr. Moskalenko, a psychologist, has collaborated with Dr. McCauley, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Bryn Mawr University, on numerous articles and books.

Table of Contents: What is Radicalization?; What Is Terrorism and Who Becomes a Terrorist?; How Are Individuals Radicalized to Join a Terrorist Group?; How Are Small Groups Radicalized to Use Terrorist as a Tactic? How Are Mass Publics Radicalized to Support Terrorism?; What Is the Relation Between Radical Ideas and Radical Action?; What Is Different About Lone Wolf Terrorists?; Are Suicide Bombers Suicidal?; Is It Possible to Prevent Radicalization to Terrorism?; Is It Possible to Deradicalize Terrorists?; What Are Mass Identity Manipulations (MIMs) – Pictures, Songs/Chants, Rumors, Rituals, and Symbols?; Is Mass Radicalization a Problem in the United States?; Conclusion: What Everyone Needs to Know About Radicalization and Extremism.

Religious Violence

Michael Jerryson (Ed.), *Religious Violence Today: Faith and Conflict in the Modern World – Volume One: African Religion to Islam/Volume Two: Jainism to State Violence* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2020), 900 pp., US $ 204.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4408-5992-2 [Volume One], ISBN: 978-1-4408-5993-9 [Volume Two].

The contributors to this highly authoritative two-volume encyclopedic handbook present objective and insightful overviews of the extremist components of the world's religions, including how members of some particular faiths are prosecuted, as well as the religious justifications and terrorist-type violent acts committed

by members of other religious faiths. As a reference handbook, the entries provide excerpts from primary source documents, with each entry concluding with cross-references and suggestions for further reading. The second volume concludes with an extensive bibliography of resources for further study. The editor is professor of religious studies at Youngstown State University, Ohio.

Table of Contents: Volume One: Preface; Introduction: The Legacy of Religion and Violence; Timeline; African Religion; Buddhism; Chinese Religion; Christianity; Hinduism; Islam. Volume Two: Jainism; Judaism; New Religious Movements; Sikhism; State Violence; About the Editor and Contributors.

Psychology of Terrorism

Clay Routledge and Matthew Vess (Eds.), ***Handbook of Terror Management Theory*** (Cambridge, MA: Academic Press/Elsevier, 2019), 648 pp., US $ 105.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-1281-1844-3.

The contributors to this handbook comprehensively examine the Terror Management Theory (TMT). As explained in the first chapter on "A Consideration of Three Critical Hypotheses," TMT asserts that "the knowledge of one's own mortality is problematic because it conflicts with a basic drive to stay alive that humans share with all other living organisms. Knowing that one is destined to die, coupled with a drive for continued life, thus creates a potential for existential terror that other animals likely do not possess" (p. 2). Concerns about one's mortality also apply to terrorism. As explained by the chapter "Meaning-Making, Communication, and Terror Management Processes," by Claude H. Miller and Zach B. Massey, news of terrorist attacks are likely to "increase people's support for national leaders using firm, reassuring but polarizing simple forms of dichotomizing rhetoric (e.g., 'you're either with us or with the terrorists')" (p. 598). As a result, "interethnic discord likely represents a more intractable source of existential anxiety, which may resist more benign forms of worldview bolstering" (p. 598). For counter-terrorism analysts, the theory of TMT thus provides an important insight in explaining the underpinnings of societal conflict. For this and other reasons, this handbook is an indispensable resource in understanding some of the causes of terrorism and the measures required to mitigate it from a psychological perspective. Dr. Routledge is a professor at North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota, and Dr. Vess is a professor at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

Table of Contents: **Section 1: Testing the Contours of the Theory**; A Consideration of 3 Critical Hypotheses; Distinguishing Proximal and Distal Responses to Death-Thoughts; Controversies and Alternative Theories; TMT Toolbox: A Guide to Doing TMT Research; **Section 2: How TMT Helps us Understand**; The Need to Structure the World; Our Relationship with Nature; The Self; The Self in Time: Nostalgia; Human Concerns about Sex, the Body, and Animality; Attachment and Romantic Relationships; Group Identification; Religion; Secular Cultural Worldviews; Affect, Meaning, and Well-Being; Psychological Growth, Creativity, and Exploration; Existential Neuroscience: Terror Management and the Brain; **Section 3: Applications**; Health Attitudes and Behavior; Aging and Coping with Mortality; Psychopathology; Terrorism, War, and Peace-Making; Consumerism; The Legal System; Art and Media; Death and Risk Taking; Communication Theory and Terror Management.

Females and Terrorism

Reed M. Wood, ***Female Fighters: Why Rebel Groups Recruit Women for War*** (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2019), 304 pp., US $ 105.00 [Hardcover], US $ 35.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-2311-9299-6.

An interesting and conceptually innovative account of the various roles of females in insurgent groups around the world, especially why some groups deploy them in combat for strategic purposes, such as a propaganda tool, while others utilize them in other non-combat roles. The author's examination draws on a dataset of female fighters in more than 250 rebel organizations which is summarized in one of the book's appendices. One of the

author's findings is that religious fundamentalist rebels generally oppose employing females in combat roles. The author is an associate professor in the School of Politics and Global Studies at Arizona State University.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Why Rebels Mobilize Women for War; The Strategic Implications of Female Fighters; Female Combatants in Three Civil Wars; Empirical Evaluation of Female Combatant Prevalence; Empirical Evaluation of the Effects of Female Combatants; Conclusion: Understanding Women's Participation in Armed Resistance; Appendix A: Version History; Appendix B: Examples of Coding Narratives from WARD; Appendix C: Survey Wording and Instrument.

Terrorism and the Internet

Babak Akhgar, Andrew Staniforth, and Franesca Bosco (Eds.), ***Cyber Crime and Cyber Terrorism Investigator's Handbook*** (Boston, MA: Syngress/Elsevier, 2014), 306 pp., US $ 34.96 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-1280-0743-3.

With cyberspace's Internet of Things" (IoT) a significant criminal and terrorism threat arena, and with states also using cyber weapons to target their adversaries' critical infrastructure, the contributors to this volume examine the motivations, cyber tools, and tactics behind these various actors' cyber attacks and the protective measures that can be utilized against them. The volume's contributors are practitioner experts in conducting digital investigations to counter cyber crime and cyber-terrorism, making the handbook an indispensable reference resource on these issues. Dr. Akhgar is Professor of Informatics and Director of the Centre of Excellence in Terrorism, Resilience, Intelligence and Organised Crime Research (CENTRIC), Sheffield Hallam University, UK. Mr. Staniforth, of the West Yorkshire Police, UK, is Detective Inspector and Advisory Board Member and Senior Research Fellow at CENTRIC. Ms. Bosco, of the University of Milan, Italy, is Project Officer on Cybercrime and Cybersecurity, Emerging Crimes Unit, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI).

Table of Contents: Foreword; Preface; Cyberspace: The New Frontier for Policing?; Definitions of Cyber Terrorism; New and Emerging Threats of Cyber Crime and Terrorism; Police Investigation Processes: Practical Tools and Techniques for Tackling Cyber Crimes; Cyber-Specifications: Capturing User Requirements for Cyber-Security Investigations; High-Tech Investigations of Cyber-Crime; Seizing, Imaging, and Analyzing Digital Evidence: Step-by-Step Guidelines; Digital Forensics Education, Training and Awareness; Understanding the Situational Awareness in Cybercrimes: Case Studies; Terrorist Use of the Internet; ICT as a Protection Against Child Exploitation; Cybercrime Classification and Characteristics; Cyber Terrorism: Case Studies; Social Media and Big Data; Social Media and Its Role for LEAs: Review and Application; The Rise of Cyber Liability Insurance; Responding to Cyber Crime and Cyber Terrorism – Botnets an Insidious Threat; Evolution of TETRA Through the Integration with a Number of Communication Platforms to Support Public Protection and Disaster Relief (PPDR).

Mark Last and Abraham Kandel (Eds.), ***Fighting Terror in Cyberspace*** (Singapore and Hackensack, N.J.: World Scientific Publishing, 2005), 167 pp., US $ 99.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-9-8125-6493-1.

The contributors to this volume provide an overview of terrorist threats in cyberspace and the tools and technologies to utilize in countering them. Although the volume was published some 15 years ago (when its findings were considered groundbreaking), the contributors' insights continue to be relevant in the current era, as they discuss the use of technologies such as data mining to detect the presence and activities of terrorists, including funding, on the Internet. Many of the chapters are technical in nature, which researchers on these topics will find useful in providing an underpinning to the technologies that are being used today. At the time of the volume's publication, Dr. Last was a professor at Ben Gurion University, Israel, and Dr. Kandel was a professor at the University of South Florida, U.S.

Table of Contents: Preface; Terrorism and the Internet: Use and Abuse; The Radical Islam and the Cyber Jihad; Using Data Mining Technology for Terrorist Detection on the Web; A Content-Based Model for Web-Monitoring; TDS – An Innovative Terrorist Detection System; Clustering Algorithms for Variable-Length Vectors and Their Application to Detecting Terrorist Activities; Analysis of Financial Intelligence and the Detection of Terrorist Financing; Identification of Terrorist Web Sites with Cross-Lingual Classification Tools; Appendix A: Useful Sources; Appendix B: Terrorist Web Sites – Examples; Appendix C: About the Authors.

Pardis Moslemzadeh Tehrani, *Cyberterrorism: The Legal and Enforcement Issues* (Singapore and Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing, 2017), 360 pp., US $ 98.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-7863-4212-6.

This book examines cyberterrorism response measures in terms of the national and international legal conventions and legislation established to protect the digital infrastructure and cyber-based information of populations, corporations and governments. It also discusses some of the challenges facing international organizations in defining cyberterrorism, which is one of the first steps in countering this threat. These issues are also examined in a series of case studies of attempts to enforce provisions of such legal conventions and legislation in various jurisdictions, from initial infringement to eventual prosecution. The author proposes that once an attacker is identified, the best means to prosecute cyberterrorism under universal jurisdiction is to establish a multilateral criminal law convention that will obligate member states to prosecute or extradite offenders through the '*aut dedere aui judicare*' principle of the treaty binding the state parties of the convention (p. 327). The author is Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law, University of Malaya.

Table of Contents: Preface; Abstract; List of Cases Mentioned; List of Statutes; List of International Instruments; Definitional Issues Relating to Cyberterrorism; The Challenges Faced by International Organisations in Curbing Cyberterrorism; Application of Legal Provisions in the Case of Cyberterrorism; Issues of Enforcement in Cyberterrorism; Issues of Jurisdiction for Cyberterrorism; Conclusion and Recommendations.

Maritime Terrorism

Joshua Tallis, *The War for Muddy Waters: Pirates, Terrorists, Traffickers, and Maritime Insecurity* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019), 280 pp., US $ 34.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6824-7420-4.

An interesting account of the magnitude of the threats presented by maritime piracy and terrorism, including the author's formulation of a comprehensive strategy to counter these threats. This counter strategy is based on what the author terms a partner-oriented approach that leverages other countries' maritime services' capabilities. The author is an analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia.

Table of Contents: List of Illustrations; Introduction; **Part One: Shaping Strategy**; Shifting Tides; Breaking Windows; **Part Two: Cocaine and Context in the Caribbean**; The Business of Drugs; Trafficking: Guns, People, and Terror; Context and Conclusions; **Part Three: Integrating Piracy**; Piracy and Perception in the Gulf of Guinea; Evolving Security Conceptions in the Straits; Charting a Course.

Counterterrorism – Financial

Doron Goldbarsht, *Global Counter-Terrorist Financing and Soft Law: Multi-Layered Approaches* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020), 272 pp., US $ 130.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-7899-0998-2.

This important volume examines the application of the processes of non-binding 'soft laws' in the field of countering terrorist financing (CTF) and the degree of United Nations' member-states compliance with these

norms. Specifically, the author's objective is to examine whether "high rates of compliance" in CTF can be achieved by such non-binding norms in the form of 'soft law' instruments. These non-binding norms are applied to several country cases to identify their impact and effectiveness in CTF. The author is Lecturer in Law at Macquarie University, Australia.

Table of Contents: List of Figures; List of Tables; List of Primary Acronyms Used; Introduction; The Importance of Countering Terrorist Financing; Binding and Non-Binding Norms in Countering Terrorist Financing; Examining the Level of Implementation; Examining the Level of Compliance; Features of the Regime That Have Led to Its High Levels of Compliance; Conclusion; Appendix A: Matrix of Comparison Including Impossible Combinations; Appendix B: Rating Compliance With FATF Recommendations; Appendix C: List of FATF Members (as of July 2019); Appendix D: List of FSRBs; Appendix E: List of FATF Observers.

Counterterrorism - Intelligence

Babak Akhgar and Simeon Yates (Eds.), ***Strategic Intelligence Management*** (Boston, MA: Butterworth Heinemann/Elsevier, 2013), 340 pp., US $ 55.96 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-1240-7191-9.
The contributors to this volume examine all the components involved in the application of strategic intelligence in governments' management of national security threats. The threats include asymmetric challenges by sub-state groups, border and maritime threats, weapons of mass destruction; cyber warfare; and cybercrime. Both Dr. Akhgar and Dr. Yates are professors at Sheffield Hallam University, UK.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Introduction: Strategy Formation in a Globalized and Networked Age - A Review of the Concept and its Definition; **Section One: National Security Strategies and Issues**; Securing the State: Strategic Responses for an Interdependent World; We Have Met the Enemy and They Are Us: Insider Threat and Its Challenge to National Security; An Age of Asymmetric Challenges - 4th Generation Warfare at Sea; Port and Border Security: The First and Last Line of National Security Defense; **Section Two: The Public, Communication, Risk, and National Security**; Risk Communication, Risk Perception and Behavior as Foundations of Effective National Security Practices; Promoting Public Resilience against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism; From Local to Global: Community-based Policing and National Security; The Role of Social Media in Crisis: A European Holistic Approach to the Adoption of Online and Mobile Communications in Crisis Response and Search and Rescue Efforts; Emerging Technologies and the Human Rights Challenge of Rapidly Expanding State Surveillance Capacities; **Section Three: Technologies, Information, and Knowledge for National Security**; User Requirements and Training Needs within Security Applications: Methods for Capture and Communication; Exploring the Crisis Management/Knowledge Management Nexus; A Semantic Approach to Security Policy Reasoning; The ATHENA Project: Using Formal Concept Analysis to Facilitate the Actions of Responders in a Crisis Situation; Exploiting Intelligence for National Security; Re-thinking Standardization for Interagency Information Sharing; **Section Four: Future Threats and Cyber Security**; Securing Cyberspace: Strategic Responses for a Digital Age; National Cyber Defense Strategy; From Cyber Terrorism to State Actors' Covert Cyber Operations; Cyber Security Countermeasures to Combat Cyber Terrorism; Developing a Model to Reduce and/or Prevent Cybercrime Victimization among the User Individuals; **Conclusion: National Security in the Networked Society**.

James F. Broder and Eugene Tucker, ***Risk Analysis and the Security Survey*** [Fourth Edition] (Boston, MA: Butterworth Heinemann/Elsevier, 2012), 368 pp., US $ 48.96 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-1238-2233-8.

This authoritative and comprehensive handbook covers all the issues involved in conducting systematic security risk analyses and surveys in determining risks against a spectrum of threats such as terrorism, criminal fraud, natural disasters, and proprietary information theft. Also covered are issues such as templates for conducting cost/benefit analysis, crime prediction, response planning, and business impact analysis, including recovering

from disasters to achieve continuity of business operations. Both authors are veteran security and law enforcement practitioners.

Table of Contents: Introduction; **Part 1. The Treatment and Analysis of Risk**; Risk; Vulnerability and Threat Identification; Risk Measurement; Quantifying and Prioritizing Loss Potential; Cost/Benefit Analysis; Other Risk Analysis Methodologies; The Security Survey: An Overview; Management Audit Techniques and the Preliminary Survey; The Survey Report; Crime Prediction; Determining Insurance Requirements; **Part 2. Emergency Management and Business Continuity**; Emergency Management – A Brief Introduction; Mitigation and Preparedness; Response Planning; Business Impact Analysis; Business Continuity Planning; Plan Documentation; Crisis Management Planning for Kidnap, Ransom, and Extortion; Monitoring Safeguards; The Security Consultant; Appendix A. Security Survey Work Sheets; Appendix B. Sample Kidnap and Ransom Contingency Plan; Appendix C. Security Systems Specifications.

Erik Kleinsmith, ***Intelligence Operations: Understanding Data, Tools, People, and Processes*** (San Diego, CA: Cognella, 2020), 348 pp., US $ 99.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-5165-2358-0.

This is an excellent and highly innovative textbook and reference resource on the components involved in managing intelligence operations. The author, a former U.S. Army intelligence officer, draws on his extensive military experience, and, later, his career as a developer of courses on intelligence in the private sector and academia, to introduce the reader to significant concepts associated with intelligence as well as the primary focus of intelligence, i.e., the threat. To examine these issues, the volume covers the four components involved in intelligence operations, i.e., the data, tools, people, and then processes, with the various operational and analytic processes examined in greater detail. Significant analytic methodologies and tools are discussed, such as data mining and visualization tools. In applying the intelligence component to counterterrorism, the author discusses the components involved in analyzing threat (e.g., how to define the threat, threat motivations, analyzing and mapping threat groups, profiling threats, including profiling group leaders, organizational structures, methods of operation, analyzing the strengths, capabilities, and vulnerabilities of threat actors, and targeting the threat actors). Especially useful are the numerous tables and figures that illustrate each chapter's discussion. As a textbook, each chapter begins with a statement of learning objectives and concludes with a summary, key summary points, and discussion questions. This textbook is recommended for courses that focus on the intelligence components in counterterrorism, as well as for counterterrorism practitioners, with its presentation of analytic methodologies useful as job aids. The author is Associate Vice President for Strategic Relations in intelligence, national and homeland security and cyber security at American Military University.

Table of Contents: Foreword; The Art, Science, and Business of Intelligence; Competitors, Adversaries, and Enemies; The Once and Future Intelligence Community; Intelligence Operations and Centers; Data and Information; Data Mining and Visualization Tools; Intelligence People; Intelligence Processes—The Intelligence Operations Process; Intelligence Processes—Preliminary Analysis; Detailed Analysis and Threat Profiling; Delivering Intelligence; Intelligence Design—Supporting Operations.

Mark A. Latino, Robert J. Latino, and Kenneth C. Latino, ***Root Cause Analysis, Improving Performance for Bottom-Line Results*** [Fifth Edition] (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2020), 362 pp., US $ 103.96 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1383-3245-4.

This handbook is one of the finest, most original, and innovative applications of a proprietary software-based tool to conduct root cause analysis. In the case of counterterrorism, in particular, with academic and public policy analysts highlighting the need to uncover the root causes of terrorist insurgencies, this tool is ideal in systematically conducting such analysis in a way that can be replicated by others, making it possible for the discipline to reach a higher level of empirical and evidence-based social science. To conduct root cause

analysis, the authors explain the nature of their Root Cause Analysis (RCA) system and how it can be applied proactively to prevent failures from occurring – in this case, a terrorist insurgency – and how by hierarchically decomposing it into its component elements, solutions can be generated in a systematic way to resolve a conflict's underlying causes. The authors are owners and executives of the Reliability Center, Inc. (RCI), in Hopewell, Virginia.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Preface; How to Read This Text; Introduction/Reflections; Introduction to the PROACT Root Cause Analysis (RCA); Introduction to the Field of Root Cause Analysis; Creating the Environment for RCA to Succeed: The Reliability Performance Process (TRPP); Failure Classification; Opportunity Analysis: "Mindfulness"; Asset Performance Management Systems (APMS): Automating the Opportunity Analysis Process; Preserving Event Data; Ordering the Analysis Team; Analyzing the Data: Introducing the Data: Introducing the PROACT Logic Tree; Communicating Findings and Recommendations; Tracking for Bottom-Line Results; The Role of Human Error in Root Cause Analysis: Understanding Human Behavior; Do Human Performance "Learning Teams" Make RCA Obsolete?; Is There a Direct Correlation between Reliability and Safety?"; Automating Root Cause Analysis: Introducing PROACTOnDemand; Case Histories.

Carl S. Young, *Metrics and Methods for Security Risk Management* (Boston, MA: Syngress/Elsevier, 2010), 296 pp., US $ 34.96 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-8561-7978-2.

This is an important and useful practitioner-based handbook about the components and analytic and quantitative tools involved in managing the risk associated with a spectrum of threats. As the author explains, it provides "a methodology for risk mitigation in the form of controls, methods, and performance criteria that is applicable to any security risk management problem" (p. 243). The risk posed by terrorism is also discussed, with one of the examples the threat from terrorists in the form of a fission- or fusion-type nuclear device. The chapters are accompanied by numerous figures and tables that illustrate their discussion and provide the tools that readers can apply to assessing how to manage risk. Each chapter concludes with a useful summary. The author is a veteran security professional in the corporate sector.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Preface; PART I: THE STRUCTURE OF SECURITY RISK; Security Threats and Risk; The Fundamentals of Security Risk Measurements; Risk Measurements and Security Programs; PART II: MEASURING AND MITIGATING SECURITY RISK; Measuring the Likelihood Component of Security Risk; Measuring the Vulnerability Component of Security Risk; Mitigating Security Risk: Reducing Vulnerability; Epilogue;

Counterterrorism – Military

John E. Jackson (Ed.), *One Nation, Under Drones: Legality, Morality, and Utility of Unmanned Combat Systems* (Annapolis, MD, Naval Institute Press, 2018), 256 pp., US $ 29.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6824-7238-5.

The contributors to this fascinating edited volume discuss significant issues associated with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs/ also known as drones), including their multifaceted roles in modern warfare and civilian sectors, such as agriculture. The spectrum of different types of short-range and long-range drones are examined, such as Predators, Reapers, Scan Eagles, and numerous other pilotless aircraft, with many of them deployed in counterterrorism. Also examined are the legal and ethical issues involved in the deployment of drones in warfare. The editor is retired U.S. Navy logistics officer who has taught at the U.S. Naval War College in Rhode Island.

Table of Contents: Foreword by Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Unmanned Systems) Francis I. Kelley, Jr.; A Robot's Family Tree: An Introduction and Brief History of Unmanned Systems; Drones: the Science

Fiction Technology of Tomorrow Is Already Here Today; Rise of Terror/Rise of Drones: A World View; State of the Operational Art: Maritime Systems; When Robots Rule the Waves; The U.S. Marine Corps the Evolving Amphibious Task Force, and the Rise of Unmanned Systems; Defeating the Threat of Small Unmanned Aerial Systems; Narrowing the International Law Divide: The Drone Debate Matures; Autonomous Weapons and the Law; Lethal Autonomous Systems and the Plight of the Noncombatant; The Ethics of Remote Weapons: Reapers, Red Herrings, and a Real Problem; Techno-Partners All Around Us: Civilian Applications for Drones; The View Downrange: The Decades Ahead.

Global Jihad

Thomas Hegghammer, *The Caravan: Abdallah Azzam and the Rise of the Global Jihad* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 718 pp., US $ 34.99 [Hardcover], 978-0-5217-6595-4.

This is the first in-depth, extensively researched, and comprehensive biography of Abdallah Azzam, the Palestinian cleric who led the mobilization of Arab fighters to Afghanistan in the 1980s as part of the internationalization of the jihadi movement against the Soviet occupation of the country. Azzam was killed in mysterious circumstances in 1989 in Peshawar, Pakistan, with Usama bin Laden then emerging as the jihadi movement's paramount leader, but with Azzam remaining an influential jihadi ideologue, with his book *Join the Caravan* becoming a classic of jihadi literature. To examine these issues, the author explores several lines of inquiry: the basic facts of Azzam's biography, the sources of his influence, the mechanisms of the Arab mobilization to Afghanistan, and the magnitude of Azzam's contribution. To tell Azzam's story, the author, a fluent speaker in Arabic and expert on Islamic culture, drew on previously untapped primary sources, and travels to Afghanistan and other Muslim countries where he conducted numerous interviews with people who knew Azzam or, as the author writes, "observed the Afghan war up close". This extensively sourced volume is accompanied by a website, www.azzambook.net, which contains links to most of the primary and secondary sources cited in the book. The author is a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo, Norway.

Table of Contents: Timeline; List of Maps; List of Illustrations; List of Table and Figure; Introduction; Prologue; Palestinian; Brother; Fighter; Scholar; Vagabond; Writer; Pioneer; Diplomat; Manager; Recruiter; Ideologue; *Mujahid*; Resident; Enemy; Martyr; Icon; Conclusion; Note on Sources; Overview of Abdallah Azzam's Works.

Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Incitement: Anwar al-Awlaki's Western Jihad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 352 pp., US $ 35.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-6749-7950-5.

This is a well-researched and well-written account of Anwar al-Awlaki, who was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in 1971 to parents from Yemen, and, after rising to prominence as a radical imam, left the U.S. for Yemen, where he became the leading ideologue of al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). He acquired a wide following among jihadist adherents, particularly in the United States and Britain, for his charisma and ability to "translate jihad into English." He was killed by an American drone strike on September 30, 2011, together with Samir Khan, his protégé, an American of Pakistani origins who had joined him in Yemen and was the "publisher" of *Inspire*, AQAP's popular magazine. In addition to this account of al-Awlaki's trajectory into becoming a leading jihadi ideologue, what also makes this book especially noteworthy is the author's account of al-Awlaki's American and British disciples such as Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (who attempted the "Christmas Day" 2009 airline bombing), Nidal Hasan, Zachary Adam Chesser, and Jesse Morton. In the conclusion, the author observes that al-Awlaki's assassination had "robbed the global jihad movement of one of its most important Western assets," but that his preachings had enabled the Islamic State to "draw upon a milieu of jihadist sympathizers already ideologically primed" by him, thereby earning him "a place alongside [the

jihadist movement's – JS] other renowned martyrs" (p. 274). Dr. Melleagrou-Hitchens is Lecturer in Terrorism and Radicalisation at King's College London and Research Director of the Program on Extremism at George Washington University, in Washington, DC.

Table of Contents: Introduction; **Part One: The Making of a Global Jihadist Leader**; From America to Yemen; Awlaki and Activist Salafism; Awlaki and Salafi-Jihadism: Theory and Praxis; "And Inspire the Believers…"; **Part Two: Awlaki's Disciples**; Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab; Nidal Hasan; Zachary Adam Chesser; Awlaki and the Islamic State in the West; Conclusion.

White Supremacists

Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 352 pp., US $ 29.95 [Hardcover], US $ 16.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-6742-3769-8.

This is one of the few accounts to extensively research the history, extremist ideology, and activities of the American white supremacist movement and its paramilitary components. According to the author, the movement was consolidated in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly over their sense of betrayal over America's withdrawal from the Vietnam War, and their support for several notorious far-right extremists, such as the 11-day standoff against federal authorities by the far-right extremist Randy Weaver in 1992 in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, the Branch Davidians cult's 51-day standoff between its members and federal agents at their compound in Waco, Texas, between February and April, 1993, and Timothy McVeigh's bombing of the Murah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. Although the author's account ends with the Oklahoma City bombing, this movement was further solidified by the election of Barack Obama as President in 2008, and was consolidated during President Donald Trump's administration. As the author points out, this movement is not monolithic, but a conglomeration of far-right militant groups such as the Klansmen, neo-Nazis, skinheads, radical tax protestors, and white separatists. Hopefully, the author will update her account to the contemporary period when this movement has become more powerful than ever before in America and European countries where its counterparts operate, as well. The author is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Chicago.

Table of Contents: Introduction; **Part I: Formation**; The Vietnam War Story; Building the Underground; A Unified Movement; Mercenaries and Paramilitary Praxis; **Part II: The War Comes Home**; The Revolutionary Turn; Weapons of War; Race War and White Women; **Part III: Appocalypse**; Ruby Ridge, Waco, and Militarized Policing; The Bombing of Oklahoma City; Epilogue.

Africa

Adam Dolnik and Herman Butime, *Understanding the Lord's Resistance Army Insurgency* (Singapore/Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing, 2017), 300 pp. US $ 108.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-7863-4144-0.

This is an excellent overview of the history, motivations, and current activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has conducted terrorist attacks for some 30 years in the central African nations of Uganda, Southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. What makes this volume especially noteworthy is the authors' utilization of primary sources and interviews with individuals familiar with the LRA which were generated by their field work in the region. Dr. Dolnik is a Czech Republic-based independent specialist on terrorism, hostage and kidnap response. Dr. Butime is an independent research on conflict and security issues.

Table of Contents: Preface; Emergence of the Conflict in Northern Uganda; Mystification of the Conflict in Northern Uganda; Regionalization of the LRA Insurgency; De-Escalation of the LRA Insurgency; *Modus Operandi* of LRA I; *Modus Operandi* of LRA II; Longevity and Termination of the LRA Insurgency; Conclusion.

Michael Graham, *On Operations with C Squadron SAS: Terrorist Pursuit & Rebel Attacks in Cold War Africa* (Philadelphia, PA: Pen & Sword, 2020), 208 pp., US $ 34.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5267-7285-5.

This is the third and final 'stand-alone' personal and highly revealing account by a former Second-in-Command of C Squadron SAS's (Special Air Service) operations during the Cold War, on behalf of the Rhodesian, British, and Portuguese governments (at the time) against the insurgents in Angola and Mozambique. The author's account is updated with the C Squadron disbanded in 1980, with many of its members joining the South African special forces. By 1986, its relations with the South African government deteriorated, leading to the break-up of the SAS teams and there dispersal worldwide. After emigrating to New Zealand in 1990, the author died in September 2019.

Table of Contents: Author's Notes and Acknowledgements; Profiles; C Squadron SAS; Rebuilding; Escape and Evasion; Getting the Boot; The Ghosts of Angola; Haunting the MPLA; Relentless Pursuit; The Anguish of an SAS General; The British Reply to General Wall's Letter; A Tribute to General Peter Walls; South Africa's Zimbabwe Flop; Renamo Gather Steam; The Assassination of Samora Machel?; The Grahams of Burnley.

John Maszka, *Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram: Guerrilla Insurgency or Strategic Terrorism* (Singapore and Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing, 2018), 300 pp., US $ 98.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-7863-4398-7.

This is a well-analyzed account of the history, ideological underpinnings, strategic objectives, tactics, and current activities of the Somali al-Shabaab and Nigerian Boko Haram terrorist groups. Effective countermeasures, the author proposes, need to understand these groups' strategic objectives in order to "more successfully respond to tactical violence in ways that both protect our immediate interests and address the actors' long-term strategic goals" (p. 169). The author is a professor at Al Ain Men's College, United Arab Emirates.

Table of Contents: Preface; Strategic Studies; From Bin Laden to Baghdadi; Strategic Terrorism; Somalia: The Teeth of a Lion; The Strategic Terrorism of al-Shabaab; Nigeria: A Fight between Grasshoppers; Boko Haram; The Future of Terrorism and the Role of Strategic Theory.

Al J. Venter, *The Last of Africa's Cold War Conflicts: Portuguese Guinea and Its Guerrilla Insurgency* (Havertown, PA: Pen & Sword, 2020), 240 pp., US $ 42.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5267-7298-5.

An important and interesting account by a veteran military journalist of Portugal's counterinsurgency campaigns in its West African colonies in Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea (later called Guinea-Bissau, with the guerrilla insurgent groups in those countries backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba. In the conclusion, the author lists the factors that led to Portugal's poorly managed counterinsurgency campaigns in West Africa, including the insight that "no political solution to the problem was either found or sought" (p. 172), and that Portugal's dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar was a "real disaster" who had bankrupted his country to the point that it could no longer hold on to its African colonies (p. 174). This volume's numerous insights about the components of effective counterinsurgency also apply to the current management of counterinsurgencies in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The Appendix provides an insightful question and answer exchange between the author and a Portuguese journalist about Portugal's counterinsurgency campaigns in Africa. The author is a South African-based veteran military journalist who has authored numerous books and articles about military affairs.

Table of Contents: Prologue; Introduction; Build-up to the Conflict; Fuel to the Fire; Death of a Brave Soldier; West African Bush Base; Jungle Patrol; The Country and the War; A Luta Continual; Principal Adversaries: Cabral and Spinola; War in the Air; Cuban and Soviet Involvement; Landmines and Other Weapons of War; Operations Green Sea and Tridente; Casualties of War; What did Lisbon do Wrong?; Appendix: Q and A Session on Portugal's African Wars.

United States

Joint Special Operations University, Special Operations Forces Interagency Reference Guide [Fourth Edition] (MacDill AFB, FL: The JSOU Press, April 2020), 166 pp., (No Cost Information), [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9417-1540-6.

This reference guide provides military service students, from the U.S. and overseas, who attend the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) courses, an overview of how the U.S. Government's interagency programs address the elements of national power in terms of combating terrorism and counterinsurgency, hard and soft power, and the governmental agencies that manage these issues. The chapters are accompanied by numerous figures, tables, checklists, and reference resources.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Introduction; SOF, the Elements of National Power, and the Interagency Process; Threats, Intelligence, and the Intelligence Community; Defense, Diplomacy, and Development; Overseas Interagency Structures; Beyond the U.S. Government Interagency Community; Countering and Combating Terrorism; Interagency Evolution: Past and Future; Appendix A. List of Organizations and Programs; Appendix B. Ranks of Foreign Service, Military, Civil Service, and NATO Officials; Appendix C. Interagency-Related Definitions; Appendix D. U.S. Government Interagency and Other Abbreviations/Acronyms.

Keith M. Nightingale, *Phoenix Rising: From the Ashes of Desert One to the Rebirth of U.S. Special Operations* (Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2020), 336 pp., US $ 34.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6120-0877-6.

This is a fascinating insider's account by a former U.S. Army Special Forces officer of the origins of the American Special Operations Forces (SOF), through the prism of Operation Eagle Claw, the failed attempt to rescue fifty-two Americans held hostage in the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in November 1979. With the author involved in the rescue operation, he vividly describes the government and military officials and forces involved in the operation, including the reasons for its failure. The book's final part describes in great detail how the lessons learned from the aborted rescue mission led the U.S. Government to ultimately establish the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), which was headquartered in Tampa, Florida, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC), both of which continue to manage the U.S. special operations military community to this day. The appendices include a chronology of the history of U.S. Special Operations and a chronology of Operation Eagle Claw. Following his retirement from military service with the rank of Colonel, the author became a consultant on defense issues to major corporations.

Keith Nightingale, then a major, was Deputy Operations Officer and the junior member of Joint Task Force Eagle Claw, commanded by Major General James Vaught. Based on Nightingale's detailed diary, Phoenix Rising vividly describes the personalities involved, the issues they faced, and the actions they took, from the conception of the operation to its hair-raising launch and execution. His historically significant post-analysis of Eagle Claw gives unparalleled insight into how a very dedicated group of people from the Chief of Staff of the Army to lower-ranking personnel subjugated personal ambition to grow the forces necessary to address the emerging terrorist threat - a threat which the majority of uniformed leadership and their political masters denied in 1979. The Special Operations capability of the United States today is the ultimate proof of their success.

Table of Contents: Author's Note; The Bottom Line; Note Regarding Organizations and Texts; Part 1: Creation of the Force and Development of a Rescue Plan; Part 2: Training and Adjusting; Part 3: Execution and Events; Part 4: Aftermath and the Path Forward; Part 5: Congress 1: Bureaucracy 0; Part 6: The Strategic Services Command Proposal; Part 7: How We Got to Osama bin Laden; Appendix A: A SOF Chronology; Appendix B: Joint Task Force Organization; Appendix C: Eagle Claw: What Happened; Appendix D: FOG; Appendix E: Memo to General Meyer Ref Joint SOF Airlift Procurement; Appendix F: Declassified; Glossary.

Dennis A. Pluchinsky, *Anti-American Terrorism: From Eisenhower to Trump – A Chronicle of the Threat and Response; Volume II: The Reagan and George H.W. Bush* Administrations (Singapore/Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing, 2020), 720 pp., US $ 108.00 [Hardcover], US $ 48.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7863-4829-6.

This is the second volume of the author's comprehensive and extensively detailed four-volume overview of the origins and evolution of the United States' Government's approach to counterterrorism from the Dwight Eisenhower through the Donald Trump administrations. This second volume covers the years from the Ronald Reagan to the George H.W. Bush presidencies (1980 – 1992) – which the author characterizes as encompassing "Some of the most important changes in the international terrorist threat and the U.S. response to it…" (p. xxxix) The author adds that it was during this phase that "the U.S. confronted, for the first and only time, all four anti-American terrorism strains overseas – left-wing, secular Palestinian, state-sponsored, and Islamic revolutionary" (p. xxxix). The author observes that this phase led the U.S. Government to strengthen its anti-terrorism/counter-terrorism programs, especially in the Departments of State, Defense, Treasury and Justice, which also led to major interest in analyzing terrorism in academia, public policy research institutes, and the private sector, which is attested by the explosion of publications on these issues, including the inauguration of new journals devoted to these issues. It was during the presidency of George H.W. Bush, however, that the extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane was assassinated in New York City, in November 1990, by a jihadist terrorist, Al-Sayyid Abdulazziz Nossair, which, the author notes was "not suspected at the time [to be – JS] a harbinger of future jihadist terrorist actions in the U.S." (p. xliv). The author is a retired U.S. Government terrorism analyst in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security Threat Analysis Group/Division, giving this volume a unique insider's authoritative perspective.

Table of Contents: Dedication; About the Author; Volume II — Acronyms; Terms of Reference; **Introduction to Volume II**; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Record — The Overseas Threat — Part I; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Record — The Overseas Threat — Part II; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Record — The Overseas Threat — Part III; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Record — The Internal Threat — Part I; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Record — The Internal Threat — Part II; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Response — Part I; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Response — Part II; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Response — Part III; The Reagan Administration (1981–1988): The Response — Part IV; The George H W Bush Administration (1989–1992): The Record; The George H W Bush Administration (1989–1992): The Response; Summation and Prognosis; **Appendices:** Statistical Snapshots: Number of International Terrorist Incidents, Anti-American Terrorist Incidents; Overseas, Domestic Terrorist Incidents, Americans Killed in Overseas Terrorist Attacks, and Fatalities in Domestic Terrorist Attacks During the Reagan and Bush Administrations; Statistical Snapshots: Regional Breakdown of International and Anti-American Terrorist Incidents - Top Two Regions Only; Lethal Terrorist Attacks Against Americans Overseas from 1981 to 1992 Lethal Terrorist Attacks in the United States from the Reagan to George H W Bush; Administrations - 1981–1992; List of Americans Killed in the 1983 Vehicular Suicide Attack on the U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon by Syria, Iran, and Lebanese Hezbollah; and the 1988 Mid-air Bombing of Pan Am 103 by Intelligence Agents of the Libyan Government.

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Bibliography: Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) [Part 6]

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

[Bibliographic Series of Perspectives on Terrorism – BSPT-JT-2020-7]

Abstract

This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies and other resources on the Islamic State (IS / ISIS / ISIL / Daesh) and its predecessor organizations. To keep up with the rapidly changing political events, the most recent publications have been prioritized during the selection process. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing through more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to broaden the search.

Keywords: bibliography, resources, literature, Islamic State; IS; ISIS; ISIL; Daesh; Al-Qaeda in Iraq; AQI

NB: All websites were last visited on 17.07.2020. This subject bibliography is conceptualised as a multi-part series (for earlier bibliographies, see: Part 1 , Part 2 , Part 3 , Part 4 and Part 5). To avoid duplication, this compilation only includes literature not contained in the previous parts. However, meta-resources, such as bibliographies, were also included in the sequels. - See also *Note for the Reader* at the end of this literature list.

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Note for the Reader

Whenever retrievable, URLs for freely available versions of subscription-based publications have been provided. Thanks to the Open Access movement, self-archiving of publications in institutional repositories, on professional networking sites, or author homepages for free public use (so-called Green Open Access) has become more common. Please note, that the content of Green Open Access documents is not necessarily identical to the officially published versions (e.g., in case of preprints); it might therefore not have passed through all editorial stages publishers employ to ensure quality control (peer review, copy and layout editing etc.). In some cases, articles may only be cited after obtaining permission by the author(s).

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Kurt Braddock, *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 302 pp., US $ 79.99 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1084-7452-8.

Reviewed by William Allchorn

Over the past decade and a half, counter-narratives—defined as 'a message that…[demystifies] deconstruct or delegitimise extremist narratives'[1]—have become a key part of Western efforts to combat terrorism. Placed at the softer end of counter terror (CT) tactics and entering the United Kingdom's policy discourse in mid-2005, the use of communications to disrupt organisations committed to violent extremist causes has come to occupy one of many 'upstream' and 'downstream' counter measures (or what Braddock terms as 'Supply-side' & 'Demand-side' interventions) for governments and civil society actors wishing to counter political violence. This has become especially important as terrorist organisations (ranging from ISIS to the Base) have become more adept at using social media to radicalise, recruit and disseminate their messages – thereby circumventing traditional forms of media and face-to-face encounters in order to spread their ideology and recruit others to their 'propaganda of the deed'.

Kurt Braddock's *Weaponized Words*, therefore, comes at an auspicious time for scholarship (and the practice of) counter-narrative techniques. As he notes in chapter two of the book, there is little understanding about the exact nature of the communication used in some counter-messaging interventions or empirical evaluation of the psychological processes that have been triggered by them (p.62). An early example that Braddock provides is the United States Government's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications' (CSCC) attempts in 2013 to counter ISIS messages on Twitter. With its "Think Again, Turn Away" campaign bearing the U.S. State Department's seal, the message was quickly ridiculed by ISIS supporters (pp.6-7). This lack of theoretical and scientific underpinning, in Braddock's eyes, has led to an impoverished 'strategic counter-terrorist toolkit' – lacking a systemic, theoretical or empirical basis for best practice when constructing or distributing of counter-narratives in the field (p.83).

What unfolds in *Weaponized Words* is therefore a (largely accomplished) corrective to this 'hit and miss' approach. Leveraging insights from the fields of terrorism studies, communication studies, and psychology, Braddock's chief aim in this book is to present a master class in the study of persuasion – both when it comes to violent extremist propaganda itself but also counter-radicalisation efforts that privilege a narrative approach. Layered with useful stories and analogies to help the reader 'key' into the main themes of each chapter, Braddock takes the reader through a crash course in how terrorists use persuasion as part of their radicalisation efforts and how counter terrorism experts can 'maximize the effectiveness of [their] own counter-messages' (p.7).

Adopting a scholarly but accessible narrative approach, Braddock's book first provides a useful overview of research on radicalisation and counter-radicalisation before immersing the reader in the cognitive (chapters 3-5) and emotional processes (chapter 6) of extremist persuasion and counter-persuasion. Core to Braddock's theoretical and empirical 'toolkit' is attitudinal inoculation against terrorist propaganda that innovatively warns and exposes those targeted to weakened versions of extremist arguments to 'immunise' them against terrorist recruitment.[2] Based on decades of research in the fields of politics, health and wellness, advertising, animal rights, and the environment, it is certainly a promising approach. Most interesting, and as Braddock argues in chapter 4 of the book, such attempts at attitudinal inoculation cut both ways – with both terrorists and counter-terror practitioners keen to engender vigilance among their target audience against the competing narratives from the other side. Later chapters delve into slightly tangential, future-gazing areas (e.g. impending opportunities and challenges for counter-terror scholars and practitioners going forward in chapters 7 & 8) but this is remedied by the innovative counter-radicalisation methodologies, evidence-based tips and examples surveyed in early sections of the monograph.

In sum, then, *Weaponized Words* is the first book length treatment of counter-messaging techniques and counter-tactics that ultimately lives up to its 'evidence matters' mission statement. A key audience will be students and scholars of terrorism studies, communication studies and psychology. However, and given the array of useful stories, examples and well-evidenced pointers, the main audience of the book will most certainly be practitioners and policy-makers keen to sharpen their toolkits against extremist actors. Published amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, never has such a systematic treatment of terrorist persuasion and counter-narrative interventions been so timely, as counter-terror actors attempt to win the 'war of words' waged by terrorist actors during a crisis moment.

About the Reviewer: **William Allchorn, Ph.D.,** *is Associate Director at the Centre for the Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR) and a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Leeds. He is an expert on violent far-right extremist narratives and counter-narratives. His latest research project – with CARR & Hedayah - looked at this phenomena globally - surveying far-right extremist narratives and counter-narratives in the Balkans, Germany, Ukraine, UK, US, Canada, Scandinavia, Australia and New Zealand.*

Notes

[1] Tuck, H. & Silverman, H., 'The Counter Narrative Handbook', London: ISD, 2016, online at: https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Counter-narrative-Handbook_1.pdf.

[2] See also Braddock's earlier writings on this: Kurt Braddock, 'Vaccinating Against Hate: Using Attitudinal Inoculation to Confer Resistance to Persuasion by Extremist Propaganda', *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 31 (Nov.-Dec., 2019). DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2019.1693370.

Jonathan Matusitz, *Global Jihad in Muslim and non-Muslim Contexts*

(New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 349 pp., US $ 84.99 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-3-030-47043-2.

Reviewed by Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin

In *Global Jihad in Muslim and non-Muslim Contexts*, Jonathan Matusitz offers ten reasons why the Global Jihad Movement (GJM) has been so rampant since the dawn of the twenty-first century. Some of the reasons, for example, include radicalization, religious motivations, and outbidding other movements, and internal rifts, among others. Organized in 13 chapters, Matusitz integrates the ten reasons into a coherent framework that sheds light on the driving forces and streams behind the proliferation of jihadism. This is not to say that all ten reasons occur at the same time or are even included in every major terrorist incident within the GJM landscape. In fact, the author makes it clear that "it is crucial not to engage in reductionism and not to essentialize all jihadist groups into organizations or factions that all have the same tactics and meanings" (p. 3). Fundamentally, he says, there is "no single explanation for jihad" (p. 9).

Readers will appreciate the numerous up-to-date theoretical applications, statistics, and case studies regarding the GJM today, which are buttressed with evidence and more than 1,000 endnotes. I note in particular the detailed case study of the Sri Lanka Easter bombings that took place on April 21st, 2019, where "two-and-a-half" main reasons were suggested to explain the development of this mass casualty attack that cost the lives of about 260 civilians: political motivations, religious motivations, and, *possibly*, economic conditions affecting the Muslim attackers. One of the stamps of purist Salafism is its preoccupation with the "us vs. them" dichotomy. This is why most of the targets of the Sri Lanka Easter bombings were churches and posh hotels.

From my point of view, Jonathan Matusitz, an Associate Professor at the Nicholson School of Communication and Media, University of Central Florida, is one of the few scholars that has thoroughly and comprehensively applied the field of communication to the subject matter of Islam and jihad. This is demonstrated by his discussion of "group communication" driven jihad, which is covered in Chapter 4 ("Group Dynamics and Socialization") and Chapter 5 ("Social Alienation"). In Chapter 4, long-established theoretical approaches – like groupthink, Social Identity Theory (SIT), and psychological resilience – serve to illustrate how a significant minority of European Muslims and Muslim Palestinian youths have resorted to jihadi attacks on both soft and hard targets in Western Europe and Israel. In Chapter 5, the Durkheimian notion of social alienation is shored up by the "failed integration" model, Social Closure Theory, and structural discrimination. Yet, at the end of some chapters, Matusitz also includes academic studies and official reports that question mainstream positions in the discipline, such as the cross-examination of the so-called "Problems of Social Integration" found in Chapter 5.

In the last chapter (Chapter 13), the author presents four overarching conclusions that were deduced from the ten reasons for the profusion of the GJM today: "(1) A global war against both Muslims and non-Muslims, (2) diverse forces of convergence, (3) Salafism as Fascism, and (4) reformation in Islam: two opposing directions" (p. 316). As for "Salafism as Fascism," it was interesting to observe the analogy of Matusitz's conclusion with Umberto Eco's general characteristics of fascist ideology – one being the "one-state system led by a totalitarian leader [or the Caliphate]." In the second part of the chapter, Matusitz summarizes his conclusion by creating his own theory: Global Divergence Theory (GDT). As such, he writes that "the growing threat that jihadis pose to humankind indicates the ever-increasing demarcation and polarization that the global jihad movement is creating *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world" (p. 322). This newly coined theory is an essential gap-filler in the current literature in the sense that it underscores how a social movement disassociates from the rest of the world to elevate its own and protect it from threatening outside forces. GDT also represents a slight deviation from Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis in that global jihad today is not about "civilizational conflicts over culture" (p. 324). It is "not only about an East-West confrontation, or even a Muslim–Christian conflict. It is not a treatise on the West's superior values" (p. 324). Rather, it represents a paradigm shift in the interpretation of jihadism as one that is independent of a clash with other civilizations.

The two gaps in the literature, that I had hoped Jonathan Matusitz would have filled, were, first, the one related to the notion of shame and honor culture in Muslim society and how this contributes to jihadist thinking (though some detractors would consider it more of an anthropological view). Second, though a section on "Gender Considerations" was included in Chapter 3, one that accurately explains how no true profile exists for the typical jihadi because groups like ISIS have encouraged – and employed – women in their terrorist endeavors, I would have liked to see one or two paragraphs on early childhood development in relation to the mother as influencers on the development of Muslim terrorists.

Nevertheless, with his *Global Jihad in Muslim and non-Muslim Contexts* book, Jonathan Matusitz has written an extremely important text. It is, indeed, a *tour de force* that students and scholars in the disciplines of political science, international relations, religious studies, and communication – but also professionals and experts in state and national security agencies, local law enforcement, as well as local and national media outlets – should read to stay abreast with an ever-increasing phenomenon that is definitely real, but that seems to remain a controversial and sensitive topic for far too many.

About the Reviewer: **Dr. Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin** *is a psychoanalyst, Arabist, and external expert on Jihadese, La Universidad de Granada, Department of Linguistics.*

Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects

by Berto Jongman

Most of the clickable items included became available online between June and August 2020. They are categorized under thirteen headings (as well as sub-headings, not listed below):

1. Non-Religious Terrorism
2. Religious Terrorism
3. Terrorist Strategies and Tactics
4. Conflict, Crime and Political Violence other than Terrorism
5. Extremism, Radicalization
6. Counterterrorism - General
7. Counterterrorism: Specific Operations and/or Specific Policy Measures
8. Prevention, Preparedness and Resilience Studies
9. State Repression, Civil War and Clandestine Warfare
10. Intelligence Operations
11. Cyber Operations
12. Risk and Threat Assessments, Forecasts and Analytical Studies
13. Also Worth the Time to Read/Listen/Watch

N.B. *Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects* is a regular feature in 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. For past listings, search under 'Archive' at www.universiteitleiden.nl/PoT

1. Non-Religious Terrorism

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2. Religious Terrorism

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***About the Compiler*: Berto Jongman** *is Associate Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. He is a former senior Military Intelligence Analyst and currently serves as an International Consultant on CBRN issues. A sociologist by training, he previously worked for Swedish and Dutch civilian research institutes. Drs. Jongman was the recipient of the Golden Candle Award for his World Conflict & Human Rights Maps, published by PIOOM. He is editor of the volume 'Contemporary Genocides' (1996) and has also contributed to various editions of 'Political Terrorism', the award-winning handbook of terrorism research, edited by Alex P. Schmid.*

Conference Monitor/Calendar of Events (August 2020)

Compiled by Reinier Bergema

The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), in its mission to provide a platform for academics and practitioners in the field of terrorism and counter-terrorism, compiles an online calendar, listing recent and upcoming academic and professional conferences, symposia and similar events – both on- and offline – that are directly or indirectly relevant to the readers of Perspectives on Terrorism. The calendar includes academic and (inter-) governmental conferences, professional expert meetings, civil society events and educational programs. The listed events are organised by a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental institutions, including several key (counter) terrorism research centres and institutes.

TRI encouragee readers to contact the journal's Associate Editor for Conference Monitoring, Reinier Bergema, and provide him with relevant information, preferably in the same format as the items listed below. Reinier Bergema can be reached at <r.bergema@icct.nl> or via Twitter: @reinierbergema.

August 2020

Aon's 2020 Risk Maps COVID-19 Webinar
Aon
6 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @Aon_plc

Understanding Incel Violence
Monash University
14 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @MonashUni

Staring into the Abyss: Where does Lebanon go from here?
Brookings Institute
17 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @BrookingsInst

War and Pandemic: Is Peace Possible in Yemen?
Chatham House
17 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @ChathamHouse

Advanced Summer Programme: Preventing, Detecting, and Responding to Violent Extremism
Leiden University, Centre for Professional Learning & International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) – The Hague
17-21 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @UniLeidenCPL; @ICCT_TheHague

The Arms Trade Treaty & Diversion: Assessing Risks and Impacts
Stimson Center
17 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @StimsonCenter

The Status of the Fight Against ISIS
Atlantic Council
18 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @AtlanticCouncil

Afghanistan's Future: Regional Perspectives on the Road Ahead
Stimson Center
18 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @StimsonCenter

Spy vs Spy: The New Age of Espionage
Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)
19 August, *online*
Website: visit| Twitter: @ASPI_org

How the United States Can Use Force Short of War
Brookings Institute
19 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @BrookingsInst

Policy Protection Against Foreign Threats: A Conversation with Daniel N. Hoffman
Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI)
20 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @fpri

The Kashmir Conflict: A Year of Tumult
Stimson Center
20 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @StimsonCenter

Principled Spying: The Ethics of Secret Intelligence
RUSI
20 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

Advanced Summer Program: Terrorism, Countering Terrorism, and the Rule of Law
International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague & Asser Institute
24-28 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @ICCT_TheHague; @TMCAsser

Africa in Perspective – Spotlight on Somalia
RUSI
26 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

GLOBSEC 2020 Digital Stage
GLOBSEC
26-28 August, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @GLOBSEC

September 2020

Ask Me Anything About… Online Dialogue [CSEP Webinar]
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
2 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Ask Me Anything About… Safety [CSEP Webinar]
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
2 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

The World Counter Terror Congress 2020
Counter Terror Expo
8-10 September, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @CTX_Event

Women, Terrorism, and Counter-Terrorism
Monash University
9 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @MonashUni

Whitehall Briefing - The Future of UK–EU Intelligence Sharing in a Post-Brexit World
Royal United Services Institute
9 September, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

Ask Me Anything About… Staying Innovative [CSEP Webinar]
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
10 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Ask Me Anything About… Storytelling [CSEP Webinar]
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
10 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Defence Against Terrorism [Course]
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
14-17 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Trading Emerging Technologies: Security and Human Rights Perspectives
Asser Institute
15 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @TMCAsser

From Potential to Prosperity: Africa's Long-Term Future
Institute for Security Studies Africa
15 September, Johannesburg, South Africa
Website: visit | Twitter: @issafrica

The Use of Videogaming by (Violent) Extremists – Strategies and Narratives
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) C&N
15-17 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

IVth 'Silent Leges Inter Arma?' Conference
International Society for Military Law and the Law of War
15-18 September, Bruges, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @ISMLLW

Update of RWE Exit and Probation Programmes
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Rehabilitation
16-17 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Extreme Threats to the UK
Royal United Services Institute
17 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

Ask Me Anything About… YouTube/Google
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
17 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Ask Me Anything About… Twitter
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
17 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Gender and Counterterrorism: Enhancing Women's Role and Empowering Women
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
22-24 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Countering CBRN at Home and Beyond
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
23 September, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

Digital Study Visit to Australia
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
23 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

RAN YOUNG Review Panel
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
23-24 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

(Post-) COVID Narratives That Polarise
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
24-25 September, *online*

Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Prison Mental Health
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
25 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction
Asser Institute
28 September-2 October, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @TMCAsser

VRWE [Violent Right-Wing Extremism] in the Local Strategy
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
28 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Digital Study Visit to Canada
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Rehabilitation
28-29 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

German Prevention Congress
Deutscher Praeventionstag
28-29 September, Kassel, Germany
Website: visit | Twitter: *@praeventionstag*

Lone Actors
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
29-30 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Discussion Between Groups VoT [Victims of Terrorism] and Detainees
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
29-30 September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
September, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

14th Annual International Conference: Unanswered Questions and Under-Researched Topics in Terrorism Research
Society for Terrorism Research
September, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @SocTerRes

October 2020

Misogynistic Terrorism and the Far-Right
Monash University
6 October, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @MonashUni

GLOBSEC 2020 Bratislava Forum
GLOBSEC
7-8 October, Bratislava, Slovakia
Website: visit | Twitter: @GLOBSEC

Migration Deals and Their Damaging Effects
Asser Institute
9 October, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @TMCAsser

Terrorism and Media [Course]
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
19-23 October, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Police and VRWE [Violent Right-Wing Extremism] Lone Actors
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
20 October, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Modern Deterrence Spring 2020 Conference
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
21 October, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

An Online Conversation with Two Former Spymasters
RUSI
22 October, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

1980-1920: The Forgotten History of Right-Wing Terrorism
FORENA/University of Applied Science Düsseldorf & NS-Documentation Centre of the City of Cologne, and Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung
29 October, Cologne, Germany
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

November 2020

CBRNe Convergence Boston
CBRNe Convergence
2-4 November, Boston (MA), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @cbrneworld

Preparation Victim's Day 2021
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
3 November, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Defence Against Terrorism Seminar
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
3-4 November, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Workshop: Counter-Terrorism Handbook
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
5-6 November, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

2020 Stockholm Security Conference
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
18 November, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @sipriorg

Security, Democracy & Cities Conference
European Forum for Urban Security
25-27 November 2020, Nice, France
Website: visit | Twitter: @Efusnews

Youth Isolation, How to Get Them Out of It
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
26-27 November, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

December 2020 & Beyond

Engaging with Non-Violent/Not Yet Violent Activists and Extremists to Prevent Them from Turning to Violence
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
2 December, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Police and Dealing with Online Incitement, Mobilisation, Recruitment and Radicalisation
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
8 December, *online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Dem Extremismus an die Wurzel! – Prävention und Repression im Zusammenspiel zwischen lokaler, nationaler und europäischer Ebene
Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
15-16 December, *Nurnberg, Germany*
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Advanced Winter Programme: Preventing, Detecting and Responding to Violent Extremism
Leiden University, Centre for Professional Learning & International Centre for Counter-Terrorism [ICCT] – The Hague

25-29 January 2021, The Hague, The Netherlands
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About the Compiler: **Reinier Bergema** *is a Research Fellow and Project Manager at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT) and an Associate Editor for 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. His research interests include, inter alia, Dutch (jihadist) foreign fighters and terrorist threat levels across the EU.*

About *Perspectives on Terrorism*

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