Transnational Crime Alternatives

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ANDREW M. J. HUNTLEIGH, JUL 25 2013

Transnational crime represents possibly the greatest modern threat to the stability of the world. While some certainly disagree with this statement, the stark realities of the threats such crime represents, in tandem with the woeful inability of the global political structure to currently deal with such threats, suggest the statement's accuracy. Transnational crime has many forms, some of which (terrorism) often overshadow the others, even though all are crucial security concerns. To better appreciate the full range and potentially catastrophic nature of this threat overall, it is important to analyze the state of world affairs in this regard through a variety of perspectives. Ron Suskind's "The Way of the World" and Douglas Farah & Stephen Braun's "Merchant of Death …" represent the old-fashioned muckraking journalistic approach to revealing the horror of modern transnational crime. Paul Robb's "Brave New War …" and Amitai Etzioni's "Security First …" are most concerned with social scientific-driven normative renovation, modifying the established hierarchies of response in combating such supranational threats. Peter Andreas & Ethan Nadelmann's "Policing the Globe" and Phil Williams & Dimitri Vlassis' edited volume "Combating Transnational Crime" approach the issue of transnational crime with a careful analysis of factors from a rationally scientific perspective. These works represent a multitude of perspectives and ideas, but their messages all unequivocally show the existential crisis transnational crime presents to the modern world, and help piece together the proper response to such a crisis.

Reviewing the literature, two major schools of thought on tackling transnational crime emerge, transcending the analytical techniques of their proponents. One approach, easily dubbed the "security first" approach thanks to Etzioni's book of the same title, proposes that only strengthening weak, failing, failed, and "rogue" states, including immediate and forceful interventions in morally justifiable situations like genocide, can bring about the ultimate goal of a more stable, secure world. Analyzing this approach requires a careful examination of its methods and goals, its strengths and weaknesses, and practical applications of its policies. The other approach, perhaps best called the "decentralized security" model, proposes that only increased transnational cooperation, aided by the continued softening of Westphalian concepts of sovereignty, can succeed in this goal. Similarly, analyzing this theory's methods, goals, practical applications, strengths, and weaknesses will lead to a deeper understanding of its claims. The dichotomy of transnational criminal policy represented by these two disparate theories balances on a fundamental disagreement: whether the modern system can, or even should, attempt to overcome the "Westphalian crisis" represented by the growing power of stateless groups in a system where the means of violence and power are supposed to be in the control of the state. Which of these two theories proves more effective may provide the answer to whether a system rooted in medieval principles of organizational structure can survive in an increasingly individualistic world of instant global communication.

The theoretical analysis and discussion of the literature review leads into an important question: how can states tip the balance of power to their favor in their fight against transnational crime? As is often the case, a synthesis of ideas from each theory can help guide America to a more successful fight against the forces of transnational crime—though these works analyze the global problem of transnational crime, their focus is largely on the pivotal role America holds in bringing about a new, safer world order. The final section thus analyzes which proposed solutions from each of the "security first" and "decentralized security" approaches are appropriate to use in forging a new coherent idea of American foreign policy on transnational crime, along with a discussion of emotional and rational appeals that can clarify, to both the public and the policy-maker alike, the scope and nature of and proper response to the transnational criminal threat. The Cold War justification of the battle for the "hearts and minds" of the world

demonstrates the importance of discussing the emotional issues impacting American foreign policy on transnational crime, particularly due to the distressingly quasi-glamorous image of organized crime. The importance to social science of a rational basis on which to rest the construction of policy, meanwhile, is much more obvious, but in this case contains potentially overlooked issues such as the sad reality that complete safety is impossible, and policy must be constructed with this pragmatic sensibility in mind. By the conclusion, hopefully both the threat posed by transnational crime and the best courses of action to take against it will be equally obvious, and the process of tackling these problems can begin.

Overview

The "security first" school of thought regarding transnational crime policy brings with it a set of beliefs that immediately cast it, intentionally or not, in the role of "tweaked status quo." The basic premise is that the Westphalian system of states is fundamentally sound, and that the existence of powerful transnational criminal groups is primarily a function of broken links in the chain of mutually recognized sovereignty, and that ultimately refocusing on the fundamental building blocks of state power is all that is necessary to solve the problem. Transnational crime fills the cracks in the space between state authority—assuring interlocking global state power to remove these "spaces" necessarily, and solely, defeats the crime. If transnational crime thus feeds on minimized state sovereignty, with the ultimate goal of making the state irrelevant if not nonexistent, then the only way to combat it is to ensure that the states do not thus weaken. This theory therefore suggests that the independent variable "basic state safety and security" is negatively linked to the dependent variable "proliferation of transnational crime."

The "decentralized security" model, however, posits the comparatively radical notion that the states systems cannot function properly in dealing with threats moving beyond and between borders, and that the response must be similarly transnational and similarly free from traditional (in other words, "slow and unresponsive") hierarchical power structures. Even the most secure states in the global states system can contain functional transnational criminal groups, and so the solution must be as malleable as the problem. Transnational crime, in this case, is as unavoidable as intrastate crime, and should be dealt with in using roughly similar techniques, enhanced by integrating more actors into the process; in essence, this system proposes that the independent variable "power-sharing between state and non-state actors" is negatively linked to the dependent variable "proliferation of transnational crime."

Schism

Examined as a pair, these two major theories suggest that the struggle against transnational crime is fundamentally a modern "Westphalian crisis." The states system has proven stable overall for hundreds of years, but the growth of powerful entities whose very existence is in direct or indirect opposition to this system continually undermines its legitimacy and effectiveness. Is it possible for a system rooted in principles of Middle Ages organizational hierarchy to function in an era of instant communication and nuclear weapons? When criminal groups can outperform states in terms of cohesion, effectiveness, and even authority, what does it mean for the states system? Al-Qaeda is not now as powerful as it once was, but is there much doubt that in previous years it had a comparable amount of territory, degree of power, and even number of "citizens" as did states like Palau? In some parts of the world, even powerful street gangs are virtually indistinguishable in organization and action from state-level powers (Robb 2007, 91). The "security first" theorists would say that regardless of the status of such groups, this is why the solution to transnational crime must reinforce structure—beginning with this top-down approach, this analysis of strategies for combating transnational crime thus analyzes the theory that seeks to construct (or reconstruct) a strong international order of sovereign states.

Theory #1: Security First

The 21st century ushered in a world where Globalization and the Internet are helping to tear down or redefine state borders, economies, finances, and communications unlike at any other time in history—one where non-state terrorists, crime syndicates, gangs, tribes and all other varieties of transnational criminals are claiming areas once considered state property and waging their activities from these regions with impunity (Robb 2007, 17). Yet, unlike

past guerrilla or revolutionary movements, the most insidious thing about modern transnational criminals is that they have no desire to outright obliterate or seize control of the state—rather, these groups seek the state's continued presence in the weakest form possible, rendering the state ultimately as a subordinate entity to the powerful transnational criminal groups operating within it (Etzioni 2007, 63; Robb 2007, 107). Reinforcing primary group, clan, or family loyalties over state loyalties plays directly into asymmetric warfare tactics, and prevents the complete collapse of power that might justify state-level intervention (Robb 2007, 107).

"Security first," whether discussed by that name or another, basically holds the supreme sovereignty of the state up as an example of how to bring about the cessation of the aforementioned out-of-control transnational crime, from terrorism to trafficking in arms, drugs, and people. This is an idea expressed most forcefully and directly by Amitai Etzioni's book of the same name (unsurprisingly), but the ideas of the theory frequently arise throughout many discussions of transnational crime and global instability (Etzioni 2007, Suskind 2008, Abhyankar 2001, Arlacci 2001, Godson & Williams 2001). Why does the theory promote strengthening states to allow them to tackle issues domestically rather than relying on international or transnational cooperation? A quick glance around the world analyzing the overlap between criminal havens and unstable states (Suskind 2008, 135; Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 153; Etzioni 2007, 63) can help answer that question; when it is simple for internationally known criminals to ply their trade safely in a variety of countries, it is obvious that those countries possess fundamental flaws (Farah & Braun 2007, 9).

State efforts in combating transnational crime hinge fundamentally on a government ability to monitor and police trafficking or other crimes—the weaker the state, the less likely these structures are to be in place (Suskind 2008, 342). The most pressing concern for the structural needs of the "security first" theory thus building up the destabilized society. Building up states requires a fundamental reordering of priorities, particularly in the area of American foreign policy. The goal of "security first" is to bring basic ideas of safety and security to places that have rarely, if ever, known either (Etzioni 2007, 6)—those places where transnational criminal groups can exist with little danger to themselves, and from where they can direct their global attacks or illicit trade. Just as it is difficult to imagine a state like America accepting the continued existence of a mountain range filled with violent extremists in its own borders, it is difficult to imagine Afghanistan or Pakistan currently possessing the domestic cohesion and strength necessary to handle this exact issue. Reducing the levels of violence in these societies, as well as helping to restore the fundamentals of civilization like clean water, safe food, and electricity, are crucial precursors to (re)building societies empowered enough to tackle criminal threats (Naylor 2001, 234; Etzioni 2007, 34). This process, as envisioned in its "ideal" form, proposes such currently unpopular ideas as providing greater autonomy within weaker states to ethnic, religious, or other factions in possession of power, but in exchange for their agreements to limit violence under their authority, as such warlords are often the only true sources of power in weak states–however, this security still requires the familiar top-down organizational hierarchy of the state to function, as even such semi-autonomous regional groups need to understand their part in the bigger picture (Etzioni 2007, 30).

The global situation in relation to transnational criminal groups sounds grim, but the "security first" course of action presents an unexpectedly positive assessment of potential future responses to crime: the shattering of the "myth of invincibility" (Arlacchi 2007, 9). Yes, transnational crime is a major modern threat, but it is not a threat from which there can be no escape or no counterattack. The threat merely needs a direct, coherent, powerful state response, rather than a squandering of state resources on transparently illusive security for the public (Etzioni 2007, 222). There is nothing "metaphysical" in the nature of criminal organizations–whether seen in the beefed-up Colombian government's defeat of the Medellín and Cali cartels, the Bolivian government's breakup of their major trafficking groups, or the government-negotiated removal of the Golden Triangle organization from the drug trade in Southeast Asia (Arlacchi 2007, 9-10), the logic of "security first" draws from definite successful examples—many of which where American assistance in state strengthening proved the key missing ingredient. The primacy of state loyalties must be re-established at the same time as the state itself is restructured and rebuilt, even if greater regional autonomy must also sometimes be fostered to help the state securitize. Democracy has been the primary American foreign policy goal of the early 21st century, but democracy cannot lead to security—security must lead to democracy, and security will more importantly lead to a safer world (Etzioni 2007, 30, x).

Security First: Applied Response Successes

When tested, the state-power centered "security first" theory shows success against a cross-section of transnational crime. America's efforts to coordinate and strengthen state responses to crime stretch back as far as the 1800s, with their efforts to help coerce the shutting down of the last safe havens for slavery in the world (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 110-111). More modern examples, from the defeat of the many drug-smuggling groups mentioned earlier, to the (eventually) successful arrest of the world's most notorious arms dealer (Times Online 2008), to Italian successes in creating Mafia turncoats and generally frustrating recruiting through systematic societal nationalistic acculturation (Paoli 2001, 102), demonstrate that strengthening states to better combat crime has produced definite results.

But success in "security first" is not limited to cracking down on criminal groups. The very process of empowering the state to deal with its interior threats and to become a functional part of the international order can be a success in its own right. This is seen in the example of Libya, which in the span of a small number of years went from a "state sponsor of terror" to a society open to weapons inspectors, willing to give up its nuclear material, and helping to identify any known terrorist operatives working within its borders, all thanks to American efforts to turn Libya into a secure state without attempting to overthrow its relatively stable regime (Etzioni 2007, 9). This has done little to disrupt the fundamentally illegitimate nature of Libyan politics, but for the purposes of transnational crime, Libya is a shining example of the potential success of the "security first" policy.

Iraq, on the other hand, is an example of how to take "security first" ideas and implement them in the complete wrong way. From creating massive black markets on items like gasoline through illicit subsidizing (Etzioni 2007, 74) to allowing recognized international criminals to fly supplies into the country for American troops (Farah & Braun 2007, 218), to the instant creation of massive groups sympathetic to outside radical interests via the fundamental error of de-Baathification (Robb 2007, 18), there are few indications that the American invasion followed the "security first" approach to stability. Nor did they follow the "decentralized security" approach to be discussed in the next section, likely leaving theorists from both camps wondering what approach America actually did follow.

Security First: General Strengths

"Security first" works within long-extant hierarchal structures when possible, and when this is not possible, it seeks to create an environment where such structures can be created and grow, as even a totalitarian state is easier to securitize than a collapsed state (Etzioni 2007, 6/222). Working with the status quo assists its implementation due to the obvious interest of world leaders to support the empowerment of their own state structure and hierarchy (Ibidem 2007, xiii). This security-based approach also has the advantage of appealing to the great multitude of people in non-Western societies who do not find democratization a particularly tempting process, but who seek security just the same and would welcome its presence—the world's "illiberal moderates" (Ibidem 2007, x-xi). These individuals may hold the key to influencing greater numbers of states such as Iran and Russia to cooperate with stronger domestic crime-control structures in a way that they would not willingly cooperate with democratization (Ibidem 2007, 13/18).

The greatest strength of "security first" may lie in the area of nuclear de-proliferation and general combating of the smuggling of nuclear material. This is the only major area of transnational crime where the supply is largely controlled by states (Suskind 2008, 242), thus making tracking and action easier. It is likely that such material could be put under even greater state control through concerted American efforts (Etzioni 2007, 9). Additionally, the total number of known nuclear smuggling cases is small enough to easily comprehend and analyze (13, according to Nillson 2001, 315)–but a complete breakdown of state power in a former Soviet country could easily lead to an enormous and sudden increase of such material readily available for criminal purchase and use (Godson & Williams 2001, 329). In this case, there seems to be no comparably successful decentralized crime-control alternative to strengthening the state.

Security First: General Weaknesses

There are a few weaknesses to the Security First argument. The most glaring problem is that even the most "safe," "secure" states like the United States of America are not immune from contributing to the problem—and, in fact, is a particular target possibly due to its power and wealth. If, for example, the United States were to take $60 million and

decide how to spend it in order to combat transnational crime, using it to pay the infamous, internationally-wanted arms dealer Viktor Bout who helped arm the Taliban to now fly supplies to your own troops would not likely be high on the list, yet from 2003-2005 this was exactly what occurred (Farah & Braun 2007, 218-226). Nor, surely, would giving such a man free fuel for his planes in the meantime (Farah & Braun 2007, 230) even as your country had been "trying" to arrest him for years (Farah & Braun 2007, 170), going so far as to consider him amongst the first official targets for rendition (Farah & Braun 2007, 179-180). Particularly troubling is the inept misplacement of an intelligence warning that Bout might try to freelance in Iraq in exactly the way he ultimately did (Farah & Braun 2007, 232), and the continuation of business with him even after America froze his assets and blacklisted him from working with any American trade partners (Farah & Braun 2007, 237). The "decentralized security" people would surely have a field day with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's refusal to turn over a list of companies held by Bout to an organization authorized to seize assets—particularly since the list was not even classified, and no justification for the refusal could be ascertained (Farah & Braun 2007, 249). Be it a result of corruption or incompetence, no state is immune to insidious infiltration by transnational criminal organizations.

But even successful application of the "security first" principles can highlight some of the weaknesses of the program—as states become more empowered, creating and sustaining tighter restrictions and surveillance on their borders, traffickers have to resort to more and more daring and dangerous activities, resulting in a significant increase of deaths in transit amongst individuals smuggled into countries (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 251). Finally, taking into account the 30 million or more stateless individuals in the world (Suskind 2008, 146), it is a difficult question as to whether such dislocated refugees would be accepted in a world where there were no remaining weak states to inhabit, and where every strong state would recognize the problems of such an influx of immigrants. These individuals would remain extremely susceptible to the lures of transnational organized crime, including drug-running mules or taking up extremist causes; these sorts of "invisible citizenship" (Ibidem 2008, 146) are precisely the kind of problem that the "decentralized security" theory claims to be able to best handle.

Theory #2: Decentralized Security

The changing nature of threat in the modern world, to those who propose the "decentralized security" model, can only be successfully challenged by similarly changing the nature of the response (Farah & Braun 2007, Williams 2001, Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, Robb 2007, Grabosky 2001, Naylor 2001). The idea of a regional or global antagonist is moving from the "opposing nation-state" to the "transnational criminal organization," showing that two important changes are at work. One: The old threats (the opposition states) were few in number, their identities were known, and their actions were mostly monitorable—the new threats are many, their identities are often unknown, and their actions are clandestine (Etzioni 2007, 221). Two: The modern threat is no longer aligned in opposition to specific states or regions, but to the fundamental values that the democratic world holds dear (Vlassis 2001, 358). It is little wonder that the idea of states not doing enough to combat this problem is a constant topic in all transnational crime literature—but the "decentralized security" model goes beyond pointing out the obvious that states could do more. This theory suggests that the *state itself* is the problem.

All concepts of "decentralized security" focus on the importance of strengthening international cooperation by weakening or working around individual state authority and autonomy. Building a transnational response to a transnational threat, rather than relying on the "antiquated" notions of sovereignty and national borders, is seen as crucial—after all, if the criminal organizations are able to avoid capture or otherwise ignore potential losses by merely stepping over a border, how can the state response be adequate (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 3; Godson & Williams 2001, 321)? When you are dealing with sophisticated crimes that take 45 seconds to execute (from anywhere in the world) and 18 months to investigate (using resources solely inside that country [Williams 2001, 69]), the already inherently inefficient state response (Robb 2007, 163) of dealing with 21st-century phenomenon using 18th-century concepts and organizational forms (Godson & Williams 2001, 324) is particularly unlikely to work. Many modern transnational crimes require nothing more than small amounts of freely available resources, are easily concealable, will likely not be reported to authorities, have a substantial demand, and necessitate no specific expertise to perform (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 22). Each of these factors alone makes an effective response more difficult, let alone all of them operating together.

The concept in the above crime-investigation time disparity, "asymmetries of power" (Robb 2007, 6), is the cornerstone of the decentralized security model, demonstrating why the state as an entity is simply incapable of proper response to transnational crime—the transnational criminals have no sovereignty to protect, and thus lack a fundamental weakness the state possesses. These asymmetries are expressed by the simple mathematics of carnage showing just what kind of "return" criminals can receive for their investment. A group of dedicated "systems disruption" (Robb 2007, 5) specialists with the help of only $2,000 worth of munitions cost the Iraqi government an estimated $500 million in oil revenues by destroying a strategic pipeline (Ibidem 2007, 6). The 25,000% return on their investment notwithstanding, the perpetrators were never apprehended (Ibidem 2007, 6), are likely still free to attempt even larger-scale cost-benefit devastation, and represent just one small part of an unknown but large number of individuals with similar goals. The intertwining of many branches of transnational crime demonstrates how impossible it is to extricate one form from another—drug or human trafficking proceeds are often laundered via sympathetic banks or legitimately purchased businesses, which are often then recycled into the black market arms trade (Naylor 2001, 225). These weapons are themselves often used by terrorists or other transnational criminals to devastating effect, such as the example above—and these groups are themselves particularly likely to be involved in drug trafficking (Robb 2007, 150), beginning the cycle again.

In asymmetric warfare, particularly as non-state actors continue gaining abilities through advances in technology (Suskind 2008, 25-26), the state will always have more to lose than will a small group of committed actors. States attempting damage control are like the solitary gatekeeper protecting mile-long walls against assailants who will be satisfied with taking or destroying even one brick. This asymmetric "fourth-generation warfare" (Robb 2007, 27-28) nearly always results in weakening of the bonds of society and state alike, continuing to feed into and expand asymmetries (Passas 2001, 23). The idea of going on the offensive with such disparate levels of resources on each side will ultimately result in the defeat of the state in the long run, whether through the slow depletion of resources allocated to an unending fight, or through the cataclysmic losses incurred in the process. This process effectively forces the strong to engage with the weak on the weak's terms, ultimately bringing the strong onto the same level as the weak—yet, there seems to be no other choice but to play this vicious game (Robb 2007, 27-28). Finding a way out of this conundrum is precisely what "decentralized security" seeks to accomplish—locating a previously untested, better course of action.

This idea that the state may not be best able to tackle security problems came to light in the mid-1990s when former Sudanese ambassador Francis M. Deng and his associates, in trying to highlight the plight of his home country, effectively altered the concept of sovereignty to de-legitimize governments who fail to provide fundamental levels of safety and security to their citizens (Etzioni 2007, 195). This idea is at the core of increased levels of non-government involvement in formerly state-led activities like intelligence and legitimate violence. Increasing the importance of the private sector and civil society is seen as vital to protecting the threatened interests of the state through generating more innovative and effective responses, be it creating global initiatives to combat either nuclear terrorism (Suskind 2008, 7) or the international arms trade (Farah & Braun 2007, 260), or be it relying on foreign countries to pre-inspect travellers coming into another country (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 204) or just contracting private industry to altogether take over all tracking and surveillance activity from the government (Ibidem 2006, 249).

Offloading dangerous activities to non-governmental groups eager to perform can not only save money, it can increase efficiency. American-led efforts to loosen bank secrecy laws in the fight against criminal profits (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 51/106/148-149), such is the logic behind the private company "Total Intelligence Solutions" openly planning to engage in wide-ranging black market arms- and drug-smuggling, leading up to an attempted ambitious attempted purchase of nuclear material (Suskind 2008, 156-158). That this sort of obviously illegal "national security" activity is increasingly contracted to private firms demonstrates initial steps into "decentralized security," but they are more likely to be novel experiments than long-term policy changes given the enduring popularity of sovereign control.

The most "radical" version of "decentralized security" is the one presented in Robb's "Brave New War" (2007). Explaining the nature of the threat justifies the unorthodoxy of the response:

"you can't kill their leaders, because they don't need them. You can't reliably prevent further attacks, because

they're small scale, dispersed, and unpredictable. You can't outmaneuver or outsmart them, because their innovative organization system makes that nearly impossible. Welcome to open-source war" (Robb 2007, 110).

The "open source" phenomenon was seen first in the computer world, where groups of interested individuals together accomplish for little to no cost what businesspeople might spend billions accomplishing. In response to its claimed use as a criminal tool, Robb turns it into an anti-crime model, one where anyone with the drive and the ability is able to become a sort of "junior partner" in the war on transnational crime (Ibidem 2007, 171-173). This group includes not only the aforementioned private firms engaging in formerly government-run foreign policy activities like intelligence (Suskind 2008, 155), but neo-mercenary groups actively recruited by the government (Robb 2007, 89), other loose transnational non-governmental networks aimed at curbing specific activities like child prostitution or intellectual property bootlegging (Williams 2001, 74-75/84) and potentially even the bored computer hobbyist helping to analyze otherwise ignored data, or even to help gather the data in the first place (Williams 2001, 85). These individuals join the fight against transnational "superempowered groups" (Robb 2007, 7) and such groups' ever-increasing criminal power. The obvious barrier to entry is the government—America in particular is not particularly fond of claims that the only way to defeat transnational crime is by switching to a transparent, two-way, open security system (Robb 2007, 171-173). But, the saying goes: transnational organizations like the International Criminal Court may be seen as threats to sovereignty, but transnational crime is a much bigger threat to sovereignty—so act accordingly (Godson & Williams 2001, 349).

Decentralized Security: Applied Response Successes

When put into action, "decentralized security" has already reaped tremendous benefits in the fundamental restructuring of the response to transnational threats. American-led efforts to loosen bank secrecy laws in the fight against criminal profits were at the vanguard of much modern success in freezing enormous amounts of assets in the later "war on terror" (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 51/106/148-149), and will surely continue to be useful in the future, particularly as more and more financial organizations begin working with governments and with each other toward these goals. Even when not working directly with the government, interconnections of groups motivated by common goals of regional and global safety can act as a "first warning system" to help ultimately coordinate state action; the activities of the massive-scale arms trader and one-man global pandemic Viktor Bout (Robb 2007, 8) were largely ignored by states, which remained focused on broader conflicts rather than underlying causes, until groups of non-governmental organizations began demanding action against him in the late 1990s (Farah & Braun 2007, 96-98). The transnational response would have been even more efficient had the Federal Bureau of Investigations not refused to turn over information about Bout's assets to the international organization working to freeze these very assets (Ibidem 2007, 249-250). This theory also demonstrates some of its effectiveness passively; the Internet, cellular telephones, and other forms of modern communication are helping to break the effectiveness of secrecy oaths and circumvent news blackouts, both tools often employed by heavily corrupt states to disguise their criminal activities (Suskind 2008, 293).

Large-scale "field tests" of the "decentralized security" model are somewhat underwhelming compared to the "security first" model's examples, both because this response is more understated and because it seems less popular amongst modern governments. There are two major developments on this front—the first is the often discussed push to globally infuse financial institutions with previously unimaginable concepts of transparency, accountability, and reporting responsibilities (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 51). The more difficult it is for criminal organizations to launder their funds, obviously, the easier their actions will be to stymie. Second is the "Eurodac" trans-European fingerprinting database. "Eurodac" was set up as the first supranational database used to track illegal immigrants in Europe, and was subsequently expanded to also cover asylum seekers (Ibidem 2006, 213). This program could obviously "feature creep" further in the future to covering criminal fingerprints, government employee fingerprints, and of course eventually all citizen fingerprints, particularly in light of identification trends like the United Kingdom's adoption of a formal national identification card.

Decentralized Security: General Strengths

Cost-effectiveness is a definite strength of the "decentralized security" approach, as private companies try to outbid

each other for contracts and as even unpaid volunteers attempt to help make an impact on the global picture. But one of the implied strengths least appreciated (or just least elaborated) by the "decentralized security" theorists is the fundamental power that the everyday person can potentially possess in disrupting transnational crime. While it is unlikely that the average person can prevent the production and transportation of heroin or help destroy weapons stockpiles, two of the most crucial elements to the proper functioning of any black market smuggling or trafficking are the local retailer and the corresponding end customer (Williams 2001, 79-80), and these are particularly weak points in the criminal regime. If a large-scale effort to only purchase "fair trade" coffee or environmentally-friendly products can pick up steam, then convincing the masses that purchasing (or selling) goods of questionable origin can lead back to the destruction of society should be possible.

One problem with this approach is that the government would have to acknowledge the demand for such goods as illegal drugs in order to craft an approach that encouraged the purchasing of "local" or "fair trade" drugs, which seems particularly unlikely. Even more unlikely is the legalization of drugs that are based as much on Western ideas of morality than on demonstrated impact on society; opium, coca, or marijuana, rather than alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine, could have been the "exceptions" if other societies' concepts of "dangerous but acceptable" drugs were followed (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 46). Unsurprisingly, there are other theorists who posit that legalizing drugs would merely move the black market to focus on other illicit goods or services, and the problem would continue unabated, but with the additional detrimental effects on society of the newly legalized and more readily available drugs (Arlacchi 2001, 8).

Decentralized Security: General Weaknesses

Transnational cooperation between organizations and governments can lead to success, but a single rogue agent either with different methods or different goals can disrupt the entire process—when President Bush and Vice President Cheney disrupted a year-long English law enforcement investigation into terrorist cells due to a disagreement over tactics, resulting in the premature arrests of individuals thought to contain the organizational "key" to hundreds more as-yet-unknown operatives (Suskind 2008, 45-48), it became obvious that the greater the number of participants, the greater the chance of one of them ruining the operation. The United States government did this because an "ordinary" police investigation into transnational crime conflicted with the belief that terrorists must be stopped immediately, not allowed to continue operating, regardless of any potential long-term payoffs. It is a fairly safe bet that not everyone involved in the decentralized intelligence and security model will have the same goals, or even how to go about any goals they do share. The United States and the United Kingdom, inseparable partners in the War on Terror, are two of the most likely countries to cooperate successfully, yet this glaring example shows the problem of relying on outside interests for help. Even less controversial forms of cooperation between other states provide roadblocks; the continued refusal of some states to sign agreements reducing bank secrecy to confront money laundering operations is evidence of the problem of coordinating between states and non-state actors when one side or the other is not interested in helping (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 53).

There are some types of transnational crime that decentralized efforts are essentially incapable of tackling: those whose existence fills a demand that is substantial, resilient, and unlikely to be replaced by another product or service (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 22). Efforts earlier in history to wipe out piracy and slavery were overwhelmingly successful, because their illegitimacy overlapped with the ability of other legitimate activities (open trade and paid work) to supplant them (Ibidem 2006, 22)–but there is nothing legal "like" drugs to replace them. Attempting to exterminate the endless drug sales at the micro-level may be less effective than macro-level efforts to strengthen governments to tackle their own drug problems. Furthermore, groups engaged in crimes commonly associated with transnational networks whose roots and operations are almost entirely constrained to a single country, such as the home-grown "Dixie Mafia" of the Prohibition era (Bovenkerk 2001, 112-113), will retain greater latitude if state power is ignored. The decentralized approach will do less to combat the activities of groups whose operations merely profit from, rather than rely on, transnational factors.

Argument: Can States Tip the Balance of Power in Their Favor in the Fight Against Transnational Crime?

Weak states in decline and decay allow transnational criminal organizations to set up shop with impunity—but so too

do states unwilling to open themselves up for transparent transnational cooperation at the state or non-state levels (Godson & Williams 2001, 325). It is thus of the utmost importance to tackle these problems head-on and with far greater effort and organization than current efforts. Transnational threats, whether from organized crime, terrorists, cartels, gangs, loose networks, or other entities, all share basically the same goal: the desire for states, governments, and general restrictive authority to disappear. These groups should all be considered roughly equal threats due to the interlocking nature of their activities discussed earlier, and should thus be subject to equal levels of response. Fighting the insurgency in Iraq might be better than ignoring it, but stopping the flow of arms and money and new recruits into the country would be far more effective.

This is not the kind of problem that necessitates a subdued response; while this may seem obvious, the collective efforts thus far of the entire world in combatting such threats have barely seemed sufficient. Drug smuggling was already worth an estimated $500 billion a year in 2001 (Mueller 2001, 14), military-grade arms have flowed ceaselessly to even the most remote and primitive regions on the planet (Farah & Braun 2007, 71), kidnapping (Robb 2007, 122) and piracy (Abhyankar 2001) are increasingly effective tools for criminal profit, and renegade individuals like Pakistani scientist A. Q. Khan can freely operate a nuclear smuggling ring for years as long as they as "useful" to the right people (Etzioni 2007, 11). Meanwhile, symptomatic of the general lack of proper priorities in the fight against transnational crime, the most ambitious nuclear de-proliferation program in history receives roughly $1 billion in funding, and has remained static even in the years after 2001 when its mission has expanded dramatically (Etzioni 2007, 226-227). Meanwhile, the United States spends $5 billion a year to protect airlines from box cutters and full bottles of shampoo while spending nothing to combat problems in the black market of arms, such as the thousands of anti-aircraft Stinger missiles readily available on the black market which have been used just as often to try to destroy commercial planes (Ibidem 2007, 213). It is clear that the threat of transnational crime is not fully understood by either the public or the policy-makers for what it is, and to that end succinct appeals designed to enlighten the masses are of fundamental importance at this stage of the battle.

Emotional Appeals

Discussing transnational crime with the person on the street would likely produce a boring conversation until the topic of terrorism came up. Terrorism has grabbed an outsize share of global time, attention, and efforts, particularly considering that it cannot be legitimately seen as anything but one variety of transnational crime. While the methods differ, terrorists, arms smugglers, drug-runners, and nuclear profiteers alike demonstrate why they are best recognized as one group: their needs and goals are all easier to obtain and accomplish in a world of weak and weakened states. Free reign to work interpersonally without any supra-organizations interfering in their activities is their fundamental aim; weakened states are very good for such criminal business (Robb 2007, 18). The only difference the world should see between Al-Qaeda and Cosa Nostra is that the first organization commits transnational crimes to destroy opposing ideologies, and the second organization commits transnational crimes to maintain its black market power. Both theories recognize the fundamental danger these "state apostates" pose to the very nature of world politics, but take very different approaches in how to deal most effectively with them.

The most problematic area for fostering understanding lies in terminology. "Terrorist" evokes an image that is roughly helpful for fighting transnational crime—an individual who is clearly opposed to everything that "we" hold dear. "Transnational organized crime," to Americans in particular, triggers the unfortunate associations "organized crime" holds with nostalgic images of yesteryear (Williams 2001, 59). Most non-experts think not only immediately, but almost exclusively, of organizations like the Cosa Nostra or Chinese Triads when the term "organized crime" comes up even though they are unrepresentative of the full modern scope of the term to include everything from warlords and street gangs and Al-Qaeda (Paoli 2001, 88). Even though the American-based Italian Mafia of the Prohibition era, with its outsize opportunistic petty thuggery (Williams & Vlassis 2001, 1), bears about as much a resemblance to modern transnational organized crime as does a calculator to a computer, the inexplicably glamorous image of common murderers and thieves still holds fast to this day (Suskind 2008, 24). Al Capone's criminal empire was like a child's toy compared to Viktor Bout's operations. Yet because of the apparent fundamental inability of people to connect causes with effects, Bout's supplying of people still killing American soldiers to this day were overlooked in favor of lavishing praise on the glamorous world businessman, to the point of conducting a casual interview with the New York Times magazine in 2003 (Farah & Braun 2007) and becoming the subject of a Nicholas

Cage vehicle in 2005 (Times Online 2008). It is almost possible to feel the mass outrage that would have come from the New York Times conducting an informal talk with Osama Bin Laden to celebrate the opening of the new film aggrandizing his life and times. This is not Prohibition, this is not the Godfather, this is a situation where individuals operating right now around the world are trying to destroy life as you know it (Godson & Williams 2001, 323). Terrorists could, in theory, destroy a major city with a nuclear weapon at any time on any day (Etzioni 2007, 207); it is not beyond the scope of the material already known to be present in the world on the black market (Nillson 2001, 315) or in the hands of heavily corrupt and incompetent officials (Etzioni 2007, 15).

Without roughly uniform understanding of the true problem of transnational crime, the decentralized security model has a much lesser chance of success; what can be done to correct this fundamental reasoning error? There must be a new term for "organized crime" to go along with a redefinition and potential renaming of "transnational crime." Nothing short of calling this phenomenon what it is, "global destabilization," will suffice, and yet that term has no more punch than "transnational crime." Perhaps ultimately the best thing to do is to begin referring to all variety of smugglers, traffickers, and cartels as "arms/drug/etc. terrorists" rather than lumping terrorists in with the rest, despite the accuracy of this approach. The idea that groups involved specifically in profit from illegal activities are somehow fundamentally different from those who are not (Paoli 2001, 104). Bill Clinton's attempts to clarify that the Oklahoma City or 1993 World Trade Center bombings were not distinct from gun and drug smuggling, but all interconnected, obviously did not ultimately work (Farah & Braun 2007, 106). Demonstrating that the feelings Americans have for Al Capone or John Gotti are likely similar to the feelings many Russian citizens had about Viktor Bout's lavish lifestyle (Ibidem 2007), Japanese citizens about the Yakuza's aid to the poor (Farah & Braun 2007, 148), or that Muslims have about Osama Bin Laden's support for Islamic supremacy, may help to explain why any glorification of such individuals is problematic. Of course, this would likely instead just lead to Americans hating Muslims more. Is it possible to ingrain the appropriate negative associations in the minds of the people? Possibly, but if so, then the world's leaders would need to speak with something like a single voice, and for this to be possible they are going to have to be more rationally convinced of the nature of the threat themselves.

Rational Appeals

World leaders are not likely to take any actions limiting their power unless there is absolutely no other recourse, and sometimes not even then. Thus the goal of rational appeals about the almost unfathomably serious threat of transnational crime must be to explain to world leaders that it is already almost past the point when even drastic action can stop the coming storm, and that the time for action is unquestionably now. Even just focusing on one threat, the potential for nuclear smuggling, illuminates the wide range of problems present in attempting large-scale renovation of global policies, particularly when America is trying to coordinate everything itself. Luminaries from across the American political spectrum urge the ban and destruction of nuclear weapons, as they are impossible to completely control, and possess an obvious world-altering downside if ignored (Suskind 2008, 121). Any location where potential smugglers could obtain nuclear material should be destroyed, not merely secured (Etzioni 2007, 234). The United Nations must cease allowing weak states like Nigeria to produce weapon-caliber uranium (Ibidem 2007, 237). Deproliferation is ultimately the only way to completely end the threat of nuclear weapons, and this is something likely only states have the authority to accomplish; similarly, they must transport materials to be destroyed to safe locations to oversee the demolition, require plants to run on non-weapons-grade uranium, prevent construction of new facilities that use weapons-grade uranium, and offer to build up weak states in return for their surrender of their nuclear programs (Ibidem 2007, 238). Even something as simple as a list of the locations of all known fissile material in the world does not currently exist, despite this being the kind of thing governments should be able to easily coordinate (Ibidem 2007, 240). No matter from what angle you approach the problem, the state apparatus has not adequately addressed this single element of transnational crime. Considering its status as the most potentially deadly form of transnational crime, it is worrying what that might mean for the state of progress fighting all the others.

Complete safety is obviously impossible, so governments should focus on tackling everything that can be impacted within the means available. For example, governments ban the use of pesticides, but allow their companies to continue making the pesticides and shipping them overseas, then allow the importation of crops grown with the help of the very same pesticides (Passas 2001, 48). This is one of many such obvious areas where even a modicum of

oversight could prevent massive problems in the future. Leaders must understand that actions have consequences, and that you reap what you sow. Sending massive stockpiles of arms to a radical group opposed to a regime out of favor with America may sound like a good idea now, but once a fundamental understanding that "more arms in more hands leads to more violence" is attained, this will cease to appear to be a good idea. Giving Colombia $1.3 billion to help their government fight drugs in a year may seem like a logical approach (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 164) until we remember that this is already 33% more than we spend on fighting nuclear smuggling in the entire world in a year (Etzioni 2007, 226-227). 92% of American aid to the Western Hemisphere goes to combating the drug trade, seemingly implying that non-drug threats are virtually insignificant in the Americas (Andreas & Nadelmann 2006, 164).

Education and Action

To resolve the "Westphalian crisis" presented by modern transnational crime, the state-centric "thesis" of "security first" and the state-bypassing "antithesis" of "decentralized security" combine to create a "synthesis" of the best, most effective, most realistic response to the threat. "Security first" is an excellent idea with appropriately feasible goals, but even its best efforts surely would not eliminate all weak states. Similarly, "decentralized security" is a solution that appears capable of tackling the entirety of the problem, but it suffers from its unpopular necessitation of fundamentally restructuring the nature of state power. Working to enlarge and empower those decentralized techniques already deemed acceptable to states is the best way to ensure progress.

Perhaps the best example of a realistic short-term goal for the "decentralized security" theory is a concerted effort to update something like the Google Maps program with military-grade high-definition photography of the entire globe (surely "sensitive" areas to governments would be blacked out, but that would be mostly irrelevant). An open-source approach to systematically examining the resulting maps of the entire planet would unquestionably result in crucial discoveries that could easily be overlooked by the comparatively limited number of intelligence analysts working for official government agencies. Even bored teenagers might finally have a use if one of them could stay up all night downing Red Bull (as [s]he would anyway) and use his/her time to scan mountains in Afghanistan, locate a suspicious armored vehicle parked nearby, and report the finding to the government, rather than watching bootleg episodes of *30 Rock* and chatting on Facebook or whatever it is the kids do these days. This is one way in which the asymmetries of power could work in the favor of the powerful—the resources at state disposal are vast, and the addition of abundant cheap labor to use these resources in the same loosely "networked" way as transnational criminal groups use their own resources (Robb 2007, 75) can potentially bring about a reversal of disparities in cost vs. return. If the casual observation of that single armored vehicle led to the location of Osama Bin Laden, something vaguely approximating the $2,000 vs. $500 million asymmetry from earlier might be accomplished from the opposite direction.

What else can you do? Well, declassifying and widely publishing any non-sensitive classified documents online, creating a sort of government-sponsored anti-transnational-crime wikipedia-inspired model (though it would have to not be globally editable), would be a way to throw the asymmetries of power back in the face of transnational criminals. Only when a hobbyist receiving no pay whatsoever is able to assist in the fight against transnational crime can the forces of stability take advantage of globalization's decentralization of information, resources, and work. It is even possible that the kind of open bribe/"reward" programs used to great success in the capture of Saddam Hussein could be greatly expanded. This technique has not proven particularly successful in capturing those criminals whose supporters are bound together by fanaticism, and would be made obsolete by the successful implementation of "security first" techniques. But for now, if countries like Liberia are selling their loyalty to the highest bidder, it stands to reason that the United States just has to make a slightly better offer than the criminal and subsequently make the arrest.

Conclusion

The danger that transnational crime represents to the modern world is difficult to overstate. There must be some theorists who disagree with this statement, but they are certainly not the ones writing books about the subject. The six books analyzed here demonstrate the two-pronged difficulty of transnational crime—not only does such crime

represent a massive threat to global stability, the interstate political structure is woefully unable to adequately tackle such threats. Though there are many types of transnational crime, in the end it is most useful to treat all of them as crucial security concerns and allocate resources according to the potential for th successful combatting of such threats, rather than which threats sound most devastating to the common person or the state official.

The two major theories with a claim on a legitimate ability to tackle transnational crime, "security first" and "decentralized security," each approach the problem from a different angle. "Security first" suggests that top-down strengthening of weak and weakening regimes across the globe, regardless of their political make-up, enabling them to better clamp down on their own domestic purveyors of transnational crime, is the most effective response. "Decentralized security" however promotes a bottom-up approach to fighting transnational crime, widening the degree of inter-cooperation between states and non-state actors and organizations and even encouraging individual action. These theories provide two angles from which to approach the problem of the modern weakening of the states system by transnational threats: whether to redouble efforts at strengthening it, or turn the weakness into strength by focusing its decline on positive efforts.

Once each theory made its case, the question arose of how to direct future American foreign policy. A synthesis of the two theories was shown to be the most logical point from which to go ahead, shoring up failing states at the same time as further encouraging extant transnational cooperation and attempting to loosen restrictions on further cooperation. It ultimately appears that for America to secure its own future as well as the future of the world, it must disregard its focus on installing democratic regimes across the world in favor of deposing genocidal regimes and securitizing all unstable regimes. Furthermore, it must make a concerted effort to loosen its secrecy-based stranglehold on the tools necessary to combat transnational crime. The reasons for both the public and the policy-maker alike to support this idea lead into a final discussion of specific steps to take to address the problem. Complete safety may be impossible, but this is no reason to ignore the construction of pragmatic and workable policy.

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Written by: Andrew Huntleigh
Written at: University of Delaware
Written for: Dr. Stuart Kaufman
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