

Narcoterrorism

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Narcoterrorism

Narcoterrorism is a growing threat that has received increased attention over recent years. Originally defined in 1983 by Peruvian President Belaunde Terry, narcoterrorism was used as a term to describe terrorist attacks on his country's drug enforcement police.¹ However, the term narcoterrorism has taken on several meanings since the conception of the theory. For example, in the United States the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) defines narcoterrorism as the "participation of groups or associated individuals in taxing, providing security for, otherwise aiding or abetting drug trafficking endeavors in an effort to further, or fund, terrorist activities."² The events of 9/11 obviously called increased attention to terrorist organizations and consequently the concept of narcoterrorism has been closely examined.

While first recognized as a threat in Latin America, narcoterrorism has wreaked havoc across the world. From the FARC in Colombia to the IRA in Ireland, and the PKK in Turkey, the methods of narcoterrorism are employed by various terrorist organizations and drug cartels. As globalization has allowed for the interconnectivity of world markets it has also allowed for global trade in the illicit market. As a result, ties have been forged between various criminal groups in which drug trafficking is increasingly used to fund the operations of terrorist organizations and crime groups.

The threats posed by narcoterrorism present a multitude of security issues. With the current drug war ongoing in Mexico, this threat has never been closer to the United

¹ Hartelius, Jonas. "Narcoterrorism." Swedish Carnegie Institute. February 2008.
<http://www.ewi.info/pdf/Narcoterrorism%20FINAL13FEB.pdf>

² Thachuk, Kimberly. Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life. (London: Praeger Security, 2007) 26.

States. The tactics being used by the Mexican drug cartels are classic examples of narcoterrorism and have some worried that the United States could soon share a border with a failed state.³ A look around the world reveals the damaging effects of narcoterrorism and the security issues it presents.

What is narcoterrorism? What threats does it pose to society? The emergence of narcoterrorism will require a different view of the nexus of crime and terrorism if it is to be effectively countered by the international community. By examining criminal groups such as the FARC, IRA, and PKK it is clear that much more needs to be done to counter this emerging threat.

FARC

Perhaps the most egregious usage of narcoterrorism has been employed by the Colombian rebel group FARC. The transformation of FARC from a political group to a U.S. designated terrorist organization correlates with their role in illicit drugs. FARC is typically the first group thought of when the term “narcoterrorism” is mentioned and for that reason it is beneficial to understand the history and origins of the group.

The group was founded by Manuel Marulanda who opposed the right wing Colombian government and military. FARC maintained a marginal influence throughout the 1970’s and their presence was only prominent in small rural towns of Colombia. In 1985 the FARC actually managed to win seats in the Colombian parliament as part of the Patriotic Union party. The group’s tenure in the political world was short lived as most

³ Traci Carl, *Mexican Collapse?*, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/jan/22/mexican-collapse/> (January 2009)

of their party members were killed by right-wing paramilitary groups.⁴ With the political route effectively closed to the FARC, they focused on the growth of their military. Fortunately for them, the drug trade would provide the means and resources to accomplish large growth in strength and numbers. In the 1980's there was an international boom in the demand for illegal drugs, specifically cocaine, that Colombian cartels rushed to supply. While the Cali and Medellin cartel's led the way in cocaine production and distribution, the leaders of FARC soon realized the opportunities that coca cultivation provided.⁵ FARC started their foray into the drug world by taxing local coca growers in southern towns.⁶ This tax was basically extortion disguised as a fee for providing security to the farmers from the Colombian government and paramilitaries.

Growth of FARC & Narcoterrorism

As the drug trade continued to grow and usage of cocaine skyrocketed in the United States, pressure grew on the Colombian government to fight the cartels. The focus on defeating the Cali and Medellin cartels succeeded but as a result, much of the cocaine production moved to areas controlled by the FARC.⁷ This allowed the increased growth and strength of FARC to continue and consequently their influence grew.

It is important to remember that the FARC's involvement in the drug trade was

⁴ *Colombia's most powerful rebels*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1746777.stm> (September 2003)

⁵ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/colombia/2242284/Colombia-The-rise-and-fall-of-Farc.html>

⁶ *Colombia's most powerful rebels*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1746777.stm> (September 2003)

⁷ Peceny, Mark, "The FARC's Best Friend: U.S. Antidrug Policies and the Deepening of Columbia's Civil War in the 1990s", *Latin American Politics & Society* - Volume 48, Number 2, Summer 2006. 95.

born out of rejection from the political system.⁸ They realized the drug trade presented them the opportunities to fund their attacks against the Colombian government.

Increasingly, these attacks became terrorist in nature.

In order to push their leftist agenda, FARC was using the drug trade to fund the attacks against the Colombian government and even innocent civilians; “Their strategies and tactics involved many acts of terrorism in that they kill peasants suspected of colluding with the paramilitaries and they kidnap for ransom, preying on anyone suspected of possessing wealth beyond that prescribed by their communist dogma. They also use traditional military strategies and tactics and target the police and other symbols of government presence”.⁹

Between 1994 and 1998 the level of armed conflict in Colombia intensified. The FARC were able to demonstrate increased military prowess and territorial control between 1995 and 1997.¹⁰ By 1996 FARC had a formidable military numbering close to 10,000 members. With successful attacks and defeats of the Colombian military, the government was ready to approach the bargaining table.

Due to growing violence and civil unrest in the 1990s, President Andres Pastrana Arango began peace talks with guerrillas. As part of the peace talks, in 1998 the FARC was awarded a block of land the size of Switzerland south of the Colombian capitol in Bogota.¹¹ This area was considered a safe haven and off limits to paramilitary groups and the Colombian government. The unintended effect of granting FARC a safe haven

⁸ Mallory, Stephen, Understanding Organized Crime. (Jones & Bartlett Publishers, 2007). 58.

⁹ Alexander, Yonah. Combating Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries. (University of Michigan Press, 2002) 120.

¹⁰ Vargas Meza, Ricardo. “The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the Illicit Drug Trade.” Transnational Institute. June 1999.

¹¹ *Timeline Colombia*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1212827.stm (April 2009).

was that it allowed the group to grow exponentially in size and wealth. FARC profited between \$300 million to \$1 billion dollars annually through the drug trade. The argument can be made that the drug trade shifted the goal and aim of FARC; “The FARC is a premier example of the unique danger of narcoterrorism: the potential for drug profits to turn a rebellion into a self-perpetuating criminal enterprise”.¹²

FARC & International Terrorist Groups

As mentioned previously the globalization of the world economy has facilitated the interaction and coordination between criminal and terrorist organizations across the world. The global sale of illegal narcotics has allowed for terrorist groups to finance training and buy materials from around the world.

Looking to expand their opportunities for wealth, FARC worked with foreign terrorist groups such as the Basque-ETA terrorist group in Spain. A 2008 Spanish-Colombian joint investigation discovered that FARC and the ETA have shared tactical and logistical information.¹³ The report found that the ETA had trained FARC cells in explosives and guerrilla tactics. The report even indicated that that some of these training sessions had taken place in Venezuela.¹⁴ FARC would pay for this training by supplying the ETA with drugs that they would sell in Spain.

FARC Challenged

¹² Kushner, Harvey. *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*. (Sage, 2002). 252.

¹³Berti, Benedetta, “Colombia’s FARC and the Basque ETA: Exploring the Tactical and Economic Partnership”, *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume: 7 Issue: 2 (2009).

¹⁴Ibid

Like most terrorist organizations, FARC has proven to be very adaptive to changing circumstances. Colombia launched an aggressive approach against FARC known as Plan Colombia that was supported by the United States. Billions of dollars were used by the U.S. government to strengthen and train the Colombian troops in an effort to eradicate coca crops and weaken guerilla groups.

Plan Colombia succeeded in weakening FARC as the size of the military had decreased to 8,000 by 2008.¹⁵ Despite being on the run in Colombia, FARC still was able to maintain influence and stage attacks against Colombia. It started to become clear that FARC was receiving outside help from neighboring nations and international crime groups. They found support in bordering nations, Venezuela and Ecuador. FARC quickly had safe havens in these nations and were able to produce cocaine to fund their attacks against the Colombian government. While the membership of FARC has declined in Colombia in recent years, they are still able to exert influence on Colombians and cause harm with terrorist attacks.

Effects on Colombia

In addition to the hundreds of thousands of lives claimed by FARC and the war in Colombia, there are other ill effects of the drug trade. Narcoterrorism and actions of FARC have a grave impact on the citizens of Colombia. Colombia ranks third in the world for internally displaced people. An internally displaced person is someone who is forced to move due to conflict but remains within the borders of their country. Due to FARC's long and ongoing war with the Colombian government and the right-wing

¹⁵ Deshazo, Peter, "Hemisphere Highlights", *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, Volume 7, Issue 2 (2008).

paramilitaries and in combination with FARC's use of intimidation and murder, millions of Colombian citizens have been forced to move; "40 years of multi-party conflict between the army and illegal armed groups including insurgent groups, notably the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have led over four million Colombians to be internally displaced, according to the Consultancy on Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES)."

While Plan Colombia was successful in defeating much of the FARC it struggled in many other areas. Much of the United States attention in Plan Colombia was focused on counter-insurgency, especially after 9/11, and preventing the flow of illegal drugs into the United States.¹⁶ The economic development of Colombia has been held back by its reliance on the illegal drug trade. Many of the poor rural farmers have no other option but to grow coca and pay the tax enforced by FARC.

IRA & Narcoterrorism

FARC is not the only terrorist organization that has funded their attacks with the drug trade. The IRA terrorized Northern Ireland for decades with mortar attacks and car bombs.

The IRA was founded in 1969 by Sinn Fein, as the legal political entity dedicated to removing British forces from Northern Ireland. The IRA has engaged in assassinations and other forms of attacks in Northern Ireland and England since being founded.¹⁷ The IRA has justified the use of terrorist tactics to fight what they view as the

¹⁶ Veillette, Connie, "Plan Colombia: A Progress Report", (CRS Report: May 2005).

¹⁷ Curtis, Glenn, "The Nexus among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe", Library of Congress, 2002.

unfair treatment of Catholics by Protestants in Northern Ireland. They have had several notable attacks that claimed many lives such as the Bloody Friday attack in which 22 bombs were used. The IRA has been notorious for their utilization of narcoterrorism to pursue their agenda in Ireland. While the IRA has been very vigilant in fighting the use of drugs within Ireland, it has not stopped them from selling drugs internationally to raise money for their terrorist aspirations. For example, in the 1980's IRA was caught smuggling over a ton of marijuana into the United States. The profits from the drug sale were to fund the purchase of arms.¹⁸

Shortly before 9/11 Colombian officials arrested three Irish citizens who were traveling in Colombia. It turned out that the citizens were explosive experts with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and had been training FARC on the creation and execution of mortar attacks.¹⁹ FARC paid upwards of \$2 million for the training provided by the IRA. In 2002, the FARC would use this training to launch a mortar attack on the presidential inauguration of President Uribe.

In the money acquired from FARC for the explosives training the IRA was able to pay for a shipment of 20 highly efficient Russian AN-94 assault rifles that Russian intelligence reported going to the IRA in 2001.²⁰ Additionally, the IRA used narcotics acquired from the FARC to pay Croatian arm smugglers.

As recently as March 2009, there have been terrorist attacks by a group affiliated with the IRA. The group known as the Real IRA killed two British soldiers and two civilians. The attack happened as peace talks had progressed between the IRA and

¹⁸ Naylor, RT, Wages of Crime: Black Markets, Illegal Finance, and the Underworld Economy. (Cornell University Press, 2004.) 74.

¹⁹ Curtis, Glenn, "The Nexus among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe", Library of Congress, 2002.

²⁰ Ibid

Britain.²¹ U.S. Congressional testimony revealed some of the criminal and terrorism links of the Real IRA. The report provided evidence that the Real IRA is involved with the illicit drug sale in the Middle East. Additionally, the seizure of drugs flowing into and out of Northern Ireland has increased in recent years.²²

PKK & Narcoterrorism

Located in Turkey, but with members in Iraq and Iran, the PKK is the Kurdistan Worker's Party. Founded in the 1970's they are a militant organization that pursues the same leftist ideology that FARC has fought for in Colombia. Classified as a terrorist group by the United States, the PKK has long fought the Turkish government. Because the PKK have dealt extensively with criminal organizations in trafficking both arms and narcotics, they have been considered an important nexus of criminal activities with terrorism.²³

In the 1990's the PKK moved to a more urban attack approach and over the course of the decade it claimed the lives of over 30,000 people. After their leader, Abdullah Ocalan was arrested, peace prospered for several years. However in recent years, there has been a spike in violence as the militant wing of PKK rose to power.²⁴

Terrorist attacks have been made against tourist attractions and hotels in the area.

²¹ Chu, Henry. "Deadly attack on British base rattles Northern Ireland." Los Angeles Times. 9 March 2009. <http://www.latimes.com/news/print/edition/asection/la-fg-northern-ireland9 2009mar09.0.6864157.story>

²² Cilluffo, Frank. "The Threat Posed from the Convergence of Organized Crime, Drug Trafficking, and Terrorism." Testimony Before the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime. December 2000. <http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/fcilluffo.pdf>

²³ Curtis, Glenn, "The Nexus among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe", Library of Congress, 2002.

²⁴ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. Terrorist Organizations: Country Reports on Terrorism. U.S. Department of State. April 2007. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82738.htm>

Evidence indicates that a large amount of the funding used for these PKK attacks is raised through the illicit drug business. In fact, the PKK makes around \$10 million a year from drug running and extortion.²⁵ Reports indicate that since 1984 there has been a convergence between organized crime groups and the PKK. However, as the PKK realized the profitability of the drug business they used their ties in the region to sell drugs to finance their operations.²⁶ This evolution of shifting from a simple tax of the drug producers and traffickers to producing and delivering the drugs themselves is very similar to what FARC did.

Unlike many nations, such as the United States, Turkey has done a much better job at linking organized crime, the drug trade, and terrorist organizations together. Understanding the role of the drug trade in the financing of PKK and their terrorist attacks has been a key tenet of the Turkish counter-terrorism strategy.²⁷

Threats posed by Narcoterrorism

Narcoterrorism is presenting threats not only to the nations occupied or that harbor these groups but to the world at large. The threat facing America from narcoterrorism is very serious and growing. The close relationships between Mexican cartels and Colombian drug producers like FARC is very alarming. Mexican smugglers have perfected the art of sneaking drugs and human beings across the border. The Mexican drug smugglers offer the ability to smuggle people, drugs, or bombs across the

²⁵ Alexander, Yonah. Combating Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries. (University of Michigan Press, 2002)

²⁶ Nikbay, Ozgur. Understanding and Responding to the Terrorism Phenomenon. IOS Press: 2007. 143

²⁷ Orttung, Robert. National Counter Terrorism Strategies. IOS Press: 2006. 206

border for a terrorist organization like FARC.²⁸ Andre Hollis recognizes the threat that this poses to the United States; “drug trafficking organizations in Mexico, the Caribbean, and other Latin American countries are known to provide transport, for a price, to non-Latin’s seeking illegal entry into the United States”.²⁹ This represents such a threat because of the growing relationships between crime groups and terrorists across the world. The FARC has close relationships with Mexican cartels due to their trade of cocaine. In 2008, a Colombian defense minister expressed over the growing connections between FARC and Mexican cartels.³⁰ The FARC also has close ties with terrorist organizations across the world.

The drug aspect alone is a major threat to the United States. It is estimated that 90% of the cocaine and 47% of the heroin that reaches the U.S. is produced or passes through Colombia. It is also believed that illicit drugs kill more than 21,000 Americans each year and result in the loss of more than \$160 billion in revenue.³¹ So while not only are the security issues raised by narcoterrorism a threat to the United States, the drugs take the lives of thousands of Americans every year.

The threats posed by narcoterrorism facing Colombia are very clear. FARC is a direct threat to the lives of Colombians with the terrorist attacks that are funded by their business in narcotics. Colombia is in a very difficult situation to entirely counter the threat of FARC and narcoterrorism. For example, in a controversial action Colombia attacked a FARC camp in Ecuador killing the high ranking FARC spokesman, Paul

²⁸ Leu, Amanda. "Fighting Narcoterrorism." *Joint Force Quarterly*. Issue 48, Q1 2008, 56-60.

²⁹ Thachuk, Kimberly. *Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life*. (London: Praeger Security, 2007). 24

³⁰ "Colombia Rebels linked to Mexico Drug Cartels." *New York Times*. 7 October 2008.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/08/world/americas/08mexico.html>

³¹ "Counter Drug/Counter Narcoterrorism" United States Southern Command Partnership for the Americas. February 2009. Web. <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/counterNarco.php>

Reyes.³² While a top FARC leader was killed in the attack, it sparked outrage in Latin America as Colombia had ignored the sovereignty of Ecuador.³³ In the wake of the attack, important information was discovered linking FARC to Ecuador and their military.

The coordination and cooperation of FARC with Ecuador and Venezuela, is one of the biggest challenges facing Colombia and its fight against narcoterrorism. Many of the Latin American nations are very socialist and have more in common with the aspirations of FARC than they do with the Colombian government. After the cross border attack in Ecuador, Venezuela responded by sending troops and tanks to the Venezuelan-Colombian border. By protecting their interests and security Colombia's actions have the capability of throwing the entire region into conflict.

The PKK are a risk to the security of Turkish citizens and recently staged a terrorist attack that killed 10 Turkish soldiers in April 2009.³⁴ The challenge facing Turkey is that the PKK receives support of Kurds across the region. Many of the PKK attacks against Turkey are staged in Northern Iraq. A major issue facing the mitigation of narcoterrorism in Turkey is the country's location. Turkey is both a transit and originating country for drugs and humans that are smuggled through the Balkan route. Esther Bacon writes that "Turkey is a major operating base for international narcotic traffickers responsible for all aspects of trafficking and refining drugs and serves as a key

³² Deshazo, Peter, "Hemisphere Highlights", *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, Volume 7, Issue 2 (2008).

³³ Kuffner, Stephan. "South America's Most Troubled Border." *Time (World)*. 18 April 2008. Web. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1732271,00.html>

³⁴ Unknown. "Ten Killed in Turkey's Deadliest Attack in Months" *Welt Online*. 29 April 2009. Web. <http://www.welt.de/english-news/article3646130/Ten-killed-in-Turkeys-deadliest-attack-in-months.html>

link to Afghanistan.”³⁵

The IRA has been in large part pacified due to the peace agreement and cease fire in 2005. However, radical splinter groups of the IRA such as Real IRA continue to conduct terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland as recently as March. While the membership and resources of the Real IRA is minimal compared to the IRA in the 1990’s they still pose a threat to the stability and security of Northern Ireland. A Congressional report found that Northern Ireland is still at risk from narcoterrorism and organized crime; “Thirty years of terrorism have left a web of networks in which organized crime can thrive and a climate of fear and secrecy that makes fighting such crime very difficult.” Such groups take advantage of arms that have been smuggled regularly into Northern Ireland during thirty years of terrorist activity.”³⁶

Policy Solutions

Effective policy must be implemented to deal with the emerging threat of narcoterrorism. There is not a single policy that will eliminate the threats posed by narcoterrorists. Rather it will take the implementation of several policies that seek to mitigate the influence and effect of narcoterrorism in various areas. These areas include properly defining the threat of narcoterrorism, tracking and freezing financial assets of transnational criminal organizations, handling the supply and demand problem with narcotics, and utilizing foreign aid.

³⁵Thachuk, Kimberly. Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life. (London: Praeger Security, 2007). 82.

³⁶ Curtis, Glenn, “The Nexus among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe”, Library of Congress, 2002.

Defining Narcoterrorism

Part of the difficulty in creating a policy that effectively mitigates narcoterrorism is that there are so many different definitions of the term. The definition of narcoterrorism can focus on the FARC's involvement in the drug industry or it can focus on their terrorist actions. Emma Bjornehed believes that there are two different definitions of narcoterrorism; "the definition of narcoterrorism is almost dual in character, where the emphasis is placed on the drug aspect or the terrorism aspect may vary considerably."³⁷ As made evident by FARC and other terrorist organizations, the international drug trade has become the most common and profitable criminal activity.³⁸

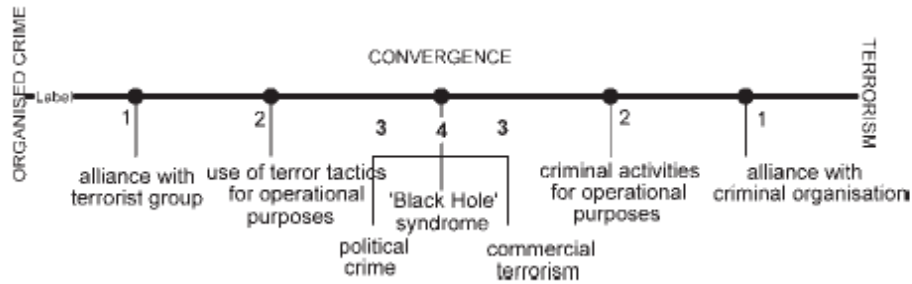
Part of this difficulty in defining narcoterrorism and attempting to identify narcoterrorists is the convergence of crime and terrorism. Tamara Makarenko states that the "1990s can be described as the decade in which the crime-terror nexus was consolidated: the rise of transnational organized crime and the changing nature of terrorism mean that two traditionally separate phenomena have begun to reveal many operational and organizational similarities."³⁹ The following chart exhibits the growing similarity between crime and terrorism.⁴⁰

³⁷ Bjornehed, Emma. "Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror." *Global Crime* Vol. 6 (2004). 306.

³⁸ Makarenko, Tamara. "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational." *Global Crime*. Volume 6, No. 1, February 2004, 129-145.

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ *Ibid*



According to Paul Wilkinson, the FARC is a perfect example of a group moving along the continuum; "it is clear that this has made them, both in reality and popular perception, little more than a branch of organized crime, decadent guerrillas rather than genuine revolutionaries, irredeemably corrupted by their intimate involvement with narcotraffickers and their cynical pursuits of huge profits from kidnapping and from their 'protection' of coca and opium production, processing and shipping facilities."⁴¹

Policies to counter narcoterrorism must view crime and terrorism in the same light. Some nations (Britain, Turkey) are far ahead of other nations in viewing the relationship between crime and terrorism. The progressive nature of the UK's view on terrorism and crime is made evident by examining the measures they have taken to combat the emerging threat.⁴² The United States government has been slow to recognize and adapt to the growing link between crime and terrorism. The bureaucratic nature of the United States government has made it very difficult to properly address narcoterrorism. The concept of narcoterrorism has not been viewed as a priority and the various agencies and departments have not cooperated on pooling together all available

⁴¹ Wilkinson, Paul. *Terrorism versus Democracy: the Liberal State Response*. Taylor and Francis: 2001.

⁴² Unknown. "Tackling Organised Crime and Terrorism." FCO In Action, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Web. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/institutions/britain-in-the-european-union/eu-policies/justice-and-home-affairs/organised-crime-and-terrorism>

information and resources. Additionally, the Department of Defense has been hesitant to fight drugs.⁴³

However, this is growing evidence that under the new Obama administration the link will be closely examined. In a recent speech given by David Luna, the Director of Anticrime Programs at the State Department, he stated that; “According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, 19 of the 44 groups that the U.S. Government has designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) participate in the illegal drug trade and many also engage in financial and other forms of crime. Besides drug trafficking, these activities include direct involvement in arms smuggling, commodity smuggling, goods smuggling, migrant smuggling, trafficking in persons, extortion, kidnapping, intellectual property theft, counterfeiting, fraud, credit theft, armed robbery, and money laundering. As terrorist groups begin to increasingly take on characteristics of organized crime entities, our international response will need to incorporate more of the tools used by law enforcement to combat organized crime.”⁴⁴

The above statements are very promising in that any future policy against narcoterrorism will require the acknowledgment of the link between crime and terrorism. The international community must work together closely to mitigate the effect of narcoterrorism. This can include sharing intelligence, providing military assistance, and legally cooperating. Effective narcoterrorism policy must manage to track and freeze the monetary assets of terrorist organizations and criminal groups.

⁴³Thachuk, Kimberly. Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life. (London: Praeger Security, 2007).

⁴⁴ Luna, David. "Threat Convergence: Subversion, Destabilization, and Insecurity." U.S. Department of State; Department of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. May 2009. <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/122662.htm>.

Financial Assets

The financial profits to narcoterrorists are frequently in the hundreds of millions of dollars. As was the case with FARC, Vanda Felbab-Brown states that "their profits grow as they move from simply taxing the producers of the illicit substances, to providing protection and safe airstrips to the traffickers, to taxing precursor agents or the final illegal commodities, to controlling parts of international trafficking routes, to getting involved with money exchange and laundering. These profits are used to improve military capabilities by facilitating procurement, to increase the salaries paid to soldiers, and to improve logistics."⁴⁵ With so much money changing hands, future policies must be created to track the financial resources of the narcoterrorists; "To get at insurgent/terrorist financial resources, the United States should focus on combating international as well as source country money laundering, on interdicting the financial flows to the insurgents, and on beefing up its international interdiction capabilities."⁴⁶

Tracking money flow of narcoterrorist organizations should be an integral part of any policy. Jane Boulden writes that; "The key advantage of targeting financial resources is that it promises to be as global as terrorism. It is a striking coincidence that the aftermath of September 11 also seems to have dealt a temporary blow to the anti-globalization movement. On the one hand, terrorist operations are deemed to be nothing without terrorist financial organizations; on the other hand, state sponsors can be cast as

⁴⁵ Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "A Better Strategy against Narcoterrorism." *The Audit of Conventional Wisdom*, MIT Center for International Studies. Volume 6, Issue 2. January 2006, 1-3.

⁴⁶ Ibid

terrorist banks as well as donors.”⁴⁷

Similar to every policy prescription for narcoterrorism, tracking financial resources of these terrorist organizations should be global in scope. Much of the money made by terrorist organizations and criminal groups is either laundered or used to corrupt officials. David Luna, Department of State Director of Anticrime Programs, indicated that under the new Obama administration this threat will receive more attention; "The United States is working with other economies to implement last year's commitment to dismantle transnational illicit networks and protect economies against abuse of our financial system by corrupt individuals and organized criminal groups through financial intelligence and law enforcement cooperation related to corrupt payments and illicit financial flows."⁴⁸

Supply & Demand

Another difficult issue facing the approach toward narcoterrorism is the view of producer nation vs. consumer nation. The United States is the largest drug consumer in the world but blames the supplying nations for its drug epidemic. Contrarily, the supplying nations blame the United States and claim that the country needs to do more to reduce the demand.⁴⁹ Moses Naim claims that this is due to the fact that it is a natural reaction for a government to fight the supply of goods because it is much easier to protect

⁴⁷ Boulden, Jane. "Terrorism and the UN" Perspective on Politics". Volume 2 (2004). 204.

⁴⁸ Luna, David. "Threat Convergence: Subversion, Destabilization, and Insecurity." U.S. Department of State; Department of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. May 2009. <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/122662.htm>.

⁴⁹ Hartelius, Jonas. "Narcoterrorism." Swedish Carnegie Institute. February 2008. <http://www.ewi.info/pdf/Narcoterrorism%20FINAL13FEB.pdf>

its border than it is to convince its citizenry to stop a certain habit.⁵⁰ If the United States is serious about curtailing its drug use and consequently funding narcoterrorism, a new policy approach must be implemented. It must be made clear to the public that the purchase of drugs is funding organized crime and terrorists around the world and the money could be used to fund an attack against the United States. Additionally, to curtail drug abuse in the United States an increased effort to prevent and intervene drug use will be necessary.⁵¹

Foreign Aid

An alternative policy option would be for the United States to offer a similar assistance package to other nations as it did in Plan Colombia. While Plan Colombia was successful in weakening FARC's presence in Colombia, it struggled in many other areas. FARC simply crossed the porous borders into nations like Ecuador and Venezuela that were not receiving the same support as Colombia. Future policies should account for this and provide aid and assistance to the entire region so that crossing the border is not such an attractive option to FARC. While Venezuela has held harsh views of the United States and much of the Western world, there were signs at the recent Summit of the Americas that they would be willing to work with President Obama.

Conclusion

The threat of narcoterrorism is very serious and can be felt across every region of the world. Narcoterrorism poses a threat to more than just the nations in which these

⁵⁰ Naim, Moises. *Illicit*. New York: Anchor Books, 2005.

⁵¹ Hartelius, Jonas. "Narcoterrorism." Swedish Carnegie Institute. February 2008.
<http://www.ewi.info/pdf/Narcoterrorism%20FINAL13FEB.pdf>

groups exist (Colombia, Ireland, Turkey). The globalization of the economy has created a network for terrorist organizations and criminals to coordinate, cooperate, and share resources. Unfortunately, policy has been slow to catch up to the convergence of crime and terrorism. Moving forward it will be vital to the security of the international community for international governments to work together. This can be done by sharing intelligence, financial information, and developing a unified approach to breaking up the ties between crime and terrorism.

This process needs to start in the United States. As the world leader, it will be integral to develop international policies that realize the growing link between crime and terrorism. Internationally and domestically, the government must do a better job at sharing information and resources to mitigate terrorism.

There are encouraging signs indicating that we are headed in the right direction in this regard but we are still behind the UK in recognizing the duality of the threat. The UK's ability to view crime and terrorism in the same light has prepared them to counter terrorism and crime much more effectively than the United States.

All of the prescribed policy approaches have one common ingredient; they must be international in scope. If the international community is to work together to defeat transnational criminals and terrorists than international governments must coordinate government. The links forged by narcoterrorists and criminals are too vast for one nation to make a difference. By pulling resources together, the international community can uncover the links between crime and terrorism and consequently the effects and fund raising capabilities of narcoterrorists like FARC will be severely decreased.

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