

# **International Perspectives**

# Trends in the Global Cycle of Violence and Crime



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### **Overview**

I will talk about some of the main global trends in transnational non-state activity which threatens human security and the stability of states. The growing number of groups acting on their own initiative or with others outside the law or on the fringes of it is one aspect of the 21st century which has a direct bearing on security and governance in most countries. The IISS lists some 400 such groups in its database. This figure is growing. The majority of groups have ideological aims and are prepared to use terror at some stage in their campaigns. Some are independence movements and insurgents; others maybe criminal in nature but with commercial links to terrorist groups. Then there are groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir which deny violence, but have the capacity through their preaching to incite others to violence.

All this activity is enabled by globalisation and facilitated by mass transportation and communications. The phenomenon became unstoppable at the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of the bipolar world, the end of one type of threat, and the emergence of others, less easily determined. Many countries put the commercial and trade imperative before security as they no longer felt threatened. A weak border regime was constructed in



Europe to allow free movements of goods. At the same time 20 new borders were created in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia without the means to secure them properly. Now the move is back towards security and the EU is launching a new initiative to enhance border security which will include measures such as satellite surveillance to curb illegal immigration as well as finger-printing. Brazil, of course, has already deployed SIVAM in recognition of the difficulty of policing its 11,000km border.

### **Finance and non-State Trade**

The era of globalisation is a utopian dream for the non-state sector. With high levels of cross-border traffic globally and the large volume of container traffic as the chosen method of transportation of goods there are many opportunities for illicit trade. To operate effectively finance is a vital life source for all forms of non-state activity. The sources of finance are many. I will mention a few.

### **Trafficking in...**

#### **Drugs:**

Reports suggest that cocaine production in Peru has increased significantly and that the

Sinaloa Cartel from Mexico is a prime purchaser. Guyana is a transportation hub for the product going to Europe and North America and on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean Guinea-Bissau is used as a hub for onward distribution.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Rapid Assessment Survey (RAS) for 2008 states that heroin production in Afghanistan is likely to remain at or exceed 2007 levels. Cultivation has risen in Nimroz province. Afghanistan is also now the biggest producer of Cannabis. There are 10,000 hectares under cultivation.

### **Small Arms and Light Weapons:**

SALW remain the biggest cause of violent death in the world. The Small Arms Survey reported in 2007 that 250,000 people died as a result of small arms used in violent crime as opposed to conflict. Most casualties occurred in urban areas. Increasing urbanisation is adding to the problem by creating areas for armed gangs to operate with relative impunity.

Contributing to the increasing availability of SALW are factors such as; leakage of weapons and what we call the explosive remnants of war from conflict areas – the failure to secure ammunition and weapons storage sites in Iraq led to a ‘migration’ of weapons and related materials. Post-conflict trade is another issue: in 2004- 05 the US bought over 200,000 AKs and millions of rounds of ammunition from Bosnia to equip Iraqi security forces. There is a tendency among former fighters to use weapons for currency. And there is a weak international regime of export control which takes little account of ammunition and which is applied differently by states. Some key SALW

exporters even opt out of mechanisms such as Comtrade - notably Bulgaria, the Republic of South Africa, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

### **Humans:**

Trafficking in humans is widespread. Many illegal migrants are not just a source of income but also carriers of trafficked goods. The global aspect of the trade was highlighted by the discovery of 58 Chinese nationals in a container in the UK port of Dover. All were dead from suffocation. They had been smuggled by a 'snake head' gang from southern China to Russia, transhipped into a container which moved by rail via Moscow to Kaliningrad, and loaded onto a ship bound for Dover. Trafficked humans are a source of income for non-state groups as well as providing a means of trafficking illicit materials.

### **Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear weapons:**

Trafficking in CBRN is a major concern. The extent of the traffic is not well-known, but it is widespread and diverse. According to the book "Smuggling Armageddon" the illicit nuclear trade apparently takes place in loosely structured associations with varied membership. The Italian mafia clan, the Ndrangheta, are believed to be involved to be in trafficking in nuclear waste as well as to be behind the problems of domestic waste disposal in Florence. Russian metal traders are known to have brokered on the nuclear market. A Russian with highly-enriched uranium (HEU) was arrested last year in Georgia. A Turkish artefacts dealer smuggled plutonium. A heroin dealer also had HEU in his possession. And so on.

### **Cybercrime and laundering:**

Cybercrime has risen more than any other category of non-state activity in the last 10 years. It is an activity carried out by all the types of groups I have mentioned whether criminal or terroristic in nature. Mafia groups deal in computer fraud. Whether hacking into private or public computer systems or distributing illegal content, or more recently engaging in cyber-terrorism, cybercriminals adapt their methods to the advances made by society and pose numerous challenges to our judicial systems.

The global economic damage from internet fraud doubled over the year 2003 to 2004 from a figure of \$250 billion to \$500 billion. At least \$26 billion in consumer identity fraud is believed to be the result of cyber crime.

To put this in context, some figures from the US Federal Trade Commission are interesting. In 2005 the Commission pointed out that to combat the threat US companies collectively spend about \$67 billion dealing with viruses, spyware, data theft and other computer-related crimes. That figure is now likely to be higher.

The report goes on to say that identity theft is a crime that affects 10 million US consumers each year, at a cost of about \$50 billion. Valerie McNevin, a former Bush administration official, once famously stated that the cyber crime problem had ballooned to a \$105 billion a year problem. The fact that the majority of identity theft now results from computer intrusions, and the sheer volume of consumer data being stolen by invasive computer programs (such as keystroke loggers), mean that McNevin's estimate is not so far off the mark.

### **Transportation- a facilitator:**

I have mentioned mass communications as a facilitator of non-state activity. Another major facilitator is mass transportation and particularly containerisation which is of particular relevance to this region.

In 2002 the UN reported that only 2% of global container traffic was checked. Today it is believed that this figure is not much different. In this region a report by Allianca and Hamburg Sud stated that the growth in TEUs (Twenty foot Equivalent Units) being transported in Latin America would double every 7 years reaching a volume of 177m in 2010. There was a 100% increase in traffic in Brazil between 2001 and 2007.

### **Non-state linkages:**

To put linkages in the local context, Brazil is a country with relatively few border or territorial disputes but it has a long and potentially porous border which is why the Amazon Surveillance System, SIVAM, is deployed, but is also why crime gangs typically operate in the less-controlled border areas. Overall the terrain and contacts across the border offer good possibilities for illicit trafficking in arms and drugs as well as other forms of activity.

The rumour or truth of the presence of Islamist extremist groups in the region is well-known. If it is true it is indicative of linkages to indigenous groups who may have special expertise or something else to offer and vice versa. It was reported that Hezbollah may have a presence in the border region of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. The organisation may use the area as a key location for raising and laundering money, drug trafficking, weapons and people

smuggling and document and currency fraud. There have been a number of Hezbollah-related incidents in the region.

In 1992, 29 people were killed when Hezbollah bombed the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires. Two years later, 85 people were killed by a Hezbollah bombing of the AMIA Jewish community building in Buenos Aires. The trial in Argentina for the 1994 bombing revealed an extensive Hezbollah operational presence in South America. Paraguayan authorities identified Assad Ahmad Barakat as Hezbollah's leading operative and chief financier in the region. Barakat allegedly ran an extensive counterfeiting and money laundering operation in the area and sent \$50 million to Hezbollah from 1995 until his arrest by Brazilian police in 2002. Other major arrests in the tri-border region include the 2000 arrest of Ali Khalil Mehri, a Lebanese businessman who allegedly funnelled millions of dollars to Hezbollah made from selling pirated software, and the 2001 arrest of Barakat's personal secretary, Sobhi Mahmoud Fayad, who allegedly coordinated Hezbollah's fund raising operations in the region with Barakat.

Another well-known transnational link was between IRA men with expertise in IED and explosive technology and the FARC in Colombia. These examples show that one of the characteristics of 21st Century non-state activity is its ability to network on a global scale.

### **Demography and Migration:**

According to the International Organisation for Migration, of the 130 million international migrants globally, some 20 to 40 million are illegal, and at any one time

about 4million illegal migrants are on the move. Illegal migrants are often the chosen facilitator of the crime and non-state world once again highlighting the increased need to control borders at a time when globalisation challenges the idea.

state groups (which in turn, promotes more non-state activity). Population growth and urbanisation will make the problem more complex, and enforcement of the law more difficult.

### **Urbanisation and autonomous gang cultures:**

With the world population set to double to a figure of 10 billion by 2050 the issue of urbanisation is a major security challenge for societies. 95% of annual population growth is in urban areas. In some cities this has given rise to the new phenomenon of mega-slums. Mexico City and Sao Paulo are two examples in the region.

Elsewhere, Lagos provides a good example of the scale of the problem. A population of 300,000 in 1950 has risen to 13m today. By 2050 Lagos will have a population equivalent to population of the whole eastern seaboard of the US.

In this environment communities grow up outside the societies upon whose fringes they exist. The infrastructure of the host cities cannot cope with the additional quantities of people who then construct their own societies, their own rule of law and their own employments which rely on illicit and non-state activities based on a 'Darwinian survival of the fittest' culture based around armed gangs which interact with each other.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, networks are diverse by activity and make-up. Mass communications and transportation increasingly facilitate activity and income that comes to the non-

