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**COMBATting COMMERCIAL TERRORISTS: THE PKK
CASE**

by

Ulas Yildiz

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Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Robert E. Looney
Robert M. McNab

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COMBATTING COMMERCIAL TERRORISTS: THE PKK CASE

Ulas Yildiz
Captain, Turkish Gendarmerie
B.S., Turkish Military Academy, 2004

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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December 2015**

Approved by: Robert E. Looney
Thesis Advisor

Robert M. McNab
Second Reader

Mohammed Hafez
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

Money is vital for all terrorist organizations. For some organizations, it is a tool to achieve their goals; for others, it is the objective itself. Terrorists participate in organized crime activities at various levels. Organized crime expert Tamara Makarenko describes the nexus between organized crime groups and terrorist groups. This study expanded her continuum into understanding the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its evolution through the organization's financial sources.

Using this continuum, this study characterizes the PKK as a commercial terrorist group with strong financial motivations. Its financial motivations are stronger than its political ones. It originated as a pure terrorist organization sheltered by sponsoring states; meanwhile, it continuously improved its capabilities in criminal fields. To more easily conduct its criminal operations, its members maintain their deceptive political rhetoric. By UN standards, the organization can also be identified as a transnational organized crime group by considering the severity of its crimes and its criminal network across the Middle East, Turkey, and Europe.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party
DEV-SOL	The Turkish Radical Left
DHKP-C	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front
ELN	National Liberation Army/Colombia
ETA	Basque Country and Freedom / Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
EU	European Union
ERNK	National Liberation Front of Kurdistan
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
GAP	Southeast Anatolia Development Project
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IRA	Irish Republican Army
KADEK	Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress
KCK	Group of Communities in Kurdistan
KONGRA-GEL	Kurdistan People's Congress
KPE	Kurdish Parliament in Exile
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
OC	Organized Crime
PÇDK	Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party
PJAK	Party for Free Life in Kurdistan
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
PYD	Democratic Union Party
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
TOC	Transnational Organized Crime

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I dedicate my study to the martyrs and innocents who lost their lives and the families who lost their loved ones during the PKK's violent campaign.

History will always remember your sacrifices ...

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE SIGNIFICANCE AND GOAL OF THE STUDY

Terrorism is a major threat to world peace. The 9/11 attacks proved to the world that no country is immune to terrorism threats. Any country can be the victim of a terrorist attack at any time. Globalization has erased countries' borders not only in communications, trade, and culture, but also with respect to terrorism threats. In the new terrorism age, the enemy is vague and the attacks are more lethal than they were in the past.

Although there are many differences between past and contemporary terrorists, the fundamental need of every organization is the same: money. According to Steven Hutchinson, a criminologist from the University of Ottawa, and Pat O'Malley, a professor at the University of Sydney, terrorist organizations need money to provide funding for their continued operations and bribery, as well as for buying the loyalty of their own members and external sympathy.¹ As an example, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) needs money, first, to fulfill the basic requirements of its members, such as shelter and food. Second, it needs money for its operational purposes like ammunition, weapons, education, transportation, and bribery. Third, it spends money for its perpetuity and legitimacy. It propagates via different platforms to influence people, recruit new members, and lobby. The illegal and secret spirit of the terrorists' proceedings makes everything more expensive for terrorist organizations when they are compared with legal bodies.

For law enforcement officers, it is usually difficult to get information from inside these organizations. Generally, members of terrorist organizations are strictly bound to each other. The members know that their comrades will severely retaliate against any betrayal to the organization. The organizations cannot

¹ Steven Hutchinson and Pat O'Malley, "A Crime-Terror Nexus? Thinking on Some of the Links between Terrorism and Criminality," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 12 (December 2007): 1101.

endure without money, and they have to spend it for their expenses. Therefore, following the money flow is easier than infiltrating terrorist organizations.

Jeanne Giraldo and Harold Trinkunas, professors at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), note that financial and material sources are “the lifeblood of terrorist operations.”² They also point out that governments decided to attack the financial sources of terrorists to cease them. After the destruction of 9/11, U. S. President George W. Bush signed an order to freeze “United States financial assets of, and prohibited United States’ transactions with, 27 different entities that included terrorist organizations, individual terrorist leaders, a corporation serving as a front for terrorism and several nonprofit organizations.”³ President Bush publicly announced that “we will starve the terrorists of funding, turn them against each other, root them out of their safe hiding places and bring them to justice.”⁴ His description for the consequential results of cutting financial links is impressive. A military response is not enough—and sometimes counter-productive—in the war against terrorism. The war must be carried in all possible ways against terrorism. Otherwise, the terrorist organizations regenerate themselves thanks to new recruitments and new sources.

Terrorist groups benefit from a variety of sources. Michael Freeman, a professor at NPS, categorizes them into four groups: “state sponsorship, illegal activities, legal activities, and popular support.”⁵ Daniel Byman, a professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, notes that many terrorist groups had government backing in the 1970s and 1980s because supporting

² Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas, “Introduction,” in *Terrorism Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective*, eds. Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1.

³ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Executive Order 13224* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, September 23, 2001): 1.

⁴ “Bush: We Will Starve the Terrorists,” CNN, September 24, 2001, <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/09/24/ret.bush.transcript/index.html>.

⁵ Michael Freeman, “The Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 34, no. 6 (Jun 2011), 465.

terrorist groups to weaken a rival country was easier and cheaper than improving national armed capabilities.⁶ John Picarelli, an expert on transnational threats and homeland security from American University, and Louise Shelley, the founder and director of the Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC), note that the end of the Cold War and international agreements decreased the amount of state sponsorship for terrorism. Therefore, many terrorist organizations shifted to organized crime to fill the gap of state sponsorship. The authors claim that environmental criminal opportunities, relationships with criminal groups, financial strength, and structure of terrorist organizations shape the terrorists' level of involvement in crime.⁷ Freeman points out that terrorist organizations sometimes run legal enterprises to fund themselves. These businesses are generally cash-based trades. The cash-based operations give terrorists the opportunity to launder illegal money. Also, donations from a sympathetic population is another source of money and legitimacy for terrorist organizations.⁸

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the financial sources and organized crime links of terrorist organizations through a case study analysis. Turkey, a victim of PKK terrorism since 1979, has vast experience in countering it. Examining the PKK may reveal similarities between other terrorist organizations with respect to mutation phases and financial secrets. Peng Wang, a criminologist from King's College, highlights that criminal and political groups learn a lot from each other. They collaborate and teach each other new tactics.⁹ The best way to win against their enemy is to know the enemy as well as they

⁶ Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–5.

⁷ John T. Picarelli and Louise I. Shelley, "Organized Crime and Terrorism," in *Terrorism Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective*, eds. Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 40–41.

⁸ Freeman, "Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology," 469–470.

⁹ Peng Wang, "The Crime-Terror Nexus: Transformation, Alliance, Convergence," *Asian Social Science* 6, no. 6 (Jun 2010, 2010), 1.

know themselves. Therefore, detailed research on the PKK's financial sources can reveal many secrets about other terrorist organizations' financial links. This research can help policy makers generate reliable counter-policies and strategies. Consequently, the thesis may help law enforcement administrations to diminish terrorist activities worldwide.

There are three reasons for choosing the PKK as a case study. First, the PKK is a designated terrorist organization by Turkey, the EU, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Austria, Azerbaijan, Iraq, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Moldova, New Zealand, and the Philippines.¹⁰ However, it is disappointing to see that some countries and scholars still avoid naming the PKK's activities as "terrorism" because of their political concerns. There are definitional deficiencies in the common description of terrorism, but the PKK's criminal acts are undeniable. Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister of the United Kingdom between 1979 and 1990, highlighted the criminal side of terrorism. In 1981, she stated about the IRA prisoners that were seeking political status, "Crime is crime is crime. It is not political."¹¹

Second, the PKK is a good example in which to observe all four kinds of financial sources that Freeman mentions. The organization initiated its operations using various countries' sponsorship and eventually evolved to a transnational organized crime group. Glenn Curtis and Tara Karacan note, "The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)...is a Turkey-based terrorist organization with a substantial network that has engaged in terrorist and criminal activity, including narcotics and arms trafficking, in Turkey and Western Europe."¹² Regarding the Colombian

¹⁰ "Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)," IHS Jane's, accessed 02/03, 2015, 2. <https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1320763&Pubabbrev=JWIT>

¹¹ "On this Day 1950–2005, 3 October 1981: IRA Maze Hunger Strikes at an End," BBC, accessed 11/30, 2015, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/3/newsid_2451000/2451503.stm

¹² Glenn E. Curtis and Tara Karacan, *The Nexus among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 2002), 1.

cartel issue in 1995, U.S. President Bill Clinton announced that “organized crime is a threat to global security,” and he mobilized the entire U.S. government to fight against it.¹³ By recalling the remarks of Curtis and Karacan, one can claim that the PKK is no less of an organized crime organization than the Colombian drug cartels. The PKK has many traits of organized crime activities that are worthy of further research.

Third, the PKK is one of the most dangerous and long-standing terrorist organizations in the world. Nevertheless, some scholars do not have much information about the PKK due to an inadequacy of studies in the English language. Therefore, the research may contribute some knowledge to the PKK area for future international studies.

B. PRELIMINARY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORISM

Terrorism is a controversial issue in the international arena. Every country or party describes it in accordance with its own goals and political concerns. The cliché of *one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter* mindset causes everlasting conflicts and instabilities. Beril Dedeoğlu, a political science professor from Galatasaray University, argues that the international community has unified in the fight against terrorism and some states individually publish lists of terror criminals; however, the definitions of “terrorist, terrorism, terrorist organization”¹⁴ are still vague and do not have a common understanding. She highlights that each state has its own terror criminals.¹⁵ Walter Laqueur, who is a historian and political observer in security studies, states,

Governments and media in other countries do not wish to offend terrorists by calling them terrorists. The French and British press

¹³ Roy Godson and Phil Williams, “Strengthening Cooperation Against Transnational Crime,” *Survival* 40, no. 3 (1998), 79.

¹⁴ Beril Dedeoğlu, “Bermuda Triangle: Comparing Official Definitions of Terrorist Activity,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, no. 3 (2003), 103.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

would not dream of referring to their countries' native terrorists by any other name but call terrorists in other nations militants, activists, national liberation fighters, or even 'gun persons'.¹⁶

Due to conflicting interests, it does not seem that countries will reach a consensus about the definition of terrorism in the near future.

Leaving the political side of terrorist groups behind and focusing on criminality may be the best way to improve a collective stance against terrorism. Because other than having a sponsoring state, most terrorist groups acquire money by involving in organized criminal activities at various levels. Maintaining the rule of law and punishing criminals are the fundamental responsibilities of every modern state. It can be easier for countries to meet on the grounds of preventing crimes. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was signed by 185 countries and ratified by 147 countries, defines organized crime as,

a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.¹⁷

According to the Convention, a serious crime is any criminal activity that has at least four years' prison punishment. The third article of the Convention compiles a list to clarify the nature of transnational crimes. First, "it is committed in more than one State;" second, "it is committed in one state but a substantial part of its preparation, planning, direction, or control takes place in another State;" third, "it is committed in one State but involves an organized criminal group that engages in criminal activities in more than one State;" fourth, "it is committed in one State but has substantial effects in another State."¹⁸

¹⁶ Walter Laqueur, "Postmodern Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 1996, 1996), 3.

¹⁷ United Nations, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto* (New York: United Nations, 2004), Article 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Article 3.

There are many studies that mention the nexus of organized crime and terrorism. Organized crime groups use terror tactics, and terrorists involve in organized crime to finance their expenditures. Hutchinson and O'Malley provide an overview of the collaboration of terrorist and criminal organizations. They classify the crime-terror nexus into two groups: "ephemeral-sporadic" and "organized-enduring."¹⁹ Terrorist groups' involvement level in organized crime is directly related to their operational purposes. For the ephemeral-sporadic collaborations, the authors mention "profit-for-violence cells,"²⁰ which adopt low-risk and low-profit criminal activities to generate enough funds for their limited attacks. However, organized-enduring collaborations emerge with the need for trust and self-funding. According to Hutchinson and O'Malley, terrorist groups may either develop a "parasitical" relationship with organized criminal groups or they can create their own criminal "infrastructures."²¹

Dr. Tamara Makarenko, an expert on organized crime and terrorism, draws a line to represent different levels of collaboration between organized crime groups and terrorist groups (see Figure 1). According to her, there are four levels in the terror and organized crime continuum. The first level of cooperation is "alliance." Organized crime groups and terrorist groups collaborate for short terms to acquire mutual benefits. In such a collaboration, organized crime groups seek political instability in order to pressure law enforcement officials and diminish the probability of a counter international cooperation. Terrorist groups also want political instability to harm the popularity of governments.²² To explain the second level, in which "operational motivations" come forward, Makarenko points out "criminal groups using terrorism as an operational tool, and terrorist

¹⁹ Steven Hutchinson and Pat O'Malley, "A Crime-Terror Nexus? Thinking on some of the Links between Terrorism and Criminality," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 12 (2007), 1099-1101.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1099.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1102.

²² Tamara Makarenko, "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism," *Global Crime* 6, no. 1 (2004), 131-132.

groups taking part in criminal activities as an operational tool.”²³ Criminal organizations want to kill public officials, journalists, and their rivals. The basic motivation is strengthening their influence on the market for “illicit profit-maximization.”²⁴ Terrorist groups aim to acquire funds for their operations. The remarkable point is that terrorist and criminal groups both change their traditional organization and establish their own structures instead of cooperating with each other. At the third level of the continuum, “convergence,”²⁵ the diverse organizations meet almost in the middle of the line. Both terrorist and criminal organizations have similar properties, and they can change themselves into the opposite organization. The convergence is the level of “hybrids”²⁶ in which an organized crime group has the ability to turn itself into a terrorist organization, and a terrorist organization has the same capability. At the convergence point, the goals of organizations are difficult to distinguish. Makarenko notes that criminal groups have political goals, and terrorist groups have criminal profits. Terrorists use their political side as a mask behind which to conceal their illicit profit.²⁷ In the fourth and final level, which is called the “black hole”²⁸ situation, political criminal and commercial terrorist hybrids of the third level further advance their presence. They create safe havens for themselves either by controlling a territory or a state. Makarenko points out that neither group wants stability or victory because the continuation of problems serve several opportunities for them to carry on their illicit profit making operations.²⁹

²³ Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism,” 133.

²⁴ Ibid., 133.

²⁵ Ibid., 135.

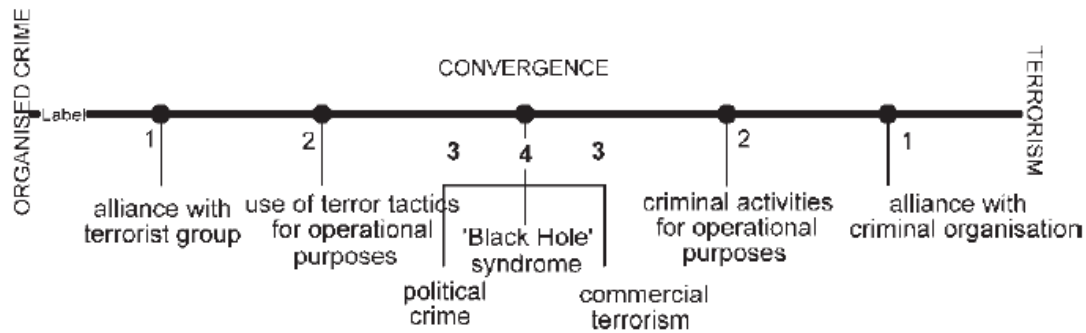
²⁶ Ibid., 135.

²⁷ Ibid., 135.

²⁸ Ibid., 138.

²⁹ Ibid., 140.

Figure 1. The Crime-Terror Continuum



Source: Tamara Makarenko, "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism," *Global Crime* 6, no. 1 (February 2004), 131.

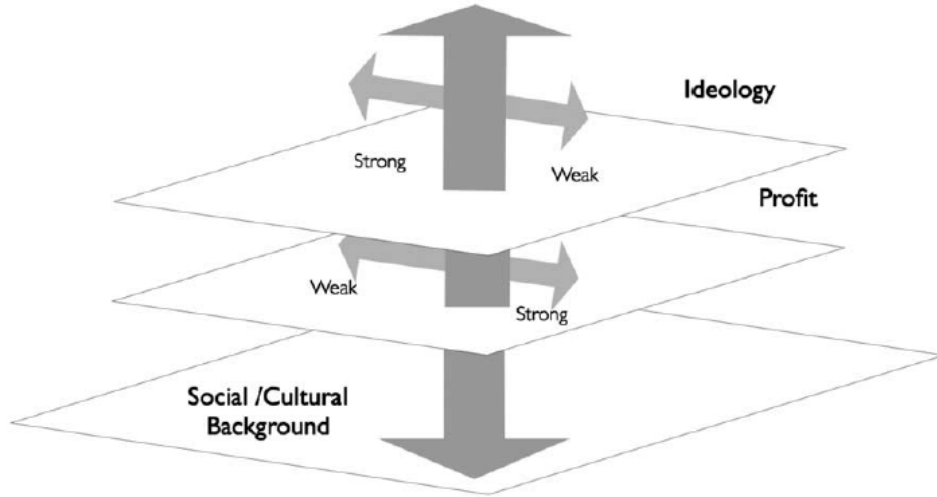
In his article on hybrid criminal organizations, Santiago Ballina tries Makarenko's continuum on two different terrorist organizations, La Familia Michoacana and the Abu Sayyaf group. By considering their operations, sources, political and religious agendas, and social environments, he thinks of them as hybrid organizations. He points out that the two-dimensional organized crime and terrorism continuum, though a good starting point, is not flexible enough to explain shifting strategies and tactics of hybrid organizations.³⁰ He notes that "kinship and territorial belonging"³¹ are also important factors in the emergence of violent groups, so he suggests a three-dimensional model (see Figure 2). This model comprises profit, ideology, and social environment dimensions that are overlapped with each other. Although the three-dimensional model is innovative in explaining the social perspective of hybrid organizations to improve governments' counter-terrorist policies, it is not a useful tool in classifying violent groups.³²

³⁰ Santiago Ballina, "The Crime-terror Continuum Revisited: A Model for the Study of Hybrid Criminal Organisations," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 6, no. 2 (2011), 130.

³¹ Ibid., 130.

³² Ibid., 132.

Figure 2. Crime-Terror Continuum on a Three-Dimensional Model



Source: Santiago Ballina, "The Crime-Terror Continuum Revisited: A Model for the Study of Hybrid Criminal Organisations," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 6, no. 2 (10/01; 2015/05, 2011), 131.

C. BASIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE PKK

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was founded in 1978 to establish a Marxist-Leninist Kurdish state in eastern Turkey. It started its terrorist attacks in 1984. In the past three decades, it has caused the deaths of more than 5,687 civilians, 6,653 security officials, and 19,946 PKK terrorists.³³ It carried out more than 20,000 violent attacks on civilians and government officials. As a result of this, 386,360 people have left their lands and migrated to Turkey's western cities or European capitals.³⁴ The cost of fighting terrorism is high for a developing country like Turkey. Servet Mutlu, an economics professor from Başkent University, estimates that from 1984 to 2005, PKK terrorism cost 88.1 billion USD, consisting of 54.2 billion USD in direct costs and 33.9 billion in indirect

³³ Habib Özdemir and İlker Pekgözlü, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," *International Journal of Security and Terrorism* 3, no. 2 (2012), 86.

³⁴ İnönü Akgün Alp, "Terörün Ekonomik Etkileri " [The economic effects of terror] *Uluslararası Güvenlik ve Terörizm Dergisi* 4, no. 5 (2013), 6.

costs.³⁵ However, Turkish government representatives think that the cost is closer to 1 trillion USD with the cost of missed opportunities in the last 30 years is factored in.

The leader of the organization, Abdullah Öcalan, was captured in Kenya in 1999 by Turkish Special Forces. Since that time, he has been imprisoned on Imrali Island in Turkey. Murat Karayılan has been leading the armed wing of the organization since Abdullah Öcalan's capture. The terrorist organization's operational head is currently based in the Kandil Mountains in the north of Iraq.

The PKK has evolved in many aspects over thirty years. According to Lyubov Mincheva, a professor of political science at the University of Sofia, and Ted Robert Gurr, a professor from the University of Maryland, it was a Marxist-Leninist organization mixed with Kurdish nationalism. Then, the Kurdish nationalism became dominant, and it focused on a separate Kurdish state. The ideals shifted to an autonomous state in the 1990s, and in the 2000s, the organization started promoting the ideal of a truly democratic Turkey.³⁶ The terrorist organization changed its name many times to avoid legal regulations restricting its financial and political activities. In 2002, it started using the name *Kongra Azadi u Demokrasiya Kurdistan* (KADEK), Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress. In 2003, it called itself *Kongra Gele Kurdistan* (KONGRA-GEL), the Kurdistan People's Congress. Later, in 2005, it returned to its original name, the PKK.³⁷ The U.S. State Department announced on November 14, 2003,

Through its recent actions, the Kurdistan Workers Party/Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (PKK/KADEK) appears to be making an effort to evade responsibility for its terrorist acts by changing its name. The PKK/KADEK, under any alias, is a terrorist

³⁵ Servet Mutlu, "The Economic Cost of Civil Conflict in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 1 (2011), 73.

³⁶ Lyubov Grigorova Mincheva and Ted Robert Gurr, *Crime-Terror Alliances and the State: Ethnonationalist and Islamist Challenges to Regional Security* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 41.

³⁷ IHS Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, "Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)," 2.

organization, and no name change or press release can alter that fact.³⁸

Many countries including the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Austria, Azerbaijan, Iraq, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Moldova, New Zealand, and the Philippines designated the PKK as a terrorist organization.³⁹

Turkish law enforcement units and the Turkish military have succeeded in the years-long counter-terrorism campaign; however, the organization has resurrected several times. After the capture of Abdullah Ocalan in 1999, the Turkish Government adopted social, cultural, and economic reforms. However, the PKK continued its attacks. Mustafa Coşar Ünal notes, “The PKK perceived Turkey’s effort toward the removal of certain grievances (granting linguistic and cultural rights) as losing its societal support and responded to it with increased violence to underline that these reforms were never sufficient for its cause.”⁴⁰ Although the terrorist group wants to show itself as the representative body of ethnic Kurdish people, Michael Radu states that, “in reality, the organization is not representative of the Kurdish people, nor is it nationalist in any commonly understood sense.”⁴¹

In late 2012, the Turkish government initiated negotiation talks with the PKK to completely end the years-long conflict. Ünal points out that “the government took a new stance from a conflict resolution perspective called the Peace/Resolution Process...and this process was publicly announced at the

³⁸ U.S. Department of State, “Kurdistan Workers Party/Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (PKK/KADEK)” [Press release] (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, November 14, 2003).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰ Mustafa Cosar Unal, “The Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and Popular Support: Counterterrorism towards an Insurgency Nature,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23, no. 3 (Jul 2012), 433.

⁴¹ Michael Radu, “The Rise and Fall of the PKK,” *Orbis* 45, no. 1 (2001), 51.

Nevruz 2013 Celebration in Diyarbakır province in a message from Öcalan.”⁴² For nearly two years, the parliamentarians of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), which is a pro-PKK party, distributed messages between the government officials and the jailed terrorist, Öcalan. The government hoped to end the violent campaign by encouraging the PKK to disarm its members. On February 28, 2015, the representatives of the pro-PKK HDP and the government representatives held a public meeting in Dolmabahçe Palace to declare their decision to further progress the talks. During the time approaching the Nevruz celebrations, the government expected a disarmament call from the PKK’s jailed leader and its operational leaders. However, the declaration, which was read on behalf of Abdullah Öcalan during the celebrations on March 21, 2015, was vague and did not include any call for democracy and disarmament. The Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, expressed his discontent by saying, “If we look into the text, one can see that most of the topics there do not have anything to do with democracy. There are still new demands arising.”⁴³ After the June 2015 elections, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) lost its majority in the parliament. By contrast, the pro-PKK party gained 80 seats in the 550-seat Turkish National Grand Assembly. Becoming one of the four major parties, it acquired the capability to form a coalition government with the AKP. Before and after the election, the HDP announced several times that it would not join in a coalition with the AKP. At the same time, the PKK restarted its brutal campaign after a two-year silence or preparation period.

The PKK has had three main financial sources since its establishment in 1978: state sponsors, illegal trade and activities, and legal businesses. Moyara Ruehsen, a professor of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, discusses that the state sponsorship is a debatable issue because it

⁴² Mustafa Cosar Unal, “Strategist or Pragmatist: A Challenging Look at Ocalan’s Retrospective Classification and Definition of PKK’s Strategic Periods between 1973 and 2012,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 3 (2014), 420.

⁴³ “Turkish President Criticizes Government’s Meeting with Pro-Kurdish Party Members.” *BBC Monitoring European* Mar 24, 2015, 2015b.

may be in various ways by sheltering, training, funding, assisting, providing weapons, or “turning a blind eye to the group’s activities.”⁴⁴ Mincheva and Gurr list Syria, Iran, Iraq, USSR (Russia), Greece, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Italy among the countries that helped the PKK in different degrees.⁴⁵ Mitchel Roth and Murat Sever, criminal justice professors from Sam Houston State University, add Greek Cypriots, Armenia, Libya, Bulgaria, and Cuba to the aforementioned sponsoring state list.⁴⁶ However, Michael Freeman writes that state funding is not a reliable source for terrorist groups because the sponsoring states try to impose their own ambitions, or at least want the group to give the sponsor’s goals priority. Sponsoring states may want terrorist groups to harm or leave alone some significant communities or groups. If the sponsors find a diplomatic way to reach their goal, they can easily abandon their terrorist collaborators.⁴⁷ Therefore, the PKK has established alternative ways to raise funds. Habib Özdemir and İlker Pekgözlü, professors from the Turkish National Police Academy, list the PKK’s major financial sources other than state sponsorship: “narcotics, human trafficking, arms smuggling, mass media, money laundering, extortion, ransom, membership fees at business and cultural activities, and abusing the utilities of the United Nation’s Makhmour Refugee Camp.”⁴⁸ Considering the criminal operations of the PKK, Mincheva and Gurr note:

We analyze the PKK as an opportunistic movement, blending ideological sectarianism with the pragmatic objectives of profit

⁴⁴ Moyara Ruehsen, “Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK),” in *Financing Terrorism: Case Studies*, ed. Michael Freeman (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2012), 66.

⁴⁵ Mincheva and Gurr, *Crime-Terror Alliances and the State: Ethnonationalist and Islamist Challenges to Regional Security*, 58–60.

⁴⁶ Mitchel P. Roth and Murat Sever, “The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 10 (09/18; 2015/01, 2007), 906.

⁴⁷ Freeman, “Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology,” 466.

⁴⁸ Özdemir and Pekgözlü, “Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK,” 86.

maximization and risk reduction in illicit trans-border business activities. The PKK is a hybrid terror-crime network, one of the few that currently operates across Europe, for which political and economic objectives count equally, especially in its most recent activities.⁴⁹

Freeman notes “since money is the lifeblood of terrorist organizations, attacking it in better and smarter ways will result in a more effective fight against terrorism overall.” If one considers money as the organization’s lifeblood as he suggests, it is not easy to discover its metaphorical veins and arteries and predict the total amount of flow. General Ergin Saygun’s statement in 2008, who was then the Deputy of Turkish General Staff, may provide an overview for the level of the PKK’s fund raising operations and what we are facing. Saygun, in his statement, says that the PKK’s annual revenue changes between 400 and 500 million Euros. Within this context, the drug business is the most lucrative business for the PKK, providing it 200–250 million Euros. It obtains 100–150 million Euros from smuggling, 15–20 million Euros from enforced donations and 20–25 million Euros from other activities.⁵⁰ Because of the secret structure of its operations, there are contradicting numbers about the PKK’s annual budget; however, the main criminal funding methods of the organization are drug trade, extortion, human smuggling, cigarette smuggling, and money laundering. The legal businesses and institutions of the PKK or PKK sympathizers are used as covers for their illegal activities and money laundering operations.

West Sands Advisory, which is led by Tamara Makarenko, points out the importance of financial combat against the PKK. It argues that military attacks cannot succeed without tight financial controls over the PKK. It also notes, “in order to cut off financing a concerted effort should be taken in the field of OC [organized crime] and terrorism; it is simply counterproductive to view terrorism in

⁴⁹ Mincheva and Gurr, *Crime-Terror Alliances and the State: Ethnonationalist and Islamist Challenges to Regional Security*, 42.

⁵⁰ “PKK’s Annual Revenue Around 400–500 Million Euros, Military Says.” *Hürriyet Daily News* Mar 13, 2008.

one part of the world as disconnected from OC in another.”⁵¹ Roy Godson and Phil Williams, professors at Georgetown University, mark the importance of collective action against terrorism by noting:

As transnational organized crime has become ubiquitous, devising and implementing effective counter measures has become an international security imperative. Independent national responses will not suffice. As long as transnational criminal organizations structure their operations in ways which limit the effectiveness of initiatives by any single state, the response needs to be extensive in scope, multilateral in form and, to the extent possible, global in reach.⁵²

The end of the Cold War resulted in the transformation of terror organizations. They mutated from state-sponsored to self-funding organizations. Extortion and the trade of drugs, humans, and cigarettes became their new financial sources. The collaboration and competition in this illicit market led both the criminal and terrorist groups to reorganize their structures to gain more profit and maximize their security. Makarenko illuminates that cooperation between crime and terror groups may be on various levels. Ballina points out the importance of social and cultural environments in strengthening this relationship. With an ethno-nationalist political rhetoric, the PKK is a good example of hybrid organizations and “commercial terrorists.”⁵³ The criminal links and operations of the PKK in several countries make it a transnational security problem. However, in the thirty years since its inception, the PKK has maintained its earnings and status by causing instability and conflict in Turkey and Europe.

⁵¹ West Sands Advisory LLP, *Europe's Crime-Terror Nexus: Links between Terrorist and Organised Crime Groups in the European Union* (Brussels: Policy Department C, Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, 2012), 52.

⁵² Godson and Williams, “Strengthening Cooperation against Transnational Crime,” 70.

⁵³ Makarenko, “Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism,” 131.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

By considering Makarenko's crime-terror continuum, I hypothesize that the PKK is a "commercial terrorism"⁵⁴ group. Behaving as the representative of ethno-Kurdish people in Turkey is its tactic to mask its criminal operations. The organization uses an ethno-nationalist political rhetoric to justify its terrorist acts, to gain popular support, and to recruit more expendable people to its criminal operations. The organization employs terrorism as a tool to suppress the ethno-Kurdish people and governmental officials. The PKK terrorists want instability and conflict on their trade route to carry on their business from Iran to European countries.

Exploring and then minimizing the financial sources of the PKK is the best way to combat against it. However, the transnational characteristic of the organization requires international cooperation and new collective counter-measures. The PKK is not a problem only in the Turkey-Iran-Iraq triangle. It is also a major threat in European countries because it controls the illegal markets there and degrades state authorities. Therefore, weakening the organization will be more beneficial to European countries than Turkey.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

To answer the research question and test the hypothesis, the study begins by exploring the similarities and differences between organized crime groups and terrorist groups. Later, it concentrates on the crime-terror continuum or other possible models that can help understand the nexus between the two groups. The clandestine mechanisms of terrorist and organized crime groups are obstacles to clear the blurring line between them. Therefore, discovering the money sources is crucial to understanding at what level criminal and terrorist organizations are conceptually alike. For example, state sponsorship helps

⁵⁴ Makarenko, "Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism," 131.

establish many terrorist organizations before they can fund themselves. As they involve in the criminal world, they diversify their sources.

This research is a single case study about PKK terrorism. To provide objectivity and plurality of opinions, it is based on numerous primary and secondary sources from academia, government, and media. The primary sources are official documents of Turkey, the United States, the European Union, Interpol, and the United Nations. There are many informative reports and documents about the criminal actions of the PKK. The secondary sources are books, journal articles, newspapers, and online sources. At some points, online sources of the PKK are also used because they provide official statements from the terrorist organization. However, they are not reliable because the organization frequently changes names and web addresses.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis begins with background information about the crime-terror nexus and the PKK. The first chapter is as follows: the significance and goal of the study, preliminary knowledge about the finances of terrorist groups and the PKK, potential explanations and hypothesis, research design and sources, and thesis overview.

The second chapter reviews the organized crime and terrorism definitions and their similarities and differences. Later, the phases of Makarenko's crime-terror continuum are explained one-by-one. After the general theoretical context, the PKK is discussed as a case study, and its position on the crime-terror continuum is considered.

In the following two chapters, the financial relations of the PKK are explained in order to provide empirical evidence to support the hypothesis. The third chapter of the study focuses on state sponsorship. State sponsorship is still a serious political obstacle for international security. The PKK started its activities as a pure terrorist organization acting on behalf of its sponsors. Therefore, one

can state that the PKK is the result of conflicting interests among allies and a power struggle among rivals.

The fourth chapter focuses on the PKK's contemporary financial sources, which it achieved over time through involvement in organized crime. These include drug trade, extortion, robbery, human trafficking for several purposes, arms smuggling, cigarette smuggling, and money laundering.

The fifth chapter concludes with the knowledge gained through the study. It includes recommendations to combat against hybrid organizations. Finally, it closes with thoughts on current events and potential future political situations.

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II. THE COMPARISON OF ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERROR

A. THE OPPOSITE ENDS OF A CONTINUUM

To improve effective responses to terrorism and organized crime, it is necessary to understand the definitions of organized crime and terrorism in a legal context. John Picarelli, a social science analyst at the U.S. National Institute of Justice, points out that the definitions of organized crime and terrorism can refer to a kind of organization, a kind of activity, or a combination of organization and activity.⁵⁵ The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines organized crime as:

Any group having some manner of a formalized structure and whose primary objective is to obtain money through illegal activities. Such groups maintain their position through the use of actual or threatened violence, corrupt public officials, graft, or extortion, and generally have a significant impact on the people in their locales, region, or the country as a whole.⁵⁶

By considering Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 1961 (1), the FBI lists two groups of crimes as federal and state crimes. These crimes include:

[Federal crimes] bribery, sports bribery, counterfeiting, embezzlement of union funds, mail fraud, wire fraud, money laundering, obstruction of justice, murder for hire, drug trafficking, prostitution, sexual exploitation of children, alien smuggling, trafficking in counterfeit goods, theft from interstate shipment, and interstate transportation of stolen property. State crimes [consist of] murder, kidnapping, gambling, arson, robbery, bribery, extortion, and drugs.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ John T. Picarelli, "Osama Bin Corleone? Vito the Jackal? Framing Threat Convergence through an Examination of Transnational Organized Crime and International Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2 (2012), 182.

⁵⁶ "Organized Crime: Glossary of Terms," Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), accessed October 10, 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/organizedcrime/glossary>.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Under the *Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act*, these crimes may have extended penalties if they are committed by an organized crime group.

Ongoing political and military conflicts, uncontrolled territories of weak states, globalization, and the technological advancements of the new millennium helped organized crime groups to acquire transnational characteristics. Therefore, the United Nations saw organized crime as a “global challenge”⁵⁸ and decided to respond accordingly. In December 2000, the United Nations opened *The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto* for signing. The protocol describes an organized crime group as:

A structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences [an offence punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least four years or more serious penalty] ... in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.⁵⁹

According to this convention, organized crime can become transnational under four conditions: if “it is committed in more than one state; in one state but a substantial part of its preparation, planning, direction or control takes place in another state; in one state but involves an organized criminal group that engages in criminal activities in more than one state; or in one state but has substantial effects in another state.”⁶⁰

Compared to how it defined organized crime, the international community has not been as successful in defining terrorism. Dedeoğlu notes that several states have defined terrorism in their own legal systems; however, the international community is desperate to find a common definition for the century’s

⁵⁸ United Nations, *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto*, iv.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 6.

biggest security threat.⁶¹ This is because the political aspect of terrorism shelters terrorists. There are political and conceptual differences between countries, which hinder crafting a common definition. Therefore, states generally define terrorism in accordance with their domestic concerns. The U.S. Code explains terrorism as:

Violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States of any State ... [if it] appears to be intended: (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.⁶²

The European Union defines terrorism through a long list of violent actions, but the focal point is the context of actions that

may seriously damage a country or an international organization where committed with the aim of: (i) seriously intimidating a population, or (ii) unduly compelling a Government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act, or (iii) seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization.⁶³

The *Turkish Anti-Terror Law*, which was ratified in 1991, gives a detailed picture of how Turkey perceives domestic terror. It states that

Any act committed by an individual or individuals belonging to an organization with a view to change the constitutionally determined characteristics of the Republic and the political, legal, social, secular and economic order through oppression, violence, intimidation or threat; to destroy the indivisible territorial and national integrity of the State or to endanger the existence of the Turkish State and Republic; to weaken or take over state authority; to suppress fundamental rights and freedoms; to disrupt domestic

⁶¹ Dedeoğlu, "Bermuda Triangle: Comparing Official Definitions of Terrorist Activity," 104.

⁶² *Crimes and Criminal Procedure: Definitions*, Pub. L. No. 92-452, 84 Stat 928 (1970), 2331.

⁶³ Council of the European Union, "Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on Combatting Terrorism (2002/475/JHA), *Official Journal of the European Communities*, June 13, 2002, 3.

or external security as well as public order and health, is an act of terror.⁶⁴

There are some dissimilarities between organized crime groups and terrorist groups, and also some shared qualities. This chapter focuses on these points, respectively. Thomas Sanderson, the deputy director of the Transnational Threats Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC, points out two dissimilarities between the groups. First, organized crime groups and terrorists have different doctrines and motivations. Organized crime groups concentrate on maximizing their material profit as if they are running a legal business; by contrast, terrorist groups have political or religious agendas. In accordance with their ideologies, they may want to remove a regime, separate a territory from a state, establish a free regime of their own, or bring attention to their grievances.⁶⁵

Second, organized crime groups usually avoid attracting attention from law enforcement, the press, and the public. Unwanted attention puts the organization in danger and may reveal their clandestine proceedings. In contrast, terrorist groups want media coverage.⁶⁶ Media coverage seems to be the best and cheapest way for them to attract attention to their motives. Brian M. Jenkins, an expert on terrorism, notes, "Terrorism is theater, terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead."⁶⁷ Thanks to big headlines and flashy news, which work as free advertisements for terrorist organizations, a terrorist organization indirectly succeeds in employing violence. It can frighten people, even in remote and unrelated areas. Also, by attracting public attention to its

⁶⁴ Terörle Mücadele Kanunu (*Anti-Terror Law*) (Translated by Beril Dedeoğlu), Pu L. No. 3713, *Resmî Gazete* (Official Gazette), 20843 *Mükerrer* (Repeated) (December 4, 1991): 1.

⁶⁵ Thomas M. Sanderson, "Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines," *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 24, no. 1 (2004), 55.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶⁷ Brian Michael Jenkins, *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2008), 101.

existence and motivation, they can draw in new recruits and affect the policies of a state.

Ibrahim Üney, from the Turkish National Police Department, argues that there are three more distinctions: First, terrorists want to be recognized by a legal body as legitimate. They also want to be recognized as the defenders of their causes. Therefore, they mostly assume responsibility for their assaults soon after they are committed. On the other side, organized crime groups deny their actions and want to maintain their secrecy.

Second, organized crime groups support and finance some political parties so that they can lobby for the groups' rights. Nevertheless, terrorist groups have their own political wings. They use them to propagate, provoke crowds, and organize demonstrations or rebellions. Organized crime leaders establish legal enterprises and donate generous amounts to charities and funds. By doing so, they can easily disguise themselves among the public as being legitimate businessmen, philanthropists, or friends of influential figures.

Third, Üney points out the difference between the victims of the two groups. Terrorists apply violence against innocent people. Their affected group is the general public. The victims are symbolic. The terrorists want to influence the behaviors and beliefs of the public. By contrast, organized crime groups choose their victims. There is generally a close social or financial relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.⁶⁸

Beyond being illegal, organized crime and terrorist groups have many similarities. Üney points out the similarities in their hierarchical structures, organizational properties, operations, and activities. Both organizations have pyramidal chains-of-command. Due to their criminal proceedings, secrecy is essential. Foot soldiers do not know much about the whole body of the organization, and they learn sensitive knowledge as they are promoted in rank.

⁶⁸ Ibrahim Üney, "Organize Suç ve Terörizm İlişkisi: PKK Örneği [the Relationship between Organized Crime and Terrorism: The Case PKK]" (Master's Thesis, Police Akademisi Başkanlığı [police academy]), 63–66.

The leaders require absolute obedience and fidelity from their followers. This last characteristic is less common in organized crime groups; still, in general, both groups develop cell-type bodies to maintain their secrecy and perpetuity.⁶⁹ Sanderson provides a list of bullet points that summarizes the similarities between the two groups. According to his research:

- Both are generally rational actors.
- Both use extreme violence and the threat of reprisals.
- Both use kidnappings, assassinations, and extortion.
- Both operate secretly, though at times publicly in friendly territory.
- Both defy the state and the rule of law (except when there is state sponsorship).
- For a member to leave either group is rare and often fatal.
- Both present an asymmetrical threat to the United States and “friendly” nations.
- Both can have “interchangeable” recruitment pools.
- Both are highly adaptable, innovative and resilient.
- Both have back-up leaders and foot soldiers.
- Both have provided social services, though this is much more frequently seen with terrorist groups.⁷⁰

The main goal of this paper is to understand criminal and terrorist organizations that embody most of these similarities. Not a complete organized crime group, nor a terrorist group, but the ones in the middle, the hybrids, are the biggest security and financial threat.

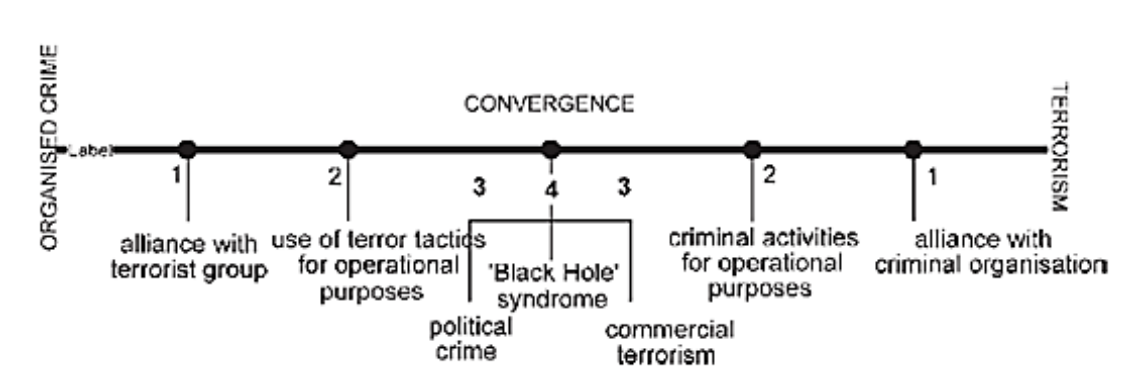
⁶⁹ Üney, “Organize Suç ve Terörizm İlişkisi: PKK Örneği [the Relationship between Organized Crime and Terrorism: The Case PKK],” 66–69.

⁷⁰ Thomas M. Sanderson, “Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines,” 53.

B. HYBRID ORGANIZATIONS

There is a common understanding that terrorists have ideological agendas to challenge state policies, and criminals seek profit. This seems true at first glance. However, the groups are not much different from each other in criminal proceedings. Both of them need money and apply violence. Terrorists are experienced in violent methods, but they crave money. By contrast, organized criminals have vast experience in illegal finance, but they need to more frequently utilize violence to maintain their profits. Because of their mutual need for knowledge and experience, terrorist organizations and organized crime groups converge at various relevant levels. Tamara Makarenko points out the levels of symbiosis by showing them on a Crime-Terror Continuum.

Figure 3. The Crime-Terror Continuum



Source: Tamara Makarenko, "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Modelling 21st Century Security Dynamics" (PhD diss., University of Wales, 2005), 187.

Using this continuum, Makarenko describes four different levels of relationship between terrorists and organized criminals: (1) alliance, (2) operational motivations, (3) convergence, and (4) black hole.

1. Alliance

Alliance is the basic level of cooperation. The alliances may last for a short or long time. During this term, organized crime and terrorist groups mutually

benefit from each other. Terrorist groups strongly desire to learn financial issues such as how to smuggle, money-launder, or counterfeit documents. Organized criminals cooperate with terrorists to acquire protection or create political instability.⁷¹ This is because, in a situation of instability and insecurity, law enforcement units primarily focus on terrorism, which the units perceive to be more threatening than organized crime. By doing so, organized criminals bring the attention to terrorists while they operate freely. They can call their terrorist collaborators to threaten politicians and law enforcement officials.

2. Operational Tool

The alliance phase is a form of collaboration, where each side does what it knows best. Terrorists create fear and organized criminals earn money. By contrast, Makarenko defines the second phase as “criminal groups using terrorism as an operational tool and terrorist groups taking part in criminal activities as an operational tool.”⁷² After learning new methods from each other in the alliance phase, both organizations achieve their own financial or political capabilities to obtain organizational security. This is because depending on another organization makes these illegal bodies highly vulnerable to intelligence operations. Behzat Ekici, Phil Williams, and Ayhan Akbulut note that organized criminals and terrorists end their mutual partnerships for two reasons: First, terrorists easily adapt their substructures not to rely on others for criminal and trafficking organizations; second, criminal groups mostly pay tax to terrorists, and paying tax diminishes their competitiveness in the drug market by increasing the costs.⁷³ Chris Dishman, a researcher for the U.S. Commission on National Security, argues that organized crime groups employ a “selective and calibrated

⁷¹ Tamara Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Modelling 21st Century Security Dynamics” (Doctorate Dissertation, University of Wales, Aberystwyth), 187.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 192.

⁷³ Behsat Ekici, Phil Williams and Ayhan Akbulut, “The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence or Conflict?” in *The PKK: Financial Sources, Social and Political Dimensions*, eds. Charles Strozier and James Frank (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2011), 150–151.

violence to destroy competitors or threaten counternarcotic authorities.”⁷⁴ He adds that a criminal organization with terrorist capabilities can “force the government leniency and negotiation.”⁷⁵

3. Convergence

At the third level, convergence, organized crime and terrorist groups acquire hybrid characteristics. Justine A. Rosenthal, executive editor of *The National Interest*, points out that terrorist groups are highly skillful in complying with new conditions; “terrorist groups are not black boxes; they are organic organizations-capable of evolution and adaptation.”⁷⁶ Makarenko points out that each organization has the ability to shift the nature of its structural body, which is at the opposite end of the crime-terror continuum. A terrorist organization can turn itself into an organized crime group, or an organized crime group can transform into a terrorist one. Makarenko introduces two new terms: political crime and commercial terrorism.⁷⁷

a. Political Crime Group

According to Makarenko, the political crime hybrids emerge when criminal organizations seek political objectives as well as material profit. These kinds of hybrid groups carry the qualifications of both terrorist and transnational organized crime groups. Like a traditional terrorist group, they have cell-type networks. They abandon their centralized-hierarchical structures and become more flexible in accommodating sudden changes. Their cadres have more expertise on crime. Their leaderships are easily replaceable. They can easily exploit economic and

⁷⁴ Chris Dishman, “Terrorism, Crime, and Transformation,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 1 (2001), 45.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 47

⁷⁶ Justine A. Rosenthal, “For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (06/13; 2015/07, 2008), 482.

⁷⁷ Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Modelling 21st Century Security Dynamics,” 203–211.

political weaknesses in countries. Makarenko highlights that political crime groups generally try to build “an alternative or parallel government.”⁷⁸

b. Commercial Terrorism

The second type of hybrids is commercial terrorists. As mentioned before, terrorist organizations want to validate their existence in case they lose their sponsors. Therefore, achieving self-funding mechanisms through criminal activities is their primary goal. Makarenko notes that criminal terrorism groups give organized crime equal or more priority than their terrorist activities. Considering the activities of several organizations such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), National Liberation Army/ Colombia (ELN), Loyalist Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland, Abu Sayyaf, and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the criminal activities mostly include kidnapping; extortion; drug trade; smuggling arms, diamonds, and contraband goods; and human trafficking.⁷⁹

Rosenthal specifically searched the mutations of terrorist groups, which moved from the right side towards the left of Makarenko’s continuum. She sees these kinds of hybrids as “armed entrepreneurs” and names their activity as “for-profit-terrorism.” These hybrids use their respective ideologies as a mask. Rosenthal argues that, even though a ‘for-profit-terrorist organization’ loses its political motivation and turns to a pure criminal one, it keeps its political rhetoric to legitimize its crimes, attract new recruits, and as a leverage to negotiate with the state authorities. They also cannot quit terrorism. This is because they employ it to oppress local populations and alienate them from the government.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Modelling 21st Century Security Dynamics,” 205.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 207–211.

⁸⁰ Rosenthal, “For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs,” 485.

4. Black Hole Syndrome

The focal point of convergence for terrorists and organized crime groups is the black hole. Political crime or commercial terrorism hybrids aim to control territory in order to create safe havens for their perpetuity. Makarenko gives two ways for them to achieve their goals: first, the sides of a civil war convert their political objectives into criminal ones; second, criminal or terrorist hybrids take the control of a state. In each way, the territory turns into a lawless zone and provides fertile ground for criminal business. The black hole syndrome causes two types of problems, each of which affect global security: failed or criminal states. She sees Afghanistan, Angola, Myanmar, North Korea, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and some areas in Pakistan, Indonesia, and Thailand as a consequence of this syndrome.⁸¹

C. THE PKK'S PLACE ON THE CONTINUUM

François Haut, from the Paris Institute of Criminology, argues that the PKK is among the most active and dangerous of mutating terrorist groups.⁸² The mutation of the organization can be seen through the first three phases of Makarenko's crime-terror continuum. Although there is not much scholarship about the PKK's transformation, it can best be observed by considering the changes in its relations and financial sources. Rosenthal describes three situations that accelerate the mutation of terrorist organizations: (1) a change in leadership, (2) a change of ideology, or (3) high amounts of illicit income.⁸³ After losing their founding leaders, successors may follow old principles and policy. By contrast, the loss may also trigger the political dissolution of group's ideology, and new leaders may create the new pillars of profit maximization. Second, the ideology of the organization may become outdated. Therefore, the group shifts its

⁸¹ Makarenko, "Crime-Terror Continuum: Modelling 21st Century Security Dynamics," 211–217.

⁸² Haut, "Kurdish Extremism and Organized Crime: The Kurdistan Workers' Party," 3.

⁸³ Rosenthal, "For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs," 482.

priorities from ideology to profit. Third, high amounts of revenue may corrupt high-ranking leaders. They inadvertently find that their priorities are no longer political. The second and third options are more relevant to the PKK's transformation from a terrorist to a hybrid organization.

The leader of the PKK, Öcalan, initiated the organization into the illicit market after its establishment in 1978. Therefore, his incarceration in 1999 did not change anything about the PKK's financial methods. His successor has continued and improved the organization. After the downfall of the USSR, the organization noticed that Marxist discourse no longer attracts members. Such discourse is old-fashioned and contrary to the popular beliefs of people, which the PKK exploits as its recruitment pool. Chris Dishman notes that "Terrorists and guerrilla groups who view their cause as futile, might turn their formidable assets towards crime—all the while under a bogus political banner. Other groups might turn to organized crime if their *raison d'être* evaporates in the face of negotiation or peace."⁸⁴ The organization removed the hammer and sickle from its so-called banners in the early 1990s. In the same decade, it concentrated on maximizing its profit, and revenue thrived with the guidance of Kurdish drug lords. In the early 2000s, as an example of Rosenthal's third point, the revenue of the organization has become so big that nobody can refuse participating in its criminal activities. The main goal of the organization has shifted to profit-maximization, and it has employed terror in several ways as a tool in complement to that shift.

1. Pure Terrorism Period

In 1978, the PKK started its activities as a pure terrorist organization. Ünal, from the Turkish National Police Academy, notes that the initial goal of the PKK was to establish an 'Independent United Kurdish State' by separating territories from Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. As with many other terrorist organizations after the 1950s, its ideology was based on Marxist-Leninist

⁸⁴ Dishman, "Terrorism, Crime, and Transformation," 56.

principles. Its leadership maintained its Stalinistic rule (top-down, centralized, and hierarchical) for years. Inspired by the Cubans, the terrorists adopted Maoist strategy in their attacks.⁸⁵ Even though the PKK had stated in its establishment resolution that it would fight against Iran, Iraq, and Syria, it did not do anything with them other than collaborate. It merely chose to struggle against the most democratic and free country among them, which has also been a member of NATO since 1952. One can argue that the PKK found many sponsors at the time, as it was a proxy during the Cold War. The third chapter discusses, in detail, the chronology of state sponsorship for the PKK.

In the 1980s, the leader of the organization, Abdullah Ocalan, expressed the organizational motto as “ Let’s kill to be an authority”⁸⁶ (see Figure 4). The PKK carried out numerous violent attacks on government and security officials and Kurdish villages. The anarchy caused thousands of people to migrate to the western cities of Turkey and European countries. Michael Radu states that the Turkish government supported immigration to defensible centers. This is because the mountaineous terrain was a serious handicap in protecting civilians from the terrorists’ raids, and the existence of civilians prevented successful military operations.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the PKK, as an opportunist group, turned the migration to its advantage by employing some of the desperate immigrants in its criminal activities.

⁸⁵ Mustafa Cosar Unal, “Strategist or Pragmatist: A Challenging Look at Ocalan’s Retrospective Classification and Definition of PKK’s Strategic Periods between 1973 and 2012,” 425.

⁸⁶ Bekir Cakar, Mahmut Cengiz and Fatih Tombul, “The History of the PKK,” in *The PKK: Financial Sources, Social and Political Dimensions*, eds. Charles Strozier and James Frank (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller GmbH & Co.KG, 2011), 12.

⁸⁷ Radu, “The Rise and Fall of the PKK,” 57.

Figure 4. The PKK's Attacks on Kurdish Villages



Note: Infanticide has been a common practice of the PKK for terrorizing people. During the PKK's years of violence, the majority of civilian victims has been ethnic Kurds. Source: *Milliyet Newspaper Blog*, February 1, 2010, <http://blog.milliyet.com.tr/kurt-isyanlarinin-nedenleri--tarihcesi-ve-pkk-katliamlari--3-/Blog/?BlogNo=227075>.

2. Alliance with Kurdish Drug Lords

Like many other terrorist organizations, the PKK started creating alternative revenue by entering the drug business. Although the Marxist ideology of the PKK rejects the rule of feudality and class exploitation, it developed strong relations with some Kurdish clans, “the Aksoy, Aydınli, Baybaşin, Cantürk, Güven, Kitay, Kocakaya, Koylan, Özdemir, Polat, Sakık, Toprak, Uğur, and Yıldırım.”⁸⁸ Haut likens those relations to those of Sicilian Mafia families. He highlights that it is impossible to distinguish the PKK from these clans.⁸⁹

In the 1990s, the PKK and those clans, which had already captured the drug flow from the Golden Crescent to the Balkan countries, mutually benefited. Ekici et al. note that the relation began as the PKK started imposing “patriotic taxes” on Kurdish drug networks. Abdullah Öcalan, in his court, publicly sanctioned substantial contributions from the Baybaşin, Cihangir, and Cantürk families.⁹⁰ During the alliance period, the PKK learned how to finance itself through the drug business, and Kurdish drug networks (clans) found the shelter that they were seeking against the government. Kurdish drug lords secured themselves by tipping the PKK. They enjoyed the terror atmosphere, which the PKK created, because the state focused its attention on terrorism.

3. Operational Tool Period

After realizing that there is substantial revenue in the drug trade, the PKK initiated reorganizing its relations and structure. There are two major reasons for this change: first, for the greedy organization, tax income and extortion funds were tiny amounts when compared with the revenue of Kurdish drug lords. Second, for the drug lords, the PKK’s taxation diminished their competitiveness in the illicit market.

⁸⁸ Haut, “Kurdish Extremism and Organized Crime: The Kurdistan Workers’ Party,” 10.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁰ Ekici, Williams and Akbulut, “The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence or Conflict?,” 150.

The PKK wanted to expand its financial capabilities by entering the drug arena. Makarenko notes that terrorist groups “copy their decentralized structure of cells and nodes from drug cartels” and the new cell-type structure gives them “a capacity to regenerate themselves” easily after severe law enforcement raids.⁹¹ Sanderson thinks that networked cell structure is highly resistant to intelligence efforts. They have minimal communication with the leadership, which authorizes them to make their decisions without approval.⁹² Ekici et al. argue that the PKK established semi-independent cells to have “in-house capabilities” to manage the drug business. By doing so, the PKK gained control of the drugs, from cultivation to street marketing.⁹³

On the other side, Kurdish drug lords were not content because the PKK over-exploited them. The terrorist organization not only imposed taxes on drugs at the Iraqi and Iranian borders, but also started extorting the Kurdish drug lords’ street sellers. Ekici et al. add that the dissatisfaction of the PKK created an organizational backlash against the Kurdish drug lords. In the mid-1990s, “the master-apprentice relationship was transformed initially into a roughly equal partnership.”⁹⁴

4. Commercial Terrorism Period

In the early 2000s, the tension between the PKK and Kurdish drug networks increased. The PKK wanted to monopolize the European street market. Therefore, the spirit of the 1990s’ cooperation and partnership left its place to hostility. Ekici et al. provide a brief history of the rivalry between the groups in the

⁹¹ Tamara Makarenko, “Terrorist Use of Organised Crime: Operational Tool or Exacerbating the Threat?” *Defining and Defying Organised Crime: Discourse, Perceptions, and Reality* (2009), 193.

⁹² Thomas M. Sanderson, “Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines,” 54.

⁹³ Ekici, Williams and Akbulut, “The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence or Conflict?,” 153.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 153.

United Kingdom and the Netherlands.⁹⁵ Both sides have and continue to recruit Kurdish immigrants who are living in European countries. Several street battles happened between the PKK and the Bombacılar (Bombers) group of Hüseyin Baybaşın, known as “Europe’s Pablo Escobar.”⁹⁶ Consequently, the PKK militarily defeated its rivals in the drug trade and became the hegemon of the Balkan drug route.

The contemporary financial sources of the PKK are explained in detail in the fourth chapter. The organization is present in many types of illicit trade. It applied its vast experience in drugs to other illicit areas, such as cigarette and arms smuggling, human trafficking, prostitution, extortion, and money laundering. Haut argues that the PKK was once a political organization, which later turned to crime. He notes that the organization “maintains its ideological trimmings for public consumption” and “always puts forward its ‘revolutionary’ nature as an absolutory excuse for all its crimes.”⁹⁷ Some European communities employed pro-Kurdish rhetoric, just like the PKK, which indirectly supported the activities of the PKK in Europe. Some European countries were hesitant towards the PKK, which gave the organization the opportunity to strengthen itself and its links in Europe. Ekici et al. note that the PKK established nearly 300 cultural clubs and refugee camps in Europe. The PKK uses these points as its recruitment and drug distribution centers.⁹⁸

The personal motives of individuals are further evidence of the commercialism of the terrorist organization. Rosenthal notes that money is a strong motive for religion-affiliated terrorist groups in Iraq and Afghanistan. She shares the observations of the spokesperson in detainee operations, who said,

⁹⁵ Ekici, Williams and Akbulut, “The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence or Conflict?,” 151–152.

⁹⁶ Brian G. Carlson, “Huseyin Baybasin-Europe’s Pablo Escobar,” *SAIS Review* 25, no. 1 (2005), 1.

⁹⁷ Haut, “Kurdish Extremism and Organized Crime: The Kurdistan Workers’ Party,” 2, 3.

⁹⁸ Ekici, Williams and Akbulut, “The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence or Conflict?,” 159.

“Interestingly, we’ve found that the vast majority of the detainees are not inspired by jihad or hate for the coalition or Iraqi government—the vast majority are inspired by money.”⁹⁹ She thinks that “in order to make a buck, these impoverished, unskilled, frustrated men were willing to do the bidding of *jihadists*.”¹⁰⁰ At the foot soldiers’ level of the PKK, it can be claimed that ignorance and economic difficulties are not the sole reasons; however, they are a huge part of the problem of ongoing recruitment. Süleyman Özeren et al., from the International Center on Terrorism and Transnational Crime (UTSAM), estimates that 72 percent of PKK terrorists do not have an education or completed only elementary school, and 78 percent of them were unemployed before joining the organization.¹⁰¹ Their research indicates that some individuals see engagement as an occupation for themselves. The authors share testimonies from terrorists in prison. One says, “Our family was in financial trouble. One of my friends whom I met in that period told me that if I joined the organization I would no longer worry about money—I would be free from such concerns.”¹⁰² By joining the organization, the foot soldiers of the PKK gain a full-time paid job. Therefore, the PKK members enjoy the revenue and benefits of this organization in accordance with their status in the group.

5. Creating a Black Hole or Transforming into a Pure OC Group

There seems two possibilities for the PKK’s evolution in the near future. First and worst, the PKK manages to create a black hole for itself. Rosenthal notes, “For-profit terrorists need to develop autonomous areas so they can cultivate more drugs or provide new smuggling routes, control more diamond mines, or rule over areas in which they can kidnap and hold hostages.”¹⁰³ The

⁹⁹ Rosenthal, “For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs,” 482.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 482.

¹⁰¹ Süleyman Özeren et al., “Whom do they Recruit?: Profiling and Recruitment in the PKK/KCK,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37, no. 4 (2014), 328.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 336.

¹⁰³ Rosenthal, “For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs,” 487.

PKK has attempted several times to gain autonomy in the Eastern regions of Turkey. Nevertheless, the Turkish military and law enforcement units defeated them many times. Second, the PKK may transform itself into a pure organized crime group over time. In 2012, the Turkish government started talks with some cadres of the PKK. The ambition was to stop the clashes. In 2015, the government suspended the talks due to unexpected raids of the PKK merchants. It is obvious that there are different groups within the PKK: terrorists and merchants. Their opinions differ in accordance with their enjoyment level from the annual revenue of the PKK.

D. CONCLUSION

There are differences and similarities between organized crime and terrorist groups. However, it is not easy to separate one from the other. In many cases, they are intermingled at various levels. Makarenko identifies the levels of connection and overlap between organized crime and terrorist groups.

Among several terrorist groups, the PKK is a remarkable one because it acts as a commercial terrorism group. In reality, it lost its political objectives long ago; however, it still uses political sayings in order to convince individuals and leverage its position against the state. Today, the main goal of the hybrid organization is preserving its benefits against the international community and order. West Sands Advisory notes that ethno-nationalist groups that have used organized crime do not stop the violence even after they reach an agreement with the government. They state that the ETA and the PKK are examples of transforming hybrids, which use “the façade of political motivations to hide criminal activity.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ West Sands Advisory LLP, *Europe’s Crime-Terror Nexus: Links between Terrorist and Organised Crime Groups in the European Union* (European Parliament, Brussels: Policy Department C, Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2012), 39.

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III. STATE SPONSORSHIP PERIOD OF THE PKK

A. A PROXY FOR MANY COUNTRIES

Michael Freeman outlines four ways to finance terrorism: “state sponsorship, illegal activities, legal activities, and popular support.”¹⁰⁵ State sponsorship is the initial funding method of many terrorist organizations. Faruk Ekmekci, an international relations professor at Karadeniz Technical University, notes that it may not happen at the birth of the organization; however, it carries organizations to other phases in which they thrive.¹⁰⁶ This chapter reviews the state sponsorship phenomenon, using the PKK as a case study. It illuminates how some states exploited the Kurdish identity for their own goals and the various ways in which they supported the PKK.

States can support terrorist groups to achieve their own goals. Martha Crenshaw, a political science professor at Stanford University, points out the frequency of state sponsorship, and she notes, “Supporting the opponents of one’s enemies is a common practice in international conflict, as is labeling the other side terrorist and one’s own side freedom fighter.”¹⁰⁷ Daniel Byman groups the common reasons why states support terrorist groups in three categories: strategic, ideological, and political reasons. For strategic reasons, countries may want to weaken their rivals, to impose their wills on other countries, to change their administrations and establish sympathetic ones to themselves, and to help opposing groups. To achieve their ideological reasons, states can support terrorist groups to earn an international reputation for supporting oppressed people and to establish similar ideological regimes. States can also support

¹⁰⁵ Michael Freeman, “Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology,” in *Financing Terrorism: Case Studies*, ed. Michael Freeman (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 12.

¹⁰⁶ Faruk Ekmekci, “Terrorism as War by Other Means: National Security and State Support for Terrorism,” *Revista Brasileira De Politica Internacional* 54, no. 1 (2011), 127.

¹⁰⁷ Martha Crenshaw, “Is International Terrorism Primarily State-Sponsored?” in *International Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*, ed. Charles W. Jr Kegley (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 165.

terrorism to pander to their own populations and also satisfy their economic and military requirements. Politicians may aid some ethnic and religious groups to acquire votes, or they can support terrorist groups to acquire more military aid or funds from the international community in order to use in their domestic conflicts.¹⁰⁸

State sponsorship may occur in various ways. Byman points out five different methods. First, it can train terrorists or organize joint operations with its intelligence members. Second, a state can donate money and supply weaponry and logistical support to a terrorist group.¹⁰⁹ Third, terrorists specifically seek diplomatic support to justify their violent actions and, in return, they recruit more people and expand their influence on a larger population. Byman highlights this issue as he notes, “Terrorists crave recognition.”¹¹⁰ A sympathetic state can provide diplomatic support to the organization in international arena. Fourth, states can mentor terrorist groups in their organizational construction and ideologically lead them. Fifth, states can provide safe havens to terrorist groups to operate freely in their territories.¹¹¹

Freeman notes that the cooperation of sponsoring states and terrorists is a win-win game.¹¹² Sponsoring terrorism is the securest and cheapest way for a state to wage war on the other as they did in past centuries.¹¹³ Ekmekci notes, “Terrorist organizations have been tools of the ‘powerful’ as much as terrorism has been the tool of the powerless.”¹¹⁴ Because states employ terrorist groups

¹⁰⁸ Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, 26–49.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 59–60.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 62–66.

¹¹² Freeman, *Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology*, 13.

¹¹³ Laqueur, “Postmodern Terrorism,” 8.

¹¹⁴ Ekmekci, “Terrorism as War by Other Means: National Security and State Support for Terrorism,” 127.

as their “mercenaries.”¹¹⁵ By doing so, they can apply all violent methods without the restriction of international or ethical values. They can easily deny their responsibility, blame the terrorists, and protect themselves from judicial, economic, and military reactions.¹¹⁶ Also, using terrorists to achieve some of its goals is a state’s cheapest option. Freeman indicates that the estimated 100 million USD per year that Iran is alleged of donating to Hezbollah is a tiny amount of Iran’s budget; however, it yields half of Hezbollah’s annual operational budget al.so, having a sponsoring state is the simplest funding method for a terrorist organization. The organization does not risk its members to earn money and it focuses on terrorist attacks.¹¹⁷ Bruce Hoffman notes,

State sponsorship has in fact a “force multiplying” effect on ordinary terrorist groups. It places greater resources in the hands of terrorists, thereby enhancing planning, intelligence, logistical capabilities, training, finances, and sophistication. Moreover, since state-sponsored terrorists do not depend on the local population for support, they need not be concerned about alienating popular opinion or provoking a public backlash.¹¹⁸

However, their collaboration may fall short of the terrorists’ expectations. First, states want priority for their own ambitions and they can easily abandon terrorist groups if they achieve diplomatic solutions to reach their ambitions.¹¹⁹ Second, sponsoring states may break their ties with terrorists if they see a possible retaliation, military reaction, or damage to their state reputation in the international arena.¹²⁰ At the same time, terrorist groups do not want to solely depend on state sponsorship because states try to limit the organization’s

¹¹⁵ Ekmekci, “Terrorism as War by Other Means: National Security and State Support for Terrorism,” 127.

¹¹⁶ Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, 22–23.

¹¹⁷ Freeman, *Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology*, 13.

¹¹⁸ Bruce Hoffman, “Terrorism Trends and Prospects,” in *Countering the New Terrorism*, ed. Ian O. Lesser (Washington, D.C.: RAND, 1999), 15.

¹¹⁹ Freeman, *Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology*, 13.

¹²⁰ Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, 50–51.

activities or targets. States prioritize for their own objectives. Therefore, the terrorist groups attempt to improve self-funding techniques.¹²¹

Mitchel Roth and Murat Sever, criminal justice scholars from Sam Houston State University, outline the state sponsors of the PKK as the Soviet Union, Greek Cypriots, Greece, Armenia, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Bulgaria, and Cuba.¹²² Mincheva and Gurr note,

Many of Turkey's neighbors have supported the PKK at different points in time with money, weapons and training, safe haven, or with intangible moral and political support. State support for terrorist groups helps them survive and evolve into larger, better trained, and well-equipped groups. Some states, notably Syria, Iran, and Iraq, have provided substantial material support. Others, such as Greece and USSR, are also suspected of helping the PKK but supporting evidence is either anecdotal or controversial. And finally there are states such as Denmark and the Netherlands that have "passively" facilitated the PKK's activities."¹²³

It is difficult to review all of the PKK's international relations. That would be a separate research project. However, Michael Radu, a political scientist and journalist, notes that Abdullah Ocalan's political asylum seeking in 1998 and 1999 revealed many facts about the PKK's state sponsors.¹²⁴ Therefore, this chapter specifically focuses on countries such as Syria, Greece, Russia, and Italy. Additionally, Armenia is studied to understand problem areas. This is because the bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia are seasonally popular in the United States.

¹²¹ Freeman, *Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology*, 13.

¹²² Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 906.

¹²³ Mincheva and Gurr, *Crime-Terror Alliances and the State: Ethnonationalist and Islamist Challenges to Regional Security*, 58.

¹²⁴ Radu, "The Rise and Fall of the PKK," 54.

B. SYRIA

Although Turkey and Syria share a 911-kilometer borderline and similar historical and religious backgrounds, Syria has consistently supported terrorist campaigns against Turkey. Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, political science professors at Middle East Technical University, note,

Syria resorted to balancing acts against Turkey by providing sanctuary to the PKK, the ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia), and the Turkish radical left (DEV-SOL). This support increased further after the 1980 military coup in Turkey, when many of these groups sought refuge abroad.¹²⁵

The U.S. Secretary of State designated Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism on December 29, 1979.

Altunışık and Tür give four reasons for Syria's PKK sponsoring activities. First, Syria was a part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of WWI. The Arabs supported the Allied forces in hopes of building their own nation state; however, their collaboration resulted in a French mandate. During its nation-building process, the Syrian authoritarian regime established its policies on enmities against Turkey and Israel. Second, the unification of Hatay and Turkey in 1939 strengthened Syria's hatred. Syria considered the unification illegitimate until the 1970s. These two motivations explain Syria's revengeful policy against Turkey. Third, Turkey started constructing a series of dams on the Euphrates for irrigational and energy purposes: Keban in 1974, Karakaya in 1987, and Ataturk in 1990. Syria protested the construction of the dams, which is known as the Southeast Anatolia Development Project (GAP), by supporting the terrorist organization, the PKK. Byman sees Syria's support for the PKK as a "tool"¹²⁶ to manipulate the water-sharing issue. Altunışık and Tür note that by a protocol signed in 1987, Turkey would give Syria 500 cubic meters of water per second,

¹²⁵ Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations," *Security Dialogue* 37 (June 2006), 232.

¹²⁶ Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, 151.

and both parties agreed to mutually extradite terrorism suspects.¹²⁷ However, the Syrian regime disobeyed the protocol by continuously supporting PKK terrorists.¹²⁸ Fourth, Altunışık and Tür point out that Syria supported the PKK in order to “quell the possible aspirations of its own Kurdish population.”¹²⁹ Radu notes that Syrian Kurds were the main recruitment source for the PKK. He argues that Ocalan ignored the suffering Kurds in Syria and collaborated with the brutal Hafez Assad regime.¹³⁰ Assad encouraged the PKK to establish a Kurdish state wherever it wanted, but not in Syrian territory. Thanks to the PKK, he managed to direct Syria’s own Kurdish problem to another country.

Abdullah Öcalan and PKK terrorists escaped to Syrian-controlled Lebanon in 1979. Mehmet Orhan, a political sociologist at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS in France), notes that, before the military coup in September 1980, the PKK terrorists communicated with Palestinian Marxist Organizations to provide shelter in the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon.¹³¹ Radu cites PKK sources that describe its escape as a ‘tactical retreat’¹³² to protect itself from the military coup and prosecution. He notes that they were given “relatively free rein in the Syrian-controlled Beka’a [Beqaa] Valley...where they thrived.”¹³³ Providing a safe haven in Syria-controlled Lebanon was the beginning of the Syria and PKK relationship. During the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Abdullah Ocalan moved to Damascus and started controlling the

¹²⁷ Altunışık and Tür, “From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations,” 232.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 231–233.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 233.

¹³⁰ Radu, “The Rise and Fall of the PKK,” 52.

¹³¹ Mehmet Orhan, “Transborder Violence: The PKK in Turkey, Syria and Iraq,” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 7, no. 1 (01/02; 2015/05, 2014), 31.

¹³² Radu, “The Rise and Fall of the PKK,” 52.

¹³³ Ibid., 52.

organization from his villa.¹³⁴ The organization held its so-called second congress in Damascus in 1982.¹³⁵ Orhan argues that the vacuum after the Israeli invasion created an opportunity for the PKK terrorists to invade Palestinian camps in Beqaa Valley and capture their weapons. He adds that the PKK had terrorist camps in Barr Elias, Quab Elias, Riyak, Masnaa, and Baalbek in Syrian-controlled Lebanon.¹³⁶ As Andrew Mango notes, Ocalan accepted that 15,000 recruits were trained in those camps by 1994.¹³⁷ Those camps were employed not only for training, but also for drug production. Political science scholar Sedat Laciner argues that the PKK started its drug business by cultivating opium and hemp around its camps (Baalbek and Hermen) in Lebanon. Thanks to the support of the Syrian and Greek administrations, the terrorist organization acquired significant revenue from transporting drugs from the ports of Beirut, Sayda, Sur, Miryan, Abdeh, and Tripoli to the Greek Cypriot, Greek, and Italian ports.¹³⁸ Mango highlights the Soviets' involvement in arming Marxist groups in Turkey since the 1970s. The Soviets used Syria and Bulgaria as its proxies in the affairs with Marxist revolutionaries in Turkey.¹³⁹

Although the PKK trained its terrorists and carried out continuous raids in Turkey, the Syrian regime continuously denied Abdullah Öcalan's presence in Syria and the terrorist camps in Syrian-controlled Lebanon. Turkey attempted, but often failed, to solve Syria's PKK-sponsoring problem diplomatically. Altunışık and Tür cite an anecdote of Turkish President Süleyman Demirel, who was then the prime minister, which describes the indecent attitude of the Syrian regime:

¹³⁴ Cakar, Cengiz and Tombul, "The History of the PKK," 12.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 9.

¹³⁶ Orhan, "Transborder Violence: The PKK in Turkey, Syria and Iraq," 31–32.

¹³⁷ Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 36.

¹³⁸ Sedat Laciner, "Drug Smuggling as a Main Source of PKK Terrorism," *The Journal of Turkish Weekly* (19 October 2008, 2008), 2.

¹³⁹ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 19, 35.

in 1993 when I went to Damascus as a Prime Minister. I talked to Hafiz Assad for four and a half hours. I said, 'This is not being neighborly. This man [Abdullah Ocalan] is killing my citizens, soldiers, teachers, imams. He is giving orders from here. This is against being Muslim, neighbors, and friends. Get this man out of here, give him to us.' 'No, he is not here,' he said. In response I pulled out a paper from the file. The addresses the man resides, the telephone numbers he uses, they are all written. I gave it to him. I said, 'Right now he is in Latakia at this number. If you call him now, you can find him.' He took the paper, folded it unabashed, put it in his pocket. The idea that without cutting Syria's support, this cannot be ended became clear to me that day at that moment. It has been reinforced in time.¹⁴⁰

Turkey tried several times to diplomatically encourage Syria not to sponsor the PKK's activities; however, the Syrian regime continued its denial policy for years. Consequently, the Turkish government decided to force Syria to expel PKK terrorists. In his inaugural speech on October 1, 1998, President Demirel declared that Turkey could no longer be patient with Syria and it reserved its right to retaliate if Syria continued sponsoring the PKK. To show its determination, Turkey immediately strengthened its military presence at the Turkish–Syrian border.¹⁴¹ Egyptian President Husnu Mubarek initiated shuttle diplomacy between the two sides, and Syria responded to Turkey's seriousness by expelling Öcalan out of Syria. Both sides met in Adana, a Turkish city close to the Turkish–Syrian border, and signed the Adana Accord on October 20, 1998. Altunışık and Tür state that the accord ended Syrian logistical support for the PKK, and Syria closed the PKK's training camps.¹⁴²

Losing its safe haven in Syria was a breaking point for the PKK. It created a domino effect in the PKK's international relations and policies. Mustafa Coşar Ünal, a Turkish Police superintendent and scholar, discusses these effects in his study for the PKK's strategic periods. In 2000, the PKK gathered an extraordinary

¹⁴⁰ Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations," 237.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 237.

¹⁴² Ibid., 238.

congress, known as its seventh or “evolution/transformation congress.”¹⁴³ The terrorist organization announced “the use of political effort rather than the use of violence as a sole means to reach its goal.”¹⁴⁴

The PKK aimed to change the international and public opinion about itself. To achieve that goal, it attempted twice to change its name, from the PKK to the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (KADEK) in 2002, and then to the Kurdistan People’s Congress (KONGRA-GEL) in 2003. Unal notes KADEK’s goal was “the recognition of Kurds in Turkey’s Constitution (including certain cultural and linguistic rights) as opposed to PKK’s initial goal of founding an independent Kurdish state comprised of territories from Syria, Iran, and Iraq.”¹⁴⁵ In 2003, KONGRA-GEL, which was established to replace KADEK, stated that it was not going to employ violence to reach its goals.¹⁴⁶ Later, KONGRA-GEL, which was unsuccessful in creating a new view among the public as a political organization, returned to its old name, the PKK.

C. GREECE

Mango believes that the trajectory, which Öcalan followed after his expulsion from Syria, is an important hint about the PKK’s international links and sponsors. First, he fled to the Greek Cypriot region, then to Greece. Until his capture, on the way to Nairobi Airport on February 15, 1999, he commuted between Greece, Italy, and Russia. When he was captured, he was going to the airport for a flight to Holland. He travelled all of those countries with a diplomatic Greek Cypriot passport issued under a false name¹⁴⁷ (see Figure 5). Greece was

¹⁴³ Ünal, “Strategist or Pragmatist: A Challenging Look at Ocalan’s Retrospective Classification and Definition of PKK’s Strategic Periods between 1973 and 2012,” 432.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 432.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 433.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 433.

¹⁴⁷ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 44–45.

the first place he sought political asylum; however, Greece did not grant such a thing in order not to reveal its covert operations.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Greece and PKK Terrorism* (Ankara: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999), 12.

Radu points out the importance of Ocalan's arrest, saying "Greece supported, tolerated, and encouraged the PKK for more than a decade, as the circumstances surrounding Öcalan's arrest ultimately revealed."¹⁴⁹ On December 23, 1998, a Greek daily newspaper called *Eksusia* interviewed Öcalan about the relationship between Greece and the PKK. He stated:

...Greece has played a great part in my decision to go to Europe. Let me put it clearer: If there had not been my Greek friends, I would never have been able to come to Europe. If we did not have this friendship with Greece, I could not come to Europe. My friendship with Greece encouraged me in making my decision to come to Europe. We opened a gateway in Europe (meaning his arrival in Italy). If we succeed going through this gateway, a political solution to the problem would then be found. This would be a political success for Greece...as well.¹⁵⁰

Greece's sponsorship can be summarized in three main dimensions: providing shelter, training, and logistics. The PKK established a sub-organization to operate freely in Greece, which is called National Liberation Front of Kurdistan (ERNK). The ERNK opened offices freely in Greece: two ERNK offices, two Kurdistan Committees, a Kurdistan Cultural Center, a Kurdish Red Crescent Office, and a Kurdistan Solidarity Committee. The offices freely displayed PKK banners, and famous Greek politicians attended several opening ceremonies of those offices. The offices all worked for the propaganda and fund-raising operations of the terrorist organization.¹⁵¹ The *Patterns of Global Terrorism Report* of the U.S. Department of State notes,

The Greek Government also continues to tolerate the official presence in Athens of two Turkish terrorist groups-the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan, which is the political wing of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C)-formerly Devrimci Sol-which is

¹⁴⁹ Radu, "The Rise and Fall of the PKK," 53.

¹⁵⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Greece and PKK Terrorism*, 15.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

responsible for the murder of two U.S. Government contractors in Turkey.¹⁵²

The PKK's facilities were not limited to propaganda offices. The organization also had training and fund-raising camps and cells in Greece. The most famous camps were "Lavrion Refugee Camp" and "Lamia Halkida Camp." The cells were in Aharnon, Dafni, and Thessaloniki.¹⁵³ The testimonies of captured PKK terrorists show that they were trained in those camps in 50- to 70-people groups for two- to three-month periods. They were trained to apply sabotage techniques and utilize explosives.¹⁵⁴ Michael Gunter notes that some retired Greek high-ranking officers helped the PKK train its terrorists and planned sabotaging tourism in Turkey.¹⁵⁵

The statements of PKK terrorist Seydo Hazar, who was seeking shelter, appeared in *The Observer* on September 28, 1997. He claimed,

When he lived in a PKK safe-house in the village of Drosia, he left behind a large cache of explosives, including TNT and Amonal, as well as the precursors for chemical and biological agents. These include the nerve agent sarin and laboratory facilities for producing the E.coli and botulism bacterias."¹⁵⁶

Although *The Observer* informed Greek authorities about the places of the materials, they failed to find any evidence of or suspects in the targeted search following these statements. The Greek authorities announced that it was Turkish propaganda.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, long before the statements of Saydo Hazar, Greek

¹⁵² U.S. Department of State, *1996 Patterns of Global Terrorism Report*, Europe and Eurasia Overview. <http://www.state.gov/www/global/terrorism/1996Report/europe.html>.

¹⁵³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Greece and PKK Terrorism*, 47.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 65–71.

¹⁵⁵ Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1997), 110–111.

¹⁵⁶ Shyam Bhatia Naxos and Leonard Doyle, "Poison Bomber Offers Secrets for Sanctuary Fugitive Kurdish Terrorist Reveals: 1 Kurdish PKK Plan Sarin Attack on British Tourists: 2 Greeks Shelter PKK and Provide Stinger Missiles: 3 Terror Inc: Tamils PKK, Hamas and Neo-Nazis Collude," *The Observer*, Sep 28, 1997, 1.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

journalist Panos Panagiotopoulos had an interview with Öcalan in Beqaa Valley. In the interview, broadcasted on Greek Sky TV on March 11, 1996, Öcalan warned European tourists not to go to Turkey and “if they do, the PKK cannot be held responsible.”¹⁵⁸ The PKK was obviously planning urban attacks, particularly on tourist resorts.¹⁵⁹ The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that Greece encouraged PKK terrorists to attack tourism in Turkey. Being located on two opposite sides of the Aegean Sea, Turkey and Greece were competing for the Mediterranean low- and middle-income tourism market. Greece wanted to canalize tourists to the Greek islands by blocking Turkey’s share of Mediterranean tourism. Haut cites Şemdin Sakık, who once acted as the second-in-command, as he reiterates Öcalan’s view: “We will attack tourist sites, especially in the Mediterranean region in order to put an end to tourism in Turkey. Our target is not the tourists, but [to] destroy tourism and the flow of money in Turkey.”¹⁶⁰

The second point raised by Seydo Hazar was the PKK’s involvement in global arms trade with the help of Greek authorities. Hazar states,

11 Stinger missiles, manufactured under license in Greece, were sold by his group to the Tamil Tigers and subsequently used to shoot down military transport planes over Sri Lanka. Two weeks ago a Sri Lankan air force plane was shot down by a missile believed to be a Stinger, killing 80 servicemen.¹⁶¹

It is difficult to clarify the PKK’s role, whether it was a mediator between Greece and Tamil terrorists or it was a seller. It may have acquired revenue by selling arms, which were given by its own sponsor. Ekici et al. note the official testimony of Şemdin Sakık as he claims that the PKK bought 50 stinger missiles

¹⁵⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Greece and PKK Terrorism*, 22.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶⁰ Haut, “Kurdish Extremism and Organized Crime: The Kurdistan Workers’ Party,” 6.

¹⁶¹ Naxos and Doyle, “Poison Bomber Offers Secrets for Sanctuary Fugitive Kurdish Terrorist Reveals,” 1.

from Greece.¹⁶² Gunter mentions a secret file, which was presented to Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller in 1993. In the file, it was claimed that Greece paid 900 USD/monthly to the ERNK members, and it procured Aris antitank missiles, different kinds of arms, and explosives.¹⁶³

The organization sells publications in many countries to accomplish two goals: propagating and extorting money. Greece permitted the PKK to publish and sell its propaganda materials called *Kurdish Report* (English), *Foni Tu Kurdistan* [Kurdistan's Voice] (Greek), *Al Aouge* (Arabic), and *El Evch* (Arabic). The Arabic materials were sold in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq¹⁶⁴ (see Figure 6).

Greece is located on a territory vulnerable to illegal immigration. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims that Greece discriminated against illegal immigrants and asylum seekers because of their nationalities. It accepted ethnic Kurds on its own territory and later placed them in refugee camps to indoctrinate them against Turkey; however, it deported all others from Iraq, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.¹⁶⁵ The selective attitude of Greece created another financial opportunity for the PKK terrorists. The Turkish document on Greece and PKK relations mentions a German ARD television program called *Report*. It was first broadcasted on January 18, 1998. The program interviewed a European gang member focused on human trafficking. He said,

Our organization is not directly linked with the PKK, but on several occasions we had to pay ransom to the PKK in order to do our job. The PKK itself is also involved in human trafficking. In Greece there is no permission to the others. My organization can only smuggle people into Greece, but from Greece onwards, it is exclusively a PKK job.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Ekici, Williams and Akbulut, "The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence or Conflict?," 157.

¹⁶³ Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 111.

¹⁶⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Greece and PKK Terrorism*, 15.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

Greece denied its involvement in many phases of the PKK's development, despite the evidence and testimonies of many PKK terrorists. However, the ways Greece physically and politically protected Öcalan undeniably exposed the links between the two. On November 26, 1998, Greek Prime Minister Kostas Simitis publicly stated that the PKK is an "organization fighting for the rights of the Kurdish minority and using various means to reach this end."¹⁶⁷ Another statement came from the Greek Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, George Nicolaidis, on December 8, 1998. He said, the "PKK is a political organization and also a military one. It fights for the liberation of Kurdistan. So, it is a liberation movement. It has a political office in Greece, which, you know, is a free country."¹⁶⁸

After Öcalan's expulsion, Greek authorities supported him not only with their political statements, but also with physical protection by Greek agents in safe houses. Although the Greek government was eager to provide political asylum to the terrorist, they tried not to show it openly. Therefore, they helped Öcalan in all means to find political asylum. Öcalan commuted between Athens, Moscow, Rome, and Nairobi.¹⁶⁹ Before his capture on February 15, 1999, Öcalan lived in the Greek embassy building in Kenya for two weeks.¹⁷⁰ After the international community discovered the details of Öcalan's flee and capture, the Greek government lost its prestige in its international relations and domestic politics. Greece was about to be designated as an international terrorism sponsoring state by the United States.

¹⁶⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Greece and PKK Terrorism*, 21.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁷⁰ Brian Murphy, "Three Greek Cabinet Ministers Resign Over Ocalan Affair," *The Washington Post*, sec. News, World, February 18, 1999.

Figure 6. PKK Posters in Greek

ΕΞΟΡΜΗΣΗ
Οικονομικής ενίσχυσης των
αγωνιστών της ελευθερίας
ΤΟΥ ΡΚΚ

Ενάντια στη
βαρβαρότητα
ΤΟΥ
τουρκικού κράτους

ΘΕΟΦΙΛΟΣ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑΔΗΣ:
Η ασφάλεια
στο Αιγαίο και την Κύπρο
περνά από τα βουνά
του Κουρδιστάν

Μεγαλύτερη υποστήριξη
για να είναι ισχυρότερη
η κοινή μας νίκη (Εθνική Τράπεζα 129/628568-65)

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΑΠΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΩΤΙΚΟ ΜΕΤΩΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΥΡΔΙΣΤΑΝ (ΕΡΝΚ)

Note: A poster of the ERNK office in Athens that notes “more support for our common victory against the barbarism of Turkish State.” It also includes a Greek National Bank account number to collect donations. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Greece and PKK Terrorism* (Ankara: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999), 18.

To minimize that stigma, Greek Prime Minister Kostas Simitis stepped back and sacrificed three ministers of his cabinet, including foreign affairs, internal affairs, and public order.¹⁷¹ Mango notes Prime Minister Kostas Simitis assigned a new foreign minister, George Papandreu, to alter the spirit of relations with Turkey. Both sides agreed on a protocol to fight together against terrorism.¹⁷²

Gunter outlines the Greek reasons for supporting terrorist campaigns against Turkey. First, some Greek nationalists have had a *Megali Idea* project to establish a great Greece on the Turkish territory, since the conquest of Istanbul, in 1453.¹⁷³ Greece attempted to realize the project after WWI; however, the campaign ended in frustration because of the Turkish Independence War. Vamik Volkan, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Virginia, notes that, after the Independence War in 1922, Turkey did not perceive the *Megali Idea* project as dangerous until the 1970s, when Greece wanted to annex Cyprus Island.¹⁷⁴ Second, Greece had claimed regions of the Aegean Sea and flight zone, which challenged international and bilateral agreements. Greece attempted to leverage its military position by arming the Aegean islands and invading some Turkish rocks in Aegean Sea.¹⁷⁵ However, the broader international arena did not support these claims and actions. Although Greece and Turkey are both NATO members, Greece continued its leveraging operations by using proxies, such as

¹⁷¹ Anadolu Agency, "Greek Former FM 'Forced to Resign' Amid Ocalan Arrest: Greece's Former Foreign Minister Says the U.S. Accused His Country of 'Sheltering International Terrorism,'" *Anadolu Agency*, sec. Athens, April 28, 2014. <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/319368--Greek-former-fm-forced-to-resign-amid-Ocalan-arrest>.

¹⁷² Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 45.

¹⁷³ Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 110.

¹⁷⁴ Vamik Volkan, *Blood Lines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 135.

¹⁷⁵ Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 110.

the ASALA and the PKK. Öcalan said, “We love the Greeks. We are together because of the common [Turkish] enemy.”¹⁷⁶

D. RUSSIA

The Soviet Union was the main sponsor behind many Marxist-Leninist terrorist groups.¹⁷⁷ During the Cold War, it supported terrorists in order to weaken its rivals and expand its ideology throughout a larger area. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia took its place as the biggest heir to that empire. Michael Gunter outlines the main problems between the two states: the historical enmity between them, their rivalry to influence the newly emerged Turkish states in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Russia’s refusal to reduce its military forces due to the Conventional Forces Reduction Agreement.¹⁷⁸

The Turkish chief of staff released a report about the captured weapons from the PKK and their origins. According to the report, there were 11,297 Kalashnikov rifles, 5,713 rifles of other types, 1,610 rocket launchers, 11,568 land mines, 3,490 hand grenades, and 2,885 pistols. Although the PKK, or the manufacturer, had erased serial numbers and specific marks on many of them, research on the identifiable origin of the weapons shows that 39.8 percent of all of the weaponry was manufactured by Russia and former Soviet countries. The PKK acquired 60.6 percent of its land mines from Italy, so Italian manufacturing follows Russian manufacturing with a total of 32.8 percent.¹⁷⁹ Mango notes that these numbers and percentages cannot prove the state sponsorship of any country because Öcalan stated in his trial, “the procurement of weapons was largely a commercial affair.”¹⁸⁰ One can blame arms smugglers, who specifically

¹⁷⁶ Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 110.

¹⁷⁷ Freeman, “Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology,” 465.

¹⁷⁸ Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 112.

¹⁷⁹ Saygi Öztürk, “İşte PKK’ nın Silahlarının Listesi [Here is the PKK’s weapon list],” *Hürriyet*, sec. Gündem, July 19, 2007.

¹⁸⁰ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 75.

chose ex-Soviet weapons because of the corrupted Soviet officials; however, the numbers of the weapons and the approaches of two states, Russia and Italy, towards the PKK problem indicate that such a coincidence is difficult to believe. A Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency report indicates the governmental knowledge and approval of Russia, Greece, Armenia, and the Greek Cypriots in the PKK's procurement from the international black market.¹⁸¹

Gunter notes that the PKK organized conferences in Moscow in February, September, and October 1994. In December, some PKK sympathizers and the president of the Russian Minorities, Li Olega, opened a 680-square-meter "Kurdish House" in Moscow. During those meetings, Öcalan's posters and PKK banners were used for decoration.¹⁸² After a couple of talks between Turkish and Russian diplomats, the two sides signed a protocol in 1995 in Ankara to prevent terrorism. According to the protocol, "Russia would not allow the PKK or a Kurdish House to be set up in Moscow in return for its policies in Chechnya."¹⁸³ The protocol did not work as it was expected, because the Russian Duma, the lower house of the Russian Parliament, permitted the so-called Kurdish Parliament in Exile (KPE) to have a third conference in Moscow between October 30 and November 1, 1995. Boris Yeltsin's government did not recognize the KPE; however, the Turkish government believed that the conference could not take place without the approval of the Russian government.¹⁸⁴ The level of bilateral relations fluctuated until 1998.

When Syria expelled Öcalan, he went to Greece, then to Russia. He sought political asylum. The Duma voted to ask the government to grant him political asylum. However, the government rejected the Duma's request.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ IHS Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, "Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)," 13.

¹⁸² Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 112–113.

¹⁸³ Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question and Chechnya: Turkish and Russian Foreign Policies since the Gulf War," *Middle East Policy* 4, no. 3 (Mar 1996, 1996), 111.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁸⁵ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 44.

Turkey wanted Russia to extradite Öcalan. However, the Russian government chose to find another shelter for him in Italy. Moscow sent Öcalan to Rome with a member of the Italian Communist Party.¹⁸⁶

E. ITALY

Italian scholars, Roberto Aliboni and Daniela Pioppi, state that the so-called Kurdish parliament in exile assembled with Italian parliamentarians in the Sala del Cenacolo building of the Italian Parliament between September 28–30, 1998. That was a preliminary act for Öcalan's planned arrival. The PKK sympathizers were convinced that political asylum was out of the question, and Italy would be the new base for the PKK's new age.

On November 12, 1998, Öcalan landed in Italy bearing a falsified passport and escorted by Italian parliamentarian Ramon Mantovani from Italy's Communist Refoundation Party.¹⁸⁷ Öcalan declared his true identity and requested political asylum. Italian police arrested him due to two outstanding warrants: one by the German government and one by the Turkish government, which dates back to September 21, 1981.¹⁸⁸ Turkey wanted Italy to extradite Öcalan; however, Italy refused Turkey's request because of its constitution that prohibits extraditions to a country practicing capital punishment.¹⁸⁹ Mango notes that Turkey wanted the German government to pressure Italy to extradite the terrorist to Germany because of the German court's warrant. But he adds that the "German government chose safety in inactivity and refused to give effect to the arrest warrant of its own court."¹⁹⁰ An Italian court released the terrorist, and he

¹⁸⁶ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 44.

¹⁸⁷ Roberto Aliboni and Daniela Pioppi, "The Öcalan Affair Revisited," *The International Spectator* 35, no. 3 (2000), 37–38.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁹⁰ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 44.

rented a villa in Rome.¹⁹¹ Aliboni and Pioppi point out that the Italian government tried to get international support, which it received from European Union members. EU foreign ministers declared that the PKK was a terrorist organization, but also that Italy's decision not to extradite Öcalan was fair.¹⁹² The attitude of the Italian government seems far from good faith between countries and forces the limits of international law. First, Italy agreed that the PKK is a terrorist organization; however, it released the group's known leader, who entered Italy under a false name and had two warrants. Second, it allowed a terrorist to use its territory as a safe haven, and then let him to escape from the country.

F. ARMENIA

The PKK has also developed relations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). Mango notes that, in 1980, ASALA held a press conference in the South Lebanese town of Sidon and declared that it would cooperate with the PKK.¹⁹³ Nur Bilge Criss, an international relations professor at Bilkent University, points out the timing of ASALA's stagnation and the PKK's emergence. According to Criss, the PKK started its violence against Turkey as soon as ASALA ceased targeting Turkish diplomats abroad.¹⁹⁴

As a landlocked country between two Turkish countries, Armenia has used ethnic Kurds to reach its own objectives. When Armenia declared its independence from the Soviet Union on August 23, 1991, it was engaged in war against Azerbaijan. It invaded Karabagh, an Azerbaijani territory, and attempted to use the Kurdish identity by establishing a puppet state called the "Lachin

¹⁹¹ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 44.

¹⁹² Aliboni and Pioppi, "The Öcalan Affair Revisited," 40.

¹⁹³ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 12.

¹⁹⁴ Nur Bilge Criss, "The Nature of PKK Terrorism in Turkey," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 18, no. 1 (01/01; 2015/06, 1995), 32.

Kurdish Republic.”¹⁹⁵ The so-called Lachin Kurdish Republic disassembled two days after its announcement. Radu notes, “with the collapse of the Soviet Union, newly independent Armenia also provided enough help, or tolerance, for the PKK to threaten northeastern Turkey.”¹⁹⁶ Gunter states that Turkish authorities discovered at least six PKK camps in Armenia. In those camps, PKK terrorists were trained by Armenians and infiltrated Turkey through the Armenian-Turkish border. There were two camps close to the Gyumri [Leninakan] province, one camp in the Mazdaian town, two camps close to the Mislis town, and one camp in the Colga town.¹⁹⁷

Mango notes that, in 2002, KADEK opened a school to train its leading members; however, within the same month “KADEK representatives in Armenia had been dismissed for a failure to abide by the instructions of the Armenian government.”¹⁹⁸ He claims that the terrorist organization bought weapons, explosives, and rockets from Armenia on several occasions.¹⁹⁹

G. CONCLUSION

Turkey has been the victim of separatist violence since 1978. Many of its neighbors, some European countries, and some members of the old Warsaw Pact helped the PKK survive for years. All these countries supported the organization in various levels and aspects.

Syria sheltered the PKK for 18 years to weaken its neighbor and oppress its own domestic problems.²⁰⁰ It also used the PKK as a “bargaining chip”²⁰¹ to

¹⁹⁵ Nur Bilge Criss, “The Nature of PKK Terrorism in Turkey,” 32.

¹⁹⁶ Radu, “The Rise and Fall of the PKK,” 53.

¹⁹⁷ Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 108.

¹⁹⁸ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 47.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 47, 92.

²⁰⁰ Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, 31.

²⁰¹ Ekmekci, “Terrorism as War by Other Means: National Security and State Support for Terrorism,” 131.

leverage its position on the water-sharing issue. The PKK trained its terrorists in Syrian-controlled Lebanon, and Öcalan led the organization from his headquarters in Damascus. Syria, both diplomatically and logistically, supported the PKK.²⁰²

Greece trained the PKK terrorists in camps in Syria and Greece. It wanted to balance its position against Turkey's stronger economy and conventional military. The Greek government aimed to improve its international and domestic popularity by procuring weapons, providing refugees, and recognizing the PKK as a political body.

During the Cold War, the USSR supported Marxist groups around the world to fight against NATO members. It encouraged its allies such as Syria, Armenia, Bulgaria, and Eastern European countries. In the post-Soviet era, Russia backed the PKK diplomatically by allowing them to organize conferences and congresses in Russia. It played the PKK card against Turkey to strengthen its links in Caucasus and Central Asian Turkish States.

The Italian government was eager to provide political asylum to the leader of the terrorist organization. Mincheva and Gurr note, "Öcalan enjoyed warm hospitality...while in the country [he] had no problems maintaining communications with his fighters in the Middle East."²⁰³ Italy not only ignored his two arrest warrants but also sheltered and finally allowed him to escape from its territory. The Italian approach to the PKK issue during Öcalan's escape indicated that the high ratio of Italian weaponry in the PKK's stocks was not a random event.

Armenia has never missed any opportunity to harm Turkey. It allowed the PKK to open camps in Armenia and helped the organization procure weapons. Armenia encouraged the PKK to threaten the northeastern region of Turkey.

²⁰² Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, 58, 150.

²⁰³ Mincheva and Gurr, *Crime-Terror Alliances and the State: Ethnonationalist and Islamist Challenges to Regional Security*, 60.

Radu points out that, although Armenia was eager to help more, it was afraid of Turkish retaliation²⁰⁴ (see Tables 1 and 2).

Although there are other states that helped the PKK at different levels, this paper reviewed the state sponsorship of only five to show the range of sponsoring. State sponsors manipulated the Kurdish identity, just as the PKK did, to justify their sponsorship acts. They wanted to achieve their own ambitions and used the PKK terrorists as their mercenaries and bargaining chips. It is worthy to remind the reader that two countries among the five that were reviewed are NATO members like Turkey.

Table 1. State Motivations for Sponsoring PKK Terrorism

States	Strategic				Ideological		Political	
	Destabilize or Weaken Neighbor	Project Power	Change Regime	Shape Opposition	Enhance International Prestige	Export Political System	Domestic Political Gain	Mil. Aid
Syria	X						X	
Greece	X				X		X	
Russia	X	X			X	X		
Italy					X		X	
Armenia	X						X	

Adapted from Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, 27–31, Table 2.

Table 2. Different Ways to Sponsor PKK Terrorism

States	Training and Operations (Joint)	Money, Arms, and Logistics	Diplomatic Backing	Help with Organizing	Ideological Direction	Sanctuary (HQs, major training facilities)
Syria	X	X	X			X
Greece	X	X	X			X
Russia		X	X		X	
Italy		X	X			
Armenia	X	X				X

Adapted from Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, 55–58, Table 3.

²⁰⁴ Radu, “The Rise and Fall of the PKK,” 56.

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IV. FINANCIAL SOURCES OF THE PKK

A. INTRODUCTION

The geographic location of Turkey has made it a historical trade route from the Far East to the West. Turkey is on the Anatolia peninsula, where three continents, Asia, Europe, and Africa, converge. It has eight neighboring countries: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Greece, and Bulgaria. It has a coastline of 8,333 kilometers on two different seas, the Mediterranean and the Black Seas.

The terrorist PKK is mostly active in the southeastern region of Turkey where three borders, those of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, meet. However, the merchant PKK is everywhere, from Iran to Norway. Jay S. Albanese, from Virginia Commonwealth University, highlights three points that increase organized crime occurrence: “opportunity factors, the criminal environment, and the skills or access required to carry out the criminal activity.”²⁰⁵ Geographic restrictions of the terrain, the weaknesses of central authority, traditional feudalism, endless conflicts and wars in the region, a culture of impunity, and existence of Kurdish drug lords that were experienced in drug trade and smuggling gave the PKK the criminal opportunity it was seeking. The organized crime activities of the PKK emerged as a result of all these criminal opportunities and the unreliability of state sponsorship.

This chapter focuses on the criminal enterprises of the PKK by exploring its role in the drug trade, a widely known practice of terrorist organizations; then extortion, human smuggling for several purposes, cigarette smuggling, and money laundering. The legal businesses and institutions of the PKK or PKK sympathizers are used as covers for their illegal activities and money laundering operations.

²⁰⁵ Jay S. Albanese, “The Causes of Organized Crime,” *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 16, no. 4 (Nov 2000, 2000), 415.

B. DRUGS

After the collapse of Soviet Russia, regional state funding was no longer reliable for the PKK. The PKK turned to cultivating and trafficking drugs to generate revenue. According to a Turkish Police report, the PKK fulfills the primary role in all stages of the drug trade: The PKK currently organizes and controls the cultivation of cannabis in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey; collects commission, or taxes, from individual drug traffickers; coordinates drug trafficking and smuggling; distributes and sells drugs in the European retail market; and launders the money that comes from the drug trade.²⁰⁶

The PKK denies any involvement in the drug trade because it does not want to lose political support from European societies. Özdemir and Pekgözlü observe that the political support coming from European countries on behalf of the Kurdish identity helped it found 392 social and political institutions in Europe. These institutions are good covers for its illegal activities in Europe.²⁰⁷ On April 20, 2011, The United States identified

KONGRA-GEL founders Cemil Bayik and Duran Kalkan and PKK leaders Remzi Kartal, Sabri Ok, and Adem Uzun as specially designated narcotics traffickers (SNDTs) pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. [The federal authorities have frozen their U.S. assets, and banned them] from conducting any financial or commercial transactions within [U.S.] jurisdictions.²⁰⁸

Jane's Terrorism Report quotes U.S. Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen. He states that the PKK mainly relies on drug trade and it has created "a pan-European network of smugglers and

²⁰⁶ Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime, *Struggle Against Smuggling and Organized Crime 2013 Report* (Ankara: Turkish National Police Department, 2014), 33.

²⁰⁷ Özdemir and Pekgözlü, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," 90.

²⁰⁸ The U.S. Department of Treasury Press Release, *Treasury Designates Five Leaders of the KONGRA-GEL as Specifically Designated Narcotics Traffickers* (Lanham, United States, Lanham: Federal Information & News Dispatch, 2011), 1.

clandestine infrastructure to produce, transport, and traffic opiates and cannabis.”²⁰⁹ Later, on February 1, 2012, The United States designated four individuals and three Romanian-based companies as SNTDs for drug trafficking on behalf of the PKK or KONGRA-GEL.²¹⁰ However, statements from Rojhelat News, which is a pro-PKK agency, deny the relationship between the PKK and the drug trade. An example statement on April 25, 2011, noted:

Outrageous and unproven accusations and threats of persecution have been directed against five Kurdish politicians by the United States Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). The five Kurdish politicians are accused of being actively involved in drug trafficking being financed by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). These outrageous, unproven accusations are just a new way of trying to criminalize well known Kurdish personalities and limiting their legitimate political activities. Even though these are allegations only, the U.S. acts as if they were all proven accusations and thus justify keeping the PKK on the U.S. terrorist list.²¹¹

There are many other statements on PKK sympathizers’ Internet sites. They accuse the U.S. government and European governments of suppressing Kurdish people and acting in their own interests.

1. The Balkan Route

Depending on UN and IMF official documents, Hutchinson and O’Malley argue that the drug trade constitutes 2 percent of the global economy and 7 percent of international trade.²¹² According to the United Nations in 2009, manufacturers produced 83 percent of the world’s opium/heroin in

²⁰⁹ IHS Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism, “Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK),” 25.

²¹⁰ The U.S. Department of Treasury Press Release, *Treasury Sanctions Supporters of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) Tied to Drug Trafficking in Europe* (Lanham, United States, Lanham: Federal Information & News Dispatch, 2012), 1.

²¹¹ “Outrageous Unproven Accusations against Five Kurdish Politicians,” Rojhelat, accessed October 15, 2015, <http://rojhelat.info/en/?p=2142>.

²¹² Hutchinson and O’Malley, “A Crime–Terror Nexus? Thinking on some of the Links between Terrorism and Criminality,” 1096.

Afghanistan.²¹³ It is hard to give an exact number for the amount produced because the amount of opium cultivation depends on climate, possible diseases in plants, and law enforcement effectiveness. However, heroin manufacturing in Afghanistan in 2011 was estimated at 467 tons.²¹⁴ In 2011, the United Nations reported that Afghan heroin is shipped in three main directions: the northern direction to Central Asia, which uses the Tajikistan and Uzbekistan border; the east border with Pakistan, which serves China and Far East markets; and the west route to the Balkans that uses the Iranian border. The PKK is mostly active on the Balkan Route (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Afghan Heroin Trafficking Routes and Volumes in 2009



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2011* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 71.

²¹³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report, 2011* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 71.

²¹⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2012* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 26.

According to the UN, every year, 95 tons of heroin passes across the borders of Turkey and is carried to Bulgaria, Greece, and Ukraine.²¹⁵ Again, it is not easy to give a current number for the volume of the drug trade because it changes from year to year depending on the production levels in Afghanistan and the success of law enforcement officials in transit countries. Turkey is not a serious heroin consumer, but a transit country on the way to Europe.

The opium and heroin reaches Turkey through Iran and Iraq. The PKK and Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK) in Iran collaborate on the Balkan Route. Although the PKK and PJAK look like different terrorist organizations, the difference remains only in location. Mincheva and Gurr qualify PJAK as “a splinter group”²¹⁶ of the PKK. PJAK is a member of Koma Civaken Kurdistan (KCK) and is loyal to the terrorist leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan. PJAK has the same political objectives and terrorism strategy as the PKK, but it is active in the north of Iran.²¹⁷

The PKK has long been sheltered in Armenia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria; however, it is most active in Turkey. It uses the advantage of settling on the borders between these countries and Turkey. The length of borders and mountainous characteristics of the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey create vulnerabilities for law enforcement units to control the entire border. After passing the Turkish border, smugglers carry the drugs on three main directions through Turkey:

- Hakkari/Van – southeastern cities – central Anatolian cities – Istanbul – Edirne to Bulgaria/Greece
- Hakkari/Van – southeastern cities – southern/western Anatolian cities and onward to Greece/Cyprus by sea

²¹⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2010* (New York: United Nations, 2010), 54.

²¹⁶ Lyubov Mincheva and Ted Robert Gurr, “Unholy Alliances III: Communal Militants and Criminal Networks in the Middle East, with a Case Study of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK),” 26.

²¹⁷ IHS Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism, “Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK),” 8.

- Hakkari/Van – southeastern cities – central Anatolian cities – northern Anatolian cities – Ukraine²¹⁸

Roth and Sever note that

80 percent of the drugs produced in the Golden Crescent, which comprises the region of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, are trafficked to the European market through Turkey. Most sources assert that the PKK plays an important role in the transportation process via the Balkan route.²¹⁹

It is illogical to ignore other drug smugglers in the region; however, the PKK acts as a drug cartel. Thanks to PJAK in Iran and cultural institutions in European countries, the PKK stretches its arms from Afghanistan to the end of continental Europe. With all these collaborators, the PKK is in the center of two different drug zones: Afghanistan, the world supplier with the lowest price; and European countries, the zone of highest demand with the highest price. Roth and Sever also quote the German chief prosecutor as he asserted that “80 percent of the drugs captured in Europe have been linked to the PKK.”²²⁰

2. Revenue in the Drug Trade

The shipping risks of opium/heroin create huge differences in values. The average opium price in Afghanistan in 2010 was 150 USD per kilogram; however, the average retail price per kilo of heroin in 17 countries located in Western and Central Europe was 70,000 USD the same year²²¹ (see Figure 8).

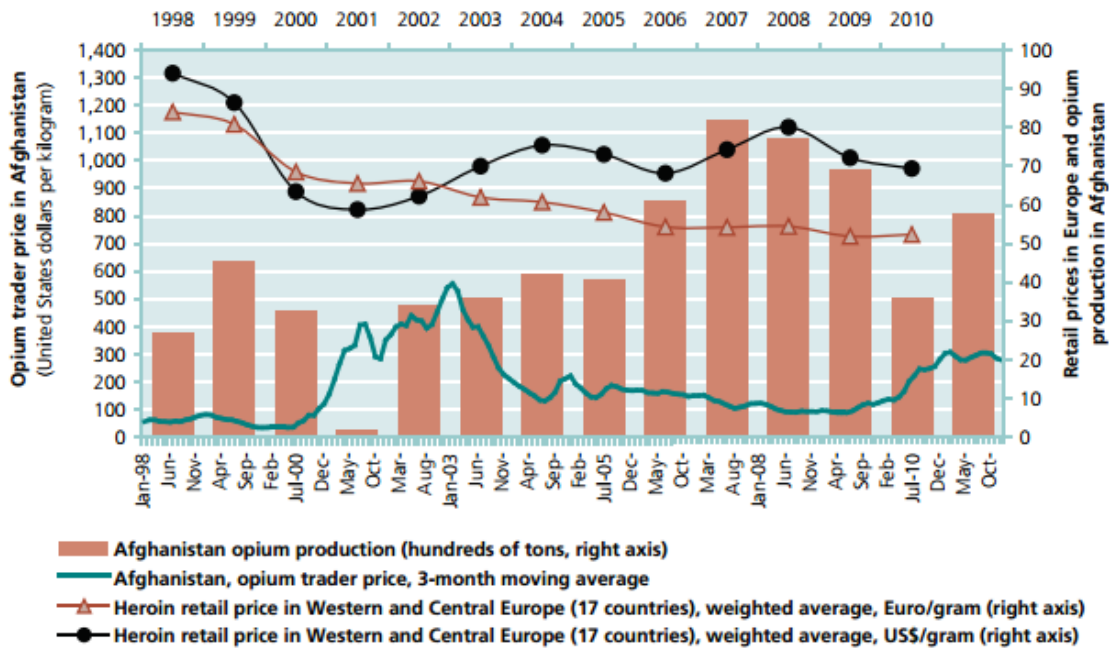
²¹⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2010*, 54.

²¹⁹ Roth and Sever, “The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study,” 907.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 908.

²²¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2012*, 33.

Figure 8. Opium Prices and Opium Production in Afghanistan Compared with Retail Prices of Heroin in Western and Central Europe, 1998–2011



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2012* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 33.

There are contradicting estimates about the PKK’s annual revenue from the drug trade. In 2008, General Ergin Saygun, who was then the deputy chief of the Turkish General Staff, made statements about the revenue of the PKK. He said that the PKK earns at least 200–250 million Euros from the drug trade. In her comparative study on FARC and the PKK, Vera Eccarius-Kelly, a professor of comparative politics at Siena College in New York, does not find Saygun’s 2008 estimate for the PKK’s revenue credible. She believes that the Turkish General Staff exaggerates the annual amount to convince authorities to spare more resources for the country’s anti-terrorism program.²²² In contrast to Eccarius-Kelly’s optimism, Emmanouela Mylonaki from London South Bank University notes that “the PKK has been reported to obtain 450 million Swiss

²²² Vera Eccarius-Kelly, “Surreptitious Lifelines: A Structural Analysis of the FARC and the PKK,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2 (2012a), 241.

Francs each year through the selling of drugs in Europe, according to officials of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.”²²³ This amount costs approximately 470 million USD.

Consequently, there is no consensus about the revenue from the PKK’s drug trade. Nevertheless, the UN affirms that the annual market value of the Balkan route is at least 20 billion USD.²²⁴ Curtis and Karacan cite the German chief prosecutor as he claims that 80 percent of the drug trade in Europe is in control of the PKK.²²⁵ Therefore, the estimation for the PKK’s annual income from drug trade as 250 million Euros is modest. A Jane’s Terrorism report noted “annual revenues raised by the group through drugs smuggling across Europe ... amounted to 1 billion EUR (USD 1.43 billion).”²²⁶

In 2013, Kashif Khan and Olcay Er conducted their Naval Postgraduate School master’s thesis on the revenues of the Taliban and the PKK. The PKK study considers only the opium/heroin trade of the Balkan route without calculating the cannabis cultivation/selling revenue. They separate the PKK’s and the Taliban’s heroin revenues in four segments: cultivation, manufacturing, shipment, and sale. According to their calculations, the PKK obtains 25 million USD manufacturing heroin, 325 million USD shipping, and 300 million USD selling it in the retail market. The total annual revenue reaches 650 million USD. The Taliban is the world’s supplier of opium/heroin; however, it earns between

²²³ Emmanouela Mylonaki, “The Manipulation of Organised Crime by Terrorists: Legal and Factual Perspectives,” *International Criminal Law Review* 2, no. 3 (07, 2002), 231.

²²⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “Drug Trafficking: Introduction,” accessed October 16, 2015, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking>.

²²⁵ Glenn E. Curtis and Tara Karacan, *The Nexus among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe* (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, 2002), 20.

²²⁶ IHS Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism, “Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK),” 30.

530 and 570 million USD. When compared with the Taliban's annual revenue as the world supplier, the PKK as a trader earns more than the Taliban.²²⁷

3. Cultivation and Manufacturing

The PKK's cultivation of drugs can be chronologically separated into three stages: opium cultivation in Syria in the 1980s, the failed attempt in the early 1990s to cultivate opium in northern Iraq, and the establishment of heroin laboratories and hemp cultivation in Turkey throughout the 1990s. According to Sedat Laçiner, after the PKK established its initial organization in Syria, it took little time to discover the potential revenue from drugs, so the PKK started cultivating hemp and opium around its camps in Beqaa Valley, Syrian-controlled-Lebanon. By respectively using Lebanese, Greek Cypriote, Greek, and Italian ports to transfer its products, the PKK earned a great amount of money in the 1980s.²²⁸

a. Heroin

Khan and Er note that in the early 1990s, the PKK settled in ungoverned regions of northern Iraq and tried to cultivate opium; however, the climate did not allow it to fulfill this aim.²²⁹ They found transferring opium from Afghanistan to European Countries easier and more profitable.

On the Balkan route, smugglers deliver much of the opium in heroin form and ready to use; however, the PKK also realized the marginal profit in the manufacturing process, so it established several heroin laboratories to process the morphine base with acetic anhydrite. Ekici et al. note that the PKK procured acetic anhydrite from Russia and Eastern Europe and the morphine base from

²²⁷ Kashif J. Khan and Olcay Er, "Cutting the Link between Drugs and Terrorists: Countering Major Terrorist- financing Means" (Master's Thesis, Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School), 15–25.

²²⁸ Laciner, "Drug Smuggling as a Main Source of PKK Terrorism," 2.

²²⁹ Khan and Er, "Cutting the Link between Drugs and Terrorists: Countering Major Terrorist- financing Means," 33.

Pakistan, Southeast Asia, and Iran with the help of its organizational cells there.²³⁰ The PKK established several drug labs in Iran. Ekici et al. share the testimony of an Iranian drug criminal as he states:

The PKK has established several drug labs in Urumiye-Aliabat District of Iran under the control of Osman Ocalan [Abdullah Öcalan's brother]. The chemists receive \$40,000-50,000 Toman per kg for producing heroin. After the production, the heroin is transferred to the Banya village (Iran) to be transferred to Yuksekova (Turkey) under the control of Osman Ocalan's militants.²³¹

Özdemir and Pekközlü explain that the PKK produce heroin in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey in "mobile laboratories."²³² Laçiner adds that the PKK also runs drug laboratories in eastern European countries.²³³

The items captured in police operations give several details about the level of the PKK's involvement in the drug business. The annual police report in 2013 gave the result of 377 operations against the PKK carried out between 1984 and 2013. Turkish law enforcement officials arrested 1,232 suspects and captured 4,584 kilograms of heroin, 36,550 kilograms of marijuana, 17,958,469 roots of cannabis plants, 4,305 kilograms of morphine base, 22 kilograms of opium, 710 kilograms of cocaine, 344,135 pills of synthetic drugs, 27,630 liters of acetic anhydrite, and 4 laboratories to produce heroin.²³⁴ The materials captured reveal that the organization is active in cultivation, production, and shipping of drugs.

²³⁰ Ekici, Williams and Akbulut, "The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence or Conflict?," 157.

²³¹ Ibid., 156.

²³² Özdemir and Pekközlü, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," 89.

²³³ Laçiner, "Drug Smuggling as a Main Source of PKK Terrorism," 2.

²³⁴ Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime, *Struggle Against Smuggling and Organized Crime 2013 Report*, 4.

b. Amphetamine-Type Stimulants

Although historically, Turkey has not been a serious drug consumer, its drug use has dramatically increased in the last decade. Ekici et al. point out that there are changes in the drug market as European addicts demand more stimulants, like cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATSs), than depressants.²³⁵ The source of the ATSs are mostly European countries and Russia; as a result, the PKK is not perceived as an ATS manufacturer. The PKK has benefited from the ATS market by bartering its heroin for ATSs. Ekici et al. note that the Turkish Police have captured thousands of ATS tablets during operations against the PKK. The organization is actively involved in the trafficking and marketing phases of ATSs. The authors add the statements of an unnamed drug investigator. He states that “we also observe that the criminal networks are bartering the heroin with synthetics in Turkey. They are bringing heroin from the east and bringing the amphetamines from the west. Then they exchange the substances in various destinations in Turkey.”²³⁶

c. Cannabis

In recent years, the PKK has concentrated on cultivating cannabis in the southeastern region of Turkey. It encourages the local sympathizers to cultivate cannabis, especially on public land or deserted areas. The law enforcement units can neither find nor convict anyone in many cannabis cultivation cases for two reasons. First, the Treasury of the Turkish Republic owns all the public lands. In many cases, the cannabis cultivated field does not belong to a private owner or the owner has not been living there for years. Second, the PKK frightens and threatens inhabitants who are not eager to collaborate with them. Threatening with violence prevents the local population from reporting it to the police. Ekici et al. note the testimonies of criminals who are convicted of cannabis cultivation.

²³⁵ Ekici, Williams and Akbulut, “The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence Or Conflict?,” 152.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

One of them says, “the PKK was forcing us to plant cannabis in rural areas of Diyarbakır. I’m rendering much of the money to the PKK operatives. They come and supervise the harvesting process. It is almost impossible to divert some of the crops.”²³⁷

In the 2000s, the PKK announced that it banned cutting wood in forests and it would punish anyone severely who cut trees.²³⁸ It claims that it does this for environmentalist reasons. However, the real goal behind that so-called environmentalist approach is mitigating the effectiveness of air reconnaissance for cannabis fields. In the *Struggle against Smuggling and Organized Crime 2013 Report*, the Turkish Ministry of Interior specifically focuses on seven operations carried out in the rural Van, Hakkari, and Diyarbakır provinces in 2013. The law enforcement forces captured in total 18 suspects, lots of explosive ammunition, 201 kilograms of heroin, 1,440 liters of acid anhydride, two laboratories, 3,260 kilograms of marijuana, and 11,985,725 roots of cannabis plants.²³⁹ The abrupt increase in the production of cannabis and marijuana, when compared with the captured amount between 1984 and 2012, shows the new trend of the PKK in cultivation.

The PKK invented new tactics during the negotiation period between 2013 and 2015. West Sands Advisory notes, “the PKK uses Colombian methods—laying mines and hand-made explosives on roads to produce ‘liberated crime zones’—to protect drug fields. These methods may suggest that the PKK is simply learning the ‘tricks of [the] trade.’”²⁴⁰ The law enforcement units carried out several attacks against the cannabis fields in Diyarbakır. To interrupt these

²³⁷ Ekici, Williams and Akbulut, “The PKK and the KDNs: Cooperation, Convergence or Conflict?,” 156.

²³⁸ Internethaber, “PKK’dan Tunceli Yasakları: Vur Emri Verdik [The PKK’s tunceli prohibitions: Ordered killing],” December 5, 2014, <http://www.internethaber.com/pkkdan-tunceli-yasaklari-vur-emri-verdik-745184h.htm>.

²³⁹ Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime, *Struggle Against Smuggling and Organized Crime 2013 Report*, 34.

²⁴⁰ West Sands Advisory LLP, *Europe’s Crime-Terror Nexus: Links between Terrorist and Organised Crime Groups in the European Union*, 51.

attacks until the end of harvest, the PKK employed YDG-H, its sub-organization, to dig trenches on roads to prevent law enforcement vehicles and force people to act as human shields.²⁴¹ The PKK used improvised explosive devices and mines against tactical vehicles that succeeded in passing over the trenches.

While the PKK is running its drug business in the internal market, it collaborates with local inhabitants. These inhabitants are generally ethnic Kurdish people. Like the FARC, the PKK motivates the local population either by money or life threats. Rosenthal notes that in the territories in which for-profit terrorists settle, the population has been humiliated by years of violence. It is easier for the people to cooperate than stand against them. Also, the businesses and the PKK offers yield much more money than rural farming.²⁴²

Feudality is still active in some parts of southeastern Turkey through social tradition. As noted in the second chapter, there are strong ties between some Kurdish clans and the PKK. Roth and Sever quote a Turkish security officer as saying, “the cooperation between the PKK and Kurdish criminal clans has been similar to the cooperation among Sicilian mafia families.”²⁴³ Jane’s Terrorism report mentions an investigation carried out by Turkish authorities in November 2011 that shows the links of the PKK with home-grown criminal organizations: “According to the authorities, there were as many as 350 ‘criminal families’, predominantly based on ethnic Kurdish clans, actively involved in the production and sale of narcotics.”²⁴⁴

It is hard to predict the annual income the PKK receives from heroin manufacturing and cannabis cultivation. However, research by Khan and Er

²⁴¹ Erkan Acar, “PKK’ nın Yol Kapatma Eyleminin Amacı Ortaya Çıktı” [The reason behind blocking roads is revealed] *Bugün*, sec. Gündem, 06/05/2014, 2014.

²⁴² Rosenthal, “For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs,” 493.

²⁴³ Roth and Sever, “The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study,” 913.

²⁴⁴ IHS Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism, “Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK),” 42.

indicates that the PKK generates annually at least 25 million USD from heroin production—without considering the revenue of cannabis cultivation.²⁴⁵

4. Collecting Commission

After realizing the traffic from Afghanistan to Europe, the biggest share in the PKK's revenue became the commissions it received from the drug smugglers. The PKK calls this commission money 'tax.' In a seminar by Turkish Police in 2011, Superintendent Dr. Mahmut Cengiz stated that there have been 14 so-called custom points on the Iranian and Iraqi sides of the border run by the PKK.²⁴⁶ According to Turkish Police reports, captured terrorists and drug smugglers confessed that the PKK was getting commission per kilogram of heroin in the so-called custom points that it established on the border areas between Iran and Turkey. They stated that the PKK discriminates the drug smugglers according to the smugglers' sympathy level to the organization. To allow passage, the PKK terrorists have behaved fine for PKK sympathizers and created several problems for the other smugglers who have not been in favor of the PKK. Between 1980 and 1990, the PKK was getting 1,000 Deutsche Marks or 10 percent of the whole price for commission; however, in the 2000s they started taking 50 dollars per kilogram or 10 percent of the price. The captured drug smugglers have all stated that without giving commission to the PKK, it has been impossible to pass from the mountainous terrain between Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.²⁴⁷

Özdemir and Peksoylu share the confession of a lifelong PKK terrorist on the PKK's so-called customary regulations. The ex-terrorist states:

²⁴⁵ Khan and Er, "Cutting the Link between Drugs and Terrorists: Countering Major Terrorist- financing Means," 20.

²⁴⁶ Gülden Aydın, "Bütün Yollar Türkiyeden Geçer" [All roads pass through Turkey], *Hürriyet Pazar* 07/17/2011. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/pazar/18271224.asp>

²⁴⁷ Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime, *Struggle Against Smuggling and Organized Crime 2013 Report*, 33.

There are four to six terrorists at each custom checkpoint. At the big custom checkpoints, there is a team consisting of 12 people. The amount of custom regulation money varies based on value of materials. Much money is collected for narcotics and wine whereas less money is collected for oil and sugar.²⁴⁸

This testimony gives details about the daily practices of the PKK. They employ more people on high volume tracks in the mountainous terrain and consider the amount of commission depending on the material smuggled. The PKK leadership does not deny getting commission from drug smugglers. Roth and Sever cite Abdullah Öcalan's testimony. After he was captured in 1999, he answered the judges' questions about the PKK's role in the drug trade:

Osman Ocalan (his brother) is collecting money from people who conduct drug trafficking. In addition, there are some structures called customs units of the organization and located along the borders. They collect the money as well...On the borders a certain amount of money is collected from traffickers as a tax. Apart from that, I did not accept the proposal of drug trafficking in Iran/Maku region, although I knew it would provide a high level of income. Despite this fact, I learned that some people in the organization, in particular my brother, Osman Ocalan, were trafficking drugs to Europe through Iran, Zagros, and Romania.²⁴⁹

The PKK is a rapidly learning and self-modifying organization; the volume of drug traffic stimulated its desire to establish its own courier network for transporting drugs to the European market. Due to PKK terrorism in 1990s, many ethnic Kurdish people from southeastern and eastern Turkey migrated to different cities in Turkey and European countries. However, they faced several financial and sociological problems at the destinations they reached. The PKK helped its sympathizers by recruiting them in the lucrative drug business, so the

²⁴⁸ Özdemir and Pekgözlü, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," 93.

²⁴⁹ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 908.

dispersion of Kurdish people from Turkey to Europe strengthened the drug shipping and selling network of the PKK.²⁵⁰

In 1998, Turkish forces seized the PKK's second-man, Şemdin Sakık. In the interview by the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Parliament, Sakık frankly iterated “the source of our money was drug trafficking. The PKK and Apo [Öcalan] have always gotten a big share from the drug trafficking on the drug route of Turkey-Middle East. We used money generated from drugs to purchase weapons.”²⁵¹ Sakık's confession proves that the PKK has become the main carrier on the Balkan route, but it is also interesting to see that Sakık differentiates the drug trade beneficiaries in two: the PKK and Apo. The PKK uses the money for buying ammunitions and weapons for further terrorist attacks and Öcalan most probably collects the money for his own wealth. After delivering drugs to the European market, the PKK uses its European links to distribute the drugs in the street market, which is as lucrative as the shipping process. Based on wholesale drug prices in Norway, the study of Khan and Er estimates that the shipping revenue of the PKK is annually at least 325 million USD; however, the PKK also receives 300 million USD by selling the drugs in retail.²⁵²

5. European Street Market

The PKK's European collaborators are composed of Kurdish immigrant families and Kurdish cultural, humanitarian, and social foundations. Özdemir and Pekgözlü clarify the organizational structure in shipping and marketing by noting that:

The PKK terrorist organization adopted the South American terrorist organizations' model that establishes a fake firm and hires

²⁵⁰ Özdemir and Pekgözlü, “Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK,” 90.

²⁵¹ Roth and Sever, “The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study,” 909.

²⁵² Khan and Er, “Cutting the Link between Drugs and Terrorists: Countering Major Terrorist- financing Means,” 24.

personnel to conduct its drug delivery activities. In parallel with the South American model, the PKK abuses political and cultural foundations as main bases for the drug delivery network.²⁵³

Due to the “one’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter” mentality, it is hard to define terrorism in the international arena. Countries mostly act according to their own interests. Eccarius-Kelly notes the statement of Germany’s former federal state prosecutor Kay Nehm. He argues that the PKK behaved like a criminal rather than a terrorist organization.²⁵⁴ The cultural foundations cover its illegal activities by caching drugs, sheltering criminals, helping as a meeting point, and money laundering.

In his article on the PKK’s drug smuggling activities, Laçiner notes that in European capitals, Kurdish children between the ages of 10–15 years old work as street sellers in entertainment centers and schools. The PKK has helped many Kurds to migrate illegally to Europe, and these people are forced to pay monthly protection money from their income.²⁵⁵ The PKK also earns huge money from human trafficking. However, people who cannot afford the trafficking price or the monthly protection money surrender mostly their children to be employed by the PKK in selling drugs on the streets. Roth and Sever observe some points on the PKK’s young collaborators in the retail drug selling business:

PKK often use non-deciphered PKK immigrants such as children, juveniles, peasants, and workers in the European drug trade. A number of 1993 reports in Germany linked Kurdish children between 10 and 14 years old to drug activity. All confessed that they had been forced to sell drugs by the PKK because they did not have penal responsibility...In 1993 a Hamburg television station reported that local police arrested a Kurdish drug smuggling gang, which included an 11-year-old child. He confessed that the PKK

²⁵³ Özdemir and Pekgözlü, “Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK,” 94.

²⁵⁴ Eccarius-Kelly, “Surreptitious Lifelines: A Structural Analysis of the FARC and the PKK,” 242.

²⁵⁵ Laçiner, “Drug Smuggling as a Main Source of PKK Terrorism,” 3.

smuggled him into Germany with others and forced them to sell drugs for terrorist organization.²⁵⁶

The PKK is involved in many phases of the drug trade. Although it publicly denies any involvement in the drug business, evidence shows us that it is a drug cartel on the Balkan route between Afghanistan and Europe. It earns money in many different ways. Establishing several so-called customs in Iran and Iraq, the PKK receives commission from individual drug smugglers who deliver from Afghanistan to Turkey. It has since established its own courier network to ship drugs from Afghanistan to European countries. Even though it seems a separate terrorist organization, PJAK collaborates with the PKK in Iran. It controls drug trafficking in Iran and delivers drugs to the PKK on the Turkish border.

The PKK is an umbrella organization that shelters many criminal families, many sympathizers, and many institutions in Europe. The PKK works together with criminal families in order to cultivate cannabis and manufacture heroin in laboratories. The mountainous character and the length of Iranian, Iraqi, and Syrian borders challenge police forces to work effectively in the terrain. The PKK carries the drugs to European markets for the best possible price. It uses its European links such as cultural, humanitarian, or social institutions to disguise its illegal activities in Europe. In Europe, PKK sympathizers and asylum seekers who have migrated are generally employed on the streets to sell drugs on behalf of the PKK. Many of the people detained for drug sales are children who say that they have been forced by the PKK to do so.

C. EXTORTION

The PKK extorts money from people in many places, under different names for each activity. The extorted people are mostly Kurds who live in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. The PKK has different names for its extortion money: customs, taxes, commissions, membership fees, protection fees, and

²⁵⁶ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 910.

revolutionary taxes. The name changes depending on the type of targeted individuals. The PKK has a dual goal in their extortion crimes as many other terrorist organizations around the world do.

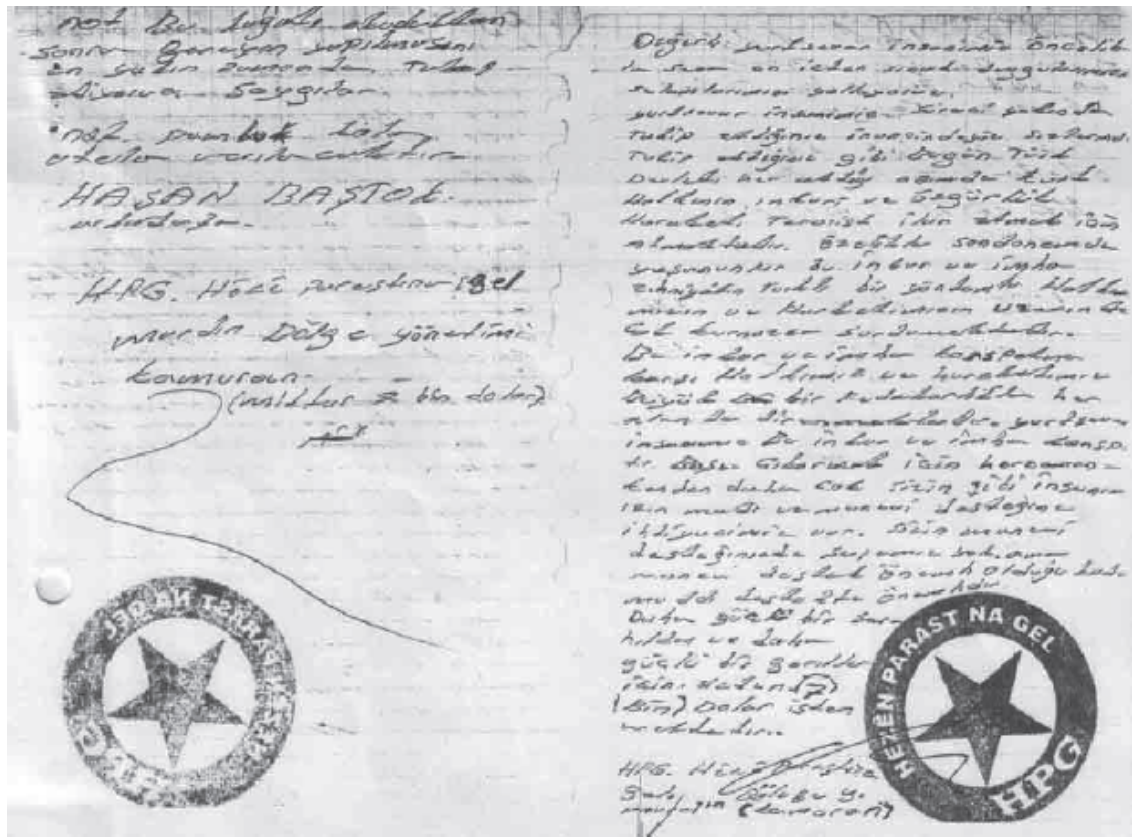
Freeman notes the two goals of extortion. First, extortion is a good financial source for terrorist groups because they can collect it as frequently as they need. The amount of the revenue increases as they brutalize or frighten people. Second, the people who are forced to give money cannot report this event to police forces in most cases because of death threats from these groups. Neither able to control its territory nor protect its citizens against terrorists, the state authority loses the public's confidence, thus increasing the popularity of illegal groups. Freeman calls this effect "passive support." Once they get the passive support of the public, they can conduct their terrorist operations more comfortably. Terrorists are not afraid that the public will report them because they think that the extorted people give consent by sponsoring them. The terrorists find extortion a vital process for legitimizing their activities and including the public in their criminal network. If the terrorists are captured as a result of being reported, they can also report people to police forces for sponsoring their operations; therefore, the extortion incriminates the extorted people.²⁵⁷

At its so-called third congress in 1986, the PKK declared the Act of Taxation. With this act, PKK terrorists began disguising their racketeering by providing receipts.²⁵⁸ This also served as a political trick to show itself as a governmental body. There are three targeted groups for the PKK's extortion crimes: the aforementioned smugglers who provide custom taxes or commission; Kurdish-origin people in Turkey, especially businessmen and artists; and Kurds living abroad (see Figure 9).

²⁵⁷ Freeman, "Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology," 468.

²⁵⁸ Özdemir and Pekközlü, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," 92.

Figure 9. Extortion Letter



Note: In the letter, the PKK regional leader is demanding 7,000 USD from a businessman in Istanbul. These letters are followed either by a receipt or another threat letter. Source: Habip Ozdemir and Ilker Pekgozlu, "Where Do Terrorist Organizations Get Their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," *International Journal of Security and Terrorism* 3, no. 2 (2012): 99.

The PKK extorts money from the people in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey. The PKK has built its popularity on brutal operations targeting local people since 1984. People that do not want to pay face physical harm or death. Jane's Terrorism Report highlights the most targeted group as businessmen. Businessmen who submit state bids in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey are often forced to pay the PKK 10 or 20 percent of their income. The report affirms that the total annual worth of state bids awarded in these regions is at least 800 million USD.²⁵⁹ Freeman points out the

²⁵⁹ IHS Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, "Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)," 25.

parasitic relationship between the terrorists and their extortion sources. The parasite does not want to harm its host because harm against the host may also kill the parasite. Thus, the PKK does not intend to kill the businessman who refuses to pay.²⁶⁰ Consequently, it harms the businessman by burning or vandalizing his property, like heavy construction equipment. As a second phase, the PKK threatens, kidnaps, or murders the workforce hired by the businessman. In doing so, it forces the businessman to cooperate with the group. If the businessman still does not surrender to the PKK's demands, the group punishes him with death.²⁶¹

The PKK forces people living abroad to contribute money in the name of revolution, protection, or membership. Özdemir and Pekközlü name the countries from which most of the abroad extortion is collected: Germany, Romania, Russia, Holland, Denmark, France, Italy, Switzerland, England, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. The authors also share the testimony of Abdullah Öcalan, who admits "the money collected in Europe is sent to members in Iran and Iraq by couriers. In European countries, annually, 30 million German Mark[s] ... [are] collected as fees."²⁶² The PKK claims that these are voluntary contributions to the organization; however, the truth is not what the PKK reflects. Roth and Sever mention that the PKK gets "insurance fees" in Green Lanes in Northern London. The restaurants that do not pay the insurance fee face retaliation. They also highlight that in 1993, the PKK acquired 2.5 million pounds from Kurdish people in Great Britain.²⁶³

There are also other methods of how it forces people to donate. The sympathizers sell newspapers, propaganda books, and tickets for cultural events.

²⁶⁰ Freeman, "Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology," 468.

²⁶¹ Özdemir and Pekközlü, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," 92.

²⁶² Ibid., 92.

²⁶³ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 910.

Özdemir and Pekközlü observe that a Kurdish publication, called *Serxwebun*, does not have a fixed price. This is because the price of the publication depends on the client's income level.²⁶⁴ Also, Ruehsen shares the confessions of former PKK members involved in extortion in Europe. They explain the details about forcing people to subscribe to certain magazines for small donations and a big contribution every year. The terrorists tell people to work 12 months for themselves and a month for the struggle. In their confessions, they admit "when that did not work...the money was coerced."²⁶⁵

It is thought that the extortions form one third of the PKK's annual budget.²⁶⁶ An operation in 1996 revealed many documents about the PKK's extortion crimes. The Scotland Yard and the Belgium Police carried out an operation against Med TV Broadcasting Company. In the research, police forces found lists of people in Belgium and Germany who were extorted continuously. The lists also documented that the PKK was acquiring 300,000 francs per month only in Belgium.²⁶⁷ Jane's Terrorism Report points out "the PKK was alleged to have stored in excess of 1 billion USD raised through extortion activities in foreign bank accounts."²⁶⁸ Özdemir and Pekközlü contribute that the PKK decreased its violence against Kurdish people in the last years as a consequence of losing political support and being designated as a terrorist organization by the EU and the United States.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ Özdemir and Pekközlü, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," 93.

²⁶⁵ Ruehsen, "Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)," 69.

²⁶⁶ Eccarius-Kelly, "Surreptitious Lifelines: A Structural Analysis of the FARC and the PKK," 241.

²⁶⁷ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 911.

²⁶⁸ IHS Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, "Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)," 29.

²⁶⁹ Özdemir and Pekközlü, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," 92.

D. HUMAN SMUGGLING

The peninsular characteristic of Turkey creates numerous routes for the PKK's human smuggling operations, but weaknesses for law enforcement units. In a single operation, Italian security officials discovered that the PKK had smuggled 9,000 people from Turkey to Europe in 2001. Turkey to Greece or Italy is the most popular route; however, the PKK also uses the route from Turkey to Romania for transportation.²⁷⁰ Once the immigrants land in Europe, local collaborators lead them through European countries. The PKK benefits from human smuggling in three ways. First, it receives a revenue from the human smuggling process. Second, it recruits most immigrants as collaborators in its European organization. Third, it traffics eastern European women to western Europe to exploit them in its prostitution rings.

Özdemir and Pekközlü explain the process of human smuggling in detail. First, the PKK gathers passports, ID cards and visas from its collaborators in Turkey. Next, it carefully selects people among its sympathizers who do not have criminal records. The PKK counterfeits original documents and distributes the fake ones to illegal immigrants. These illegal immigrants use fake documents at their final destinations. The PKK then transports illegal immigrants via various routes.

There are contradicting numbers about the PKK's price per person in human smuggling. Roth and Sever quote Interpol as it estimates the transportation fee at 2,000 to 3,000 Euros per person. However, the Romanian police discovered many immigrants with forged documents by the PKK, and the immigrants reported that they paid 6,000 to 7,000 Euros to reach European capitals.²⁷¹ The PKK may be diversifying the price according to the nationality of the immigrants, the route they choose—transportation to a Schengen zone

²⁷⁰ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 909.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 910.

country like Italy, Greece, or Romania costing more—and the amount of service they require, like counterfeited documents and transportation or only transportation.

Interpol defines human smuggling as a gain-based trade because when the illegal migrant reaches the arranged destination, the relationship between the smuggler and the immigrant normally ends; however, the PKK keeps the relation to recruit more people to increase its influence in Europe. The PKK's European links guide the immigrants and provide them initial shelter in Europe. The PKK utilizes its social and cultural foundations as bases in Europe. In 2004, an illegal immigrant was caught at the Bucharest Kurd Cultural Foundation in Romania.²⁷² Roth and Sever point out another extortion method of the PKK, which occurs after the immigrants reach their destinations. The illegal immigrants pay a “membership fee” to the PKK's “front organizations” to provide them shelter, food, and jobs.²⁷³ By creating financial and cultural ties, the PKK does not let its former clients leave its control. Being illegal is the immigrants' vulnerable point. At any time, the PKK can anonymously report the immigrants to the local police to be deported if they do not collaborate with the PKK. The PKK further incriminates the illegal immigrants and recruits them in its European criminal operations, using their anxiety over their illegal status.

Trafficking women for prostitution is another source for many human smuggling groups. Rey Koslowski, a professor from the University at Albany, notes the victims are mostly Russian and eastern European women. Human traffickers convince them to employ them as nannies, hostesses, or dancers; however, the traffickers take the passports of the women so they can no longer escape. In order to pay their smuggling debt, the traffickers force them into

²⁷² Özdemir and Pekközlü, “Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK,” 91.

²⁷³ Roth and Sever, “The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study,” 910.

prostitution, but the debt never ends.²⁷⁴ Soner Çağaptay, director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute, argues that the PKK is “smuggling illegal immigrants into the EU, and running prostitution rings to raise funds.”²⁷⁵ Amy O’Neill, a researcher for the U.S. Department of State, supports his claim with a statement of a Belgian Interpol officer. The Belgian official states, “[the] PKK has used traditional alien smuggling routes to traffic women to Belgium for prostitution.”²⁷⁶ Belgian Parliamentarian Patsy Sörensen, who had written the *Women Trade Report* for the European Parliament, highlights that the PKK is the boss of most brothels in Germany and Holland. She adds that the organization has trafficked women from Albany and Russia. It has forced them into prostitution by threatening them with their lives. She states that women trade is the least risky business for a terrorist organization because women trade crime does not have serious punishments in Europe.²⁷⁷

E. CIGARETTE SMUGGLING

The PKK is involved in cigarette smuggling between Iraq and Turkey. There are some so-called custom points run by the PKK within Iraqi territory. The PKK has benefited from the cigarette smuggling activities in two flows: one from Turkey to Iraq, the other from Iraq to Turkey. The first phase of cigarette smuggling—from Turkey to Iraq—occurred in the 1990s when Saddam Hussein was in power and the United Nations and the United States were applying sanctions on Iraq. The second phase of smuggling from Iraq to Turkey started in the 2000s.

²⁷⁴ Rey Koslowski, “The Mobility Money can Buy: Human Smuggling and Border Control in the European Union,” in *The Migration Reader* (United States: Lynne Rienner, 2006), 573.

²⁷⁵ Soner Cagaptay, “How can Europe Address its PKK Problem?” *Transatlantic Issues* no: 9, Transatlantic Institute, December, 2006), 2. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/how-can-europe-address-its-pkk-problem>.

²⁷⁶ Amy O’Neill, “International Trafficking in Women from Central Europe and the NIS,” *Trends in Organized Crime* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1998, 1998), 135.

²⁷⁷ “PKK Genelev Çalıştırıyor” [The PKK is running brothels]. *Hürriyet*, sec. Archive, May 21, 2000, c. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/pkk-genelev-calistiriyor-39155814>

In the first stage, William Billingslea, an intelligence analyst at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives in Washington, DC, notes that the PKK acquired money by smuggling U.S. cigarettes into the Iraqi market by collaborating with Saddam Hussein's son. The PKK was taxing the illicit cigarette trade.²⁷⁸ The European Union v. R.J.R. Nabisco lawsuit in 2002 alleged that the R.J.R. Tobacco Company created false paperwork and sold cigarettes to Iraq, which was a violation of U.N. and U.S. sanctions. The case also alleged that the company directly donated large sums of money to the PKK by giving tax per container.²⁷⁹ Roth and Sever note that the case was dropped, but "the proceedings revealed that PKK units in northern Iraq were collecting tax on all cigarettes trafficked into Baghdad and the rest of Iraq."²⁸⁰

In the second stage of cigarette smuggling, Iraq has become the source country. The high tax rates on tobacco products make Turkey a good market. Roth and Sever highlight that smugglers use counterfeit tax stamps and sell contraband cigarettes in the Turkish retail market.²⁸¹ They think that a smuggler can earn 60 USD per carton. Turkish Police informs that the PKK acquires commission from cigarette smugglers using Iraq and Iran borders. Recent research shows that 80 percent of the contraband cigarettes in the Turkish market use the eastern and southeastern borders. In 2013, the Turkish Police captured 108,243,473 packets of contraband cigarettes.²⁸²

²⁷⁸ William Billingslea, "Illicit Cigarette Trafficking and the Funding of Terrorism," *The Police Chief* 71, no. 2 (Feb 2004), http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=print_display&article_id=226&issue_id=22004.

²⁷⁹ Douglas Farah, "R.J. Reynolds Accused of Money Laundering; Suit also Alleges Smuggling of Cigarettes to Iraq," *The Washington Post* Nov 14, 2002.

²⁸⁰ Roth and Sever, *The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study*, 912.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 912.

²⁸² Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime, *Struggle Against Smuggling and Organized Crime 2013 Report*, 61.

When compared to drugs, the legality of smoking and the vast numbers of smokers worldwide make cigarette smuggling look less important. Some people choose buying contraband cigarettes due to their cheap price. Cigarette smuggling is a violation of custom tax regulations and causes a tax revenue loss for governments. However, if one considers the amount of contraband cigarettes in the Turkish cigarette market as 15 percent,²⁸³ the commission revenue, which the PKK earns via the so-called custom points in Iraq and Iran, is enormous.

F. MONEY LAUNDERING

The PKK earns a significant amount of money from illegal trade, so it must find ways to turn them to legal earnings. Freeman observes the importance of cash-only trade in money laundering activities of terrorist groups.²⁸⁴ Most terrorist groups encourage their collaborators to run cash-only businesses due to government officials' challenge to estimate the real revenue of the business. Eccarius-Kelly notes that many details are known about the PKK's money laundering operations via its diaspora networks. Its collaborators run döner kebab restaurants, pizza shops, and legal cultural centers. She says that the PKK does not own large businesses; however, it has publications and holds effective cultural festivals.²⁸⁵ Laçiner notes that jewelry trade is also a known method the PKK applies for money laundering.²⁸⁶

The PKK established several Kurdish cultural and business institutions in Europe with the political support of European countries. These institutions work as the propaganda machine of the terrorist group and also conceal its illegal activities. Özdemir and Pekgözlü give some examples of major Kurdish

²⁸³ Ziya İpek, "Police, Gendarmerie Deal Heavy Blow to PKK's Cigarette-Smuggling Activities," *Cihan News Agency*, Dec 17, 2012.

²⁸⁴ Freeman, "Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology," 469.

²⁸⁵ Eccarius-Kelly, "Surreptitious Lifelines: A Structural Analysis of the FARC and the PKK," 241.

²⁸⁶ Laçiner, "Drug Smuggling as a Main Source of PKK Terrorism," 4.

organizations that regularly organize parties and festivals. During these social events, the PKK racketeers money as donations. The people who do not want to contribute are threatened.²⁸⁷ Behind the mask of legal donations, the PKK extorts money for its terrorist activities. The International Kurdish Employers Foundation (KARSAZ) had around 1,000 businessmen in its portfolio, and the organization was money laundering by manipulating the financial records of its members.²⁸⁸

In 1996, the Belgian Police, in collaboration with Scotland Yard, held simultaneous operations in London, Brussels, Germany, and Luxembourg. The operation, Sputnik, aimed to discover the illegal financial relations between the PKK and Med TV Broadcasting Company. Although the company started broadcasting in May 1995, by the end of the summer, it collected 11 million USD in its bank account, which was a significant revenue. After the raid, Belgium Police revealed several documents on the PKK's extortion activities in Europe and weapons. The PKK was laundering its money through fifteen companies.²⁸⁹ Mincheva and Gurr highlight that "in February 1996 a Canadian businessman admitted that he had been contracted by PKK-front Med TV to launder money for the organization."²⁹⁰ Mango points out that after Operation Sputnik, the Brussels prosecutor's office convicted the PKK of laundering money, human smuggling, falsifying documents, drug smuggling and blackmailing people. The British Independent Television Commission cancelled the broadcasting license of Med TV in April 1999; however, the same company continued broadcasting under the MEDYA TV title via French satellites until 2004. After the license cancellation by French authorities in 2004, the company started using Danish satellites with the

²⁸⁷ Özdemir and Pekoğlu, "Where do Terror Organizations Get their Money? A Case Study: Financial Resources of the PKK," 96.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁸⁹ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 911.

²⁹⁰ Mincheva and Gurr, *Crime-Terror Alliances and the State: Ethnonationalist and Islamist Challenges to Regional Security*, 66.

ROJ TV title.²⁹¹ In another Sputnik Operation that took place in 2002 in France, French and Belgian officials discovered that PKK collaborators in Europe were depositing the extortion money in an offshore charity account on behalf of the PKK.²⁹² Ruehsen lists the charities used in money transferring for the PKK:

- Scandinavian Kurdish Peace Council
- Council of Solidarity with the Kurdish People in France
- London Kurdish Relationship Group
- Kurdistan Human Rights Project (UK)
- Council of Say No to the War against Kurdish People (Belgium)
- AKIN, a Kurdish information network (United States)
- Kurdistan Employers' Union or KARSAN (Germany)
- Kurdish Foundation Trust
- Kurdish Association of Victoria (ongoing investigation by the Australian government)²⁹³

The number of collaborators, variety of money laundering techniques, and the PKK's elasticity against laws in different countries show that the PKK has a very well-organized, proficient criminal network in money laundering.

G. CONCLUSION

The PKK is responsible for the death and displacement of thousands in the last 30 years. The lack of a common definition of terrorism and the political support of European countries on behalf of the Kurdish identity have strengthened the PKK in years. The PKK has formed its links and organizations

²⁹¹ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, 82.

²⁹² Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 911.

²⁹³ Ruehsen, "Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)," 69.

in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and European countries. Currently, it is operating like a transnational company from Afghanistan to Norway. However, it is a criminal enterprise that controls drug trafficking on the Balkan route, extorts people, smuggles people and cigarettes, and launders money. These are the basic financial sources of the PKK.

The PKK is a drug cartel on the Balkan route. It is possible to see the PKK's contributions in different phases of the drug trade. It started the drug business by cultivating opium in Syrian-controlled Lebanon, then collecting commission from individual drug smugglers via so-called customs in Iran and Iraq. It has many collaborators: PJAK in Iran, criminal families in Turkey, immigrants, and cultural institutions in Europe. After having a network in European countries with immigrants and cultural and social institutions, it reached the power of controlling 80 percent of the drug business in Europe. Currently, it ships the drugs to the lucrative European market via its own courier system and sells in the retail market.

The PKK extorts money from smugglers, ethnic Kurdish people in Turkey, and immigrants in Europe. It has discovered various ways to racketeer money: collecting commission, revolutionary taxes, donations, subscription fees, membership prices, and cultural event tickets. The people who do not want to give money face retaliation.

The PKK smuggles people to European capitals for three purposes: earning money, employing them in its illegal activities in Europe, and forcing women into prostitution. It also collects commission from cigarette smugglers. The spirit of the crime shows it as a felony, but the amount of cigarette smuggling from Iraq to Turkey should not be underestimated because it is as lucrative as the drug business in contrast with an incomparable risk rate.

The PKK uses its legal businesses and sociocultural institutions to disguise its illegal activities and their revenues. The PKK launders its illegal revenue by offshore accounts and in the name of donations to its pro-PKK

institutions. The organization is also good at falsifying the financial accounts of its sympathizers' legal businesses to launder money.

A terrorist organization cannot maintain its perpetuity without adequate finances. Having a common stand against criminal activities of terrorist groups in accordance with the United Nations Transnational Organized Crime Convention may cut the financial sources of the PKK. Consequently, the collapse of the PKK may save ethnic Kurdish people from the PKK's hegemony in Europe, prevent future addicts of drugs, raise the public's confidence in state authority, and promote democracy by renouncing violence.

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V. CONCLUSION

A. LESSONS LEARNED

Although terrorism is a major security threat to global stability and security, the international community has not succeeded in finding a common definition of terrorism or in producing corporate countering policies. Every country perceives terrorism in accordance with its own threats, benefits, and profits. Despite this challenge of the international community, most terrorist organizations have a strong sense of coordination with each other. They can easily exploit the conflicting interests of states. They are highly adept at learning new methods to comply with shifting environmental conditions. They invent new survival strategies and teach each other. Among all these survival strategies, money is one of the most vital for terrorist organizations. They cannot survive without sufficient funds. As a result, they follow two main ways to acquire enough funds: finding sponsoring states or involvement in the criminal world.

With respect to these two funding sources, there is literature that suggests that terrorist groups share characteristics with organized crime groups. This thesis focuses on the work of Tamara Makarenko, an expert on organized crime and terrorism from the University of Saint Andrews, who has explained the nexus between the two by describing and illustrating a crime-terror continuum. According to her study, terrorist organizations apply criminal methods to fund themselves; similarly, criminal groups employ terrorist methods to frighten rivals and countering organizations. Makarenko perceives four levels of relations: alliance, operational tool, convergence (political crime and commercial terrorism hybrids), and black hole, depending on the extent of the cooperation and the similarity between the two groups.

The PKK is the source of irremediable traumas in Turkey. As a result of its violent campaign, more than 40,000 people have lost their lives, and nearly 400,000 people have left their locations. It has caused regional and national

security problems, polarized the nation politically, and financially burdened the developing Turkish economy.

This study focused on the PKK's most profitable activities and its money laundering. All these crimes suggest that the organization surpassed the first two levels of Makarenko's crime-terror model. It acts as a "commercial terrorism"²⁹⁴ group that cares more about money than its political objectives. However, maintaining ethnic and political discourse helps it find shelter, help, or backing from some states and provides cheaper labor for its criminal operations. Contemporarily, it is at a critical point in which it may either transform itself into a pure organized crime group or create a 'black hole' (lawless zone) for its criminal proceedings.

The PKK started its activities as a pure terrorist organization. By using an effective political rhetoric, it did not confront any problems in finding sponsors. Sedat Laçiner, an international relations professor from Onsekiz Mart University, notes that the PKK was mostly treated as a "privileged organization"²⁹⁵ by some Western states such as Denmark, Belgium, Italy, and Germany. The organization used to have training camps and bases in Syria, Iran, Iraq, Greece, and Armenia. Laçiner states,

According to the British MI5 reports, it is one of the bloodiest terrorist organizations. It means that there is no difference between Al Qaeda and the PKK before the Western legal system. However, the PKK has military bases in Iraq and propaganda offices in the EU capitals. The terrorist organization is probably the only terrorist organization that has satellite TV channel. The PKK's Roj TV has been broadcasting from Denmark. It uses the Hotbird satellite.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Makarenko, "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Modelling 21st Century Security Dynamics," 207.

²⁹⁵ Sedat Laciner, "The West and Terrorism: PKK as A Privileged Terrorist Organization," *Turkish Weekly* 14 (2006), 1. <http://www.turkishweekly.net/2006/05/14/news/the-west-and-terrorism-pkk-as-a-privileged-terrorist-organization/>.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

Several European countries and neighboring countries of Turkey backed the PKK at different levels and for various political and strategical reasons. Some states used the PKK as a bargaining chip and some used it as a tool to harm an enemy, which they otherwise could not conventionally counter. Therefore, the PKK has been a stunt man of cowards for years. It took years for Turkey to persuade some sponsoring states to cease their harmful actions. Nevertheless, their dubious practices gave Turkey a great opportunity to evaluate the sincerity of its allies and neighbors.

While enjoying the benefits of sponsorship, the PKK mainly engaged in criminal activities such as drug trade, extortion, human trafficking, cigarette smuggling, and money laundering. Drug trading is a common way for terrorist organizations to fund themselves; however, the PKK proved itself as one of the best narco-terrorist groups. Notably, it has become a drug cartel on the Balkan Route. At first, the organization collaborated with Kurdish drug lords to learn the details of the drug business. The alliance of organized crime groups and the PKK satisfied both sides. For nearly a decade, they cooperated to traffic drugs from the Turkish-Iranian border to European countries.

For ease and perpetuity against countering organizations, the PKK established several sub-organizations under different aliases. The money flowing from east to west was massive. To earn the maximum profit from drugs, the organization expanded throughout a larger area, from Afghanistan to European street markets, by developing its own criminal infrastructures. Then it eliminated its ex-collaborators and dominated the European drug market. Kurdish organized crime groups surrendered to the military power of the PKK. Trafficking drugs is not the only criminal activity of the PKK. The organization has also gained capabilities in cultivation and production. It encourages its sympathizers in Turkey to plant cannabis. The organization has heroin manufacturing laboratories in Iran, Turkey, and eastern European countries.

The PKK has established its European infrastructure through Kurdish institutions, clubs, and associations. This network of sub-organizations has

worked as its recruitment offices, drug stores, hiding places, and shelters to mask its criminal activities. The PKK extorts mostly ethnic Kurds in several countries by blackmailing, life-threatening, and organizing attendance-mandatory cultural festivals. The organization tries to disguise the extortion by using different names, such as 'commission,' 'revolutionary tax,' 'protection fee,' 'membership fee,' and 'subscription price.'

For the local population in eastern Turkey, smuggling has always been an important revenue. Therefore, the PKK initially involved itself in the smuggling business by extorting local smugglers. At its so-called 'custom points' in Iran and Iraq, it demanded commission from the smugglers. Later, it decided to apply its vast experience in drugs to smuggling goods and trafficking humans to create new funding sources. The transition was easy because it had already learned the porous points on the borderlines, tracks in the mountainous region, law enforcement weaknesses, distracting methods, the rules of illegal trade, and the points of contact. During the years of the First Gulf War, the PKK noticed the profit to be gained in cigarette smuggling. As a result of that, it collaborated with Saddam Hussein's son to smuggle U.S. cigarettes into the Iraqi market. Since then, it has smuggled contraband cigarettes to the Turkish market. This is because the high tax rate on tobacco products in Turkey makes cigarette smuggling attractive. Smoking is common in Turkey. Some smokers prefer contraband cigarettes because of their cheapness and criminal perception. They think that selling or purchasing contraband cigarettes is a petty crime. Therefore, the organization does not face any difficulty in selling them in local markets thanks to its sympathizers.

The PKK traffics people for three primary reasons. First, the organization earns a revenue by transferring people from eastern countries to western countries. It uses various routes through Turkey. The criminal network in Europe provides them shelter. Second, the PKK does not allow illegal immigrants to collapse their relations with the organization. It employs them in its criminal positions in Europe. Children are highly valuable for the organization. This is

because they have no criminal liabilities, they are easier to be employed close to youth attraction centers, and they are more prone to the propaganda of the organization. Third, the organization traffics women from eastern European countries to western ones. Most of the brothels in Germany and Holland belong to the PKK. The organization forces women into prostitution in several European countries.

Godson and Williams point out a common practice of criminal organizations by noting, “Criminal organizations use their profits to purchase legitimate businesses.”²⁹⁷ Legal businesses allow criminal organizations to deny the source of their revenue and protect it against confiscation. The PKK launders its black money in cash-only or legal businesses. These businesses are generally run by PKK sympathizers in Europe. Kurdish cultural institutions and clubs disguise their extortion income as membership fees, subscription fees, or donations. The PKK successfully uses several different accounts in different banks to transfer and clear its tracks.

The continuous funds, which the PKK acquires through its criminal operations, is the main reason for Turkey’s failure in finding a tangible solution to the thirty-year-long grievances. Turkey’s efforts are inadequate to cease the criminal activities of the organization. This is because the organization is not only active in Turkey. It has a web of criminal and financial links across a wide territory, which passes over the jurisdiction lines of Turkey. In considering the criminal network of the PKK, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlights the transnational organized crime side:

PKK/KONGRA-GEL, one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world, is a clear example of the interconnected nature of terrorism and transnational organized crime. This terrorist network is engaged in trafficking and marketing of drugs. PKK/KONGRA-GEL has an established infrastructure and network to produce, transport and traffic opiates and cannabis throughout Europe. Moreover, material evidence and intelligence sources have

²⁹⁷ Godson and Williams, “Strengthening Cooperation against Transnational Crime,” 69.

shown that the PKK/ KONGRA-GEL is also engaged in laundering money derived from human and drug trafficking. Therefore, Turkey is of the opinion that international cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking should also cover the cooperation and an integrated approach in the fight against terrorism.²⁹⁸

B. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The PKK is more a criminal threat than a security threat because it is not limited to Turkish borders. Vera Eccarius-Kelly, a political scientist from Siena College, describes the PKK as an octopus that has transnational criminal, political, and terrorist tentacles.²⁹⁹ These terrorist tentacles are mostly active in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

To immunize itself against the sanctions of the international community, the PKK has made a habit out of changing letters and words in its name. One can argue that the organization is very well aware of the states' bureaucracies, political games, and international relations. For its sub-organizations in different countries, it has established an umbrella organization, the Group of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK). The supreme leader of the KCK is the PKK's jailed leader, Abdullah Öcalan. However, it is practically led by the PKK's second in command, Murat Karayılan. PJAK in Iran, PKK in Turkey, PÇDK in Iraq, and PYD in Syria are all branches of the KCK that are ruled by Öcalan.³⁰⁰

The organization's criminal and political tentacles stretch from Iran to Europe. Francois Haut claims that "the PKK has set up as a system the methodical exploitation of Europe considering it the means tank fueling its 'cause.'"³⁰¹ The organization earns most of its annual revenue from its illegal

²⁹⁸ "Turkey's Efforts Against the Drug Problem," accessed November 1, 2015, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-efforts-against-the-drug-problem.en.mfa

²⁹⁹ Eccarius-Kelly, "Surreptitious Lifelines: A Structural Analysis of the FARC and the PKK," 239.

³⁰⁰ "Terör Örgütünün 'KCK Türkiye Meclisi' Yapılanması" [Terrorist organization's KCK structure]. *Milliyet*, sec. Gündem, May 28, 2009, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/teror-orgutunun--kck-turkiye-meclisi--yapilanmasi/gundem/gundem-detay/28.05.2009/1100049/default.htm>

³⁰¹ Haut, "Kurdish Extremism and Organized Crime: The Kurdistan Workers' Party," 3.

activities in Europe, and it has gotten political backing from European communities. Although the European Union designated the PKK as a terrorist organization, the 30-year experience in the fight against PKK terrorism shows that European communities have poor political will to cease the activities of the PKK in European jurisdiction. For a recent example, on November 12, 2015, Zübeyir Aydar, one of the high ranking leaders of the PKK, gave a speech in a conference at the National Assembly of France.³⁰² He was designated as one of the “significant foreign narcotics traffickers”³⁰³ by the U.S. Treasury in 2009 and is currently a wanted terrorist by Turkey with an award of 1.4 million USD.³⁰⁴ As it can be seen, not only foot soldiers, but also high ranking members of the PKK can freely act in Europe and give speeches at the French Parliament without any fear of capture.

At the foreword of *Turkey and The War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Andrew Mango, who is a British historian, emphasizes the loneliness of Turkey in the fight against terrorism. He notes:

Until President George W. Bush declared his war on terror, Turkish efforts to fight terrorists enjoyed little sympathy in the West. Comments were mostly focused on the justifications advanced by terrorists and on complaints that human rights were violated in the course of anti-terrorist operations.³⁰⁵

In spite of the European tolerance for the PKK’s political mask, the criminal PKK poses a greater risk to Europe than it does in Turkey. This is because Turkey is a transit country for many of the PKK’s criminal activities and Europe is the destination of its all criminal proceedings. Şule Toktaş and Hande

³⁰² “Zübeyir Aydar Fransa Ulusal Meclisinde Konferansa Katıldı” [Zubeyir Aydar attended a conference at the National Assembly of France.]. *Milliyet*, sec. Gündem [Agenda], November 13, 2015c. <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/zubeyir-aydar-fransa-ulusal-gundem-2147560/>

³⁰³ The U.S. Department of Treasury Press Release, *Treasury Designates Three Leaders of the Kongra-Gel as Significant Foreign Narcotics Traffickers* [October 14, 2009].

³⁰⁴ “Aranan Terörist [Wanted Terrorists] (Red List),” accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.terorarananlar.pol.tr/detaylar/Sayfalar/kirmizi1.aspx>

³⁰⁵ Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, vi.

Selimoğlu, political scientists at Kadir Has University, argue that eliminating transnational organized crime is a prerequisite for establishing European Union values like “human rights, justice, equality, democracy, freedom, rule of law, and preserving peace and stability.”³⁰⁶ David M. Luna, director of Anti-Crime Programs at the U.S. Department of State, points out a different aspect by saying, “interlinked illicit threats not only undermine the integrity of vital governmental institutions meant to protect peace and security, but cost economies tax revenue and jobs, and promote a culture of impunity.”³⁰⁷ Therefore, the countries that are not convinced by the PKK’s terrorism side should be aware of the commercial side of the organization. The countries should honor the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; otherwise, they should understand that their so-called political vigilance is promoting the statute of unlawfulness. Covertly backing the PKK is supporting racketeering, mafias, prostitution, forced labor, slavery, drugs, child kidnappings and 12-year old children holding AK-47s at arms.³⁰⁸ Promoting democracy and human rights can only be achieved by eliminating terrorism and transnational organized crime and providing justice.

In order to fight effectively against transnational organized crime (TOC), countries need to achieve five critical goals: a determined approach against TOC, international cooperation and coordination, sharing information, education, and economical precautions.

³⁰⁶ Şule Toktas and Hande Selimoğlu, “Smuggling and Trafficking in Turkey: An Analysis of EU–Turkey Cooperation in Combating Transnational Organized Crime,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14, no. 1 (03/01, 2012), 146.

³⁰⁷ David M. Luna, “Threat Convergence: Subversion, Destabilization, and Insecurity” (George Mason University, School of Public Policy, U.S. Department of State, May 4, 2009). <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/rm/122662.htm>.

³⁰⁸ Fatih Çakmak and Sertaç Bulur, “PKK Criticized Over ‘Child Soldiers’ Claims.” *Anadolu Agency*: AA Sep 20, 2015a. <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/pkk-criticized-over-child-soldiers-claims/245168>

1. Standing Firm against Security Threats

States should have a deciduous stance against transnational organized crime threats, which they failed to show against terrorism. Terrorists, freedom fighters, revolutionaries, guerillas, and militias are all unique words, but are synonyms in the terrorism terminology. Policy makers choose one of them in accordance with their own benefits. The use of these words creates vicious cycles in international relations and prevents peace. However, crime is crime in most places. Crime cannot be justified by political goals. Countries can easily reach a consensus about preventing crimes.

The stance of the United States toward terrorism in 2001 served as a good model to the remaining part of the world. Thomas Sanderson notes that, "U.S. pressures on nations to participate in the global war on terrorism: many states that might otherwise turn a blind eye to organized crime now feel compelled to pursue terrorists."³⁰⁹

In 2011, the U.S. presidency released the *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*. According to this strategy report, the White House summarizes its key objectives as follows:

- Protect Americans and our partners from the harm, violence, and exploitation of transnational criminal networks.
- Help partner countries strengthen governance and transparency, break the corruptive power of transnational criminal networks, and sever state-crime alliances.
- Break the economic power of transnational criminal networks and protect strategic markets and the U.S. financial system from TOC penetration and abuse.
- Defeat transnational criminal networks that pose the greatest threat to national security by targeting their infrastructures, depriving them of their enabling means, and preventing the criminal facilitation of terrorist activities.

³⁰⁹ Thomas M. Sanderson, "Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines," 55.

- Build international consensus, multilateral cooperation, and public-private partnerships to defeat transnational organized crime.³¹⁰

With this report, the U.S. government took responsibility for preventing transnational criminal networks not only against America, but also its partners. The United States and Turkey have had close relationships and common commitments since the 1940s. As the leader in many areas, the United States is expected to continue its mission and encourage other states to fight against terrorists and transnational organized crime groups.

After 2006, Iraq and Syria's respective power vacuums led to the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a fundamentalist terrorist organization. The United States and some other Western democracies are now supporting PYD in Syria against ISIS. However, the PYD is an organization that is aligned with the PKK. They belong to the KCK and get direct orders from Abdullah Öcalan. Patrick Cockburn, a commentator and journalist from *The Independent*, reports that "The PKK for the first time holds power in a quasi-state in north-east Syria which has U.S. military backing and increasingly warm relations with Russia."³¹¹ Although Western policy makers try to differentiate the PYD from the PKK, it is obvious that the organization is fulfilling the instructions of Abdullah Öcalan, who the United States helped Turkey to capture in Nairobi in 1999.³¹² The paradoxical approach of the United States seems to be a source of distrust between the two communities in future.

ISIS is a serious security threat; however, the virtuous people are still stronger than the ISIS terrorists. Therefore, the precautions and solutions must

³¹⁰ National Security Council, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security* (Washington, DC: The White House, July 19, 2011), 1.

³¹¹ Patrick Cockburn, "Kurds have Driven a Wedge between Turkey and the US," *The Independent* Oct 16, 2015.

³¹² Vernon Loeb, "U.S. Tip to Turkey Led to Capture of Öcalan; Officials Acknowledge Role in Hunt for Rebel," *The Washington Post* Feb 21, 1999.

be compatible with the moral values. Supporting a terrorist group to combat another is not a legitimate or appropriate option. States have militaries, fighter aircrafts, ships, intelligence units, and diplomatic capabilities. They do not need hired guns. It is not a completely fitting analogy; however, the U.S. self-criticism about the support that they provided to Mujahedeen in Afghanistan is noteworthy because rapid decisions may create further security and criminal problems in the Middle East. Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told Congress:

We also have a history of kind of moving in and out of Pakistan. I mean, let's remember here: **The people we are fighting today we funded 20 years ago. And we did it because we were locked in this struggle with the Soviet Union.** They invaded Afghanistan, and we did not want to see them control central Asia, and we went to work, and it was President Reagan, in partnership with the Congress, led by Democrats, who said, "You know what? Sounds like a pretty good idea! Let's deal with the ISI and the Pakistani military, and let's go recruit these Mujahedin! That's great! Let's get some to come from Saudi Arabia and other places, importing their Wahhabi brand of Islam, so that we can go beat the Soviet Union!" And guess what? They retreated, they lost billions of dollars, and it led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. So there's a very strong argument, which is: **It wasn't a bad investment to end the Soviet Union, but let's be careful what we sow, because we will harvest.** So we then left Pakistan. We said, "OK, fine. You deal with the Stingers that we've left all over your country. You deal with the mines that are along the border. And by the way, we don't want to have anything to do with you. In fact, we're sanctioning you." So we stopped dealing with the Pakistani military, and with ISI, and we now are making up for a lot of lost time.³¹³

For the last five years, Turkey has attempted to use negotiations to put an end to the PKK's terrorism. Nevertheless, the PKK's preparations during the negotiation talks, which have been revealed by its sudden raids and bombings against military posts, police officers, and civilians, demonstrates that the organization has never had a will to finish its violent campaign. This is because

³¹³ Akbar Ganji, "U.S.-Jihadist Relations (Part 1): Creating the Mujahedin in Afghanistan," *The Huffington Post*, sec. The World Post, July 2, 2014.

the PKK is a criminal organization as well as a terrorist one. Trying to negotiate with it just only strengthens its confidence and increases its popularity. Negotiation will probably boost its violence and profit campaign. Rosenthal argues that the governments of Colombia and Sierra Leone made mistake by negotiating with for-profit groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone. She notes,

When governments are fooled into negotiating with for-profit terrorists as political actors, they inevitably make mistakes. One of the turning points for FARC was when the former president of Colombia [Andres Pastrana] gave the group control of 42,000 square kilometers of land during the peace talks begun at the end of the 1990s. Not surprisingly, this increased territorial control allowed FARC to solidify its drug business and its profits; it was not until after the 2000 accord that FARC enacted Law 002. This also coincided with FARC's dividing itself into seven units to formalize its enterprise. At least two of these divisions now operate almost solely in the fashion of drug cartels. Although the land offering was later rescinded because it was obvious FARC had used the negotiations only as a means of increasing its profits, by then it was too late. The success of the terrorist group's drug operations, the loss of ideological efficacy and the inadvertent aid of the government turned FARC into a group more involved and motivated by continued financial gain than ideological revolution. No matter how the group may wish to view itself, reality reflects the overwhelming drive to sustain and even expand its profit base.³¹⁴

The PKK is a commercial terrorism group, and governments should solve the problem in accordance with the group's genuine motives. Bargaining with criminals may criminalize more people in the future. The PKK is a group that often changes its political objectives, and it has been difficult for governments to satisfy its needs. It uses the negotiation process to gain political and diplomatic ground in the world and backing for its criminal enterprise. It does not want peace; peace is a threat to its existence. If peace happens inadvertently, it looks for ways to break it. As Rosenthal concludes,

³¹⁴ Rosenthal, "For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs," 492.

The more they are viewed as a destructive criminal influence, by both the government and the population, the easier it will be to undermine them. Governments do not negotiate territorial settlements with criminals. Governments do not negotiate peace settlements with criminals. Governments arrest criminals.³¹⁵

2. International Cooperation

Luna states that the world can succeed against transnational organized crime and terrorism if it can establish “fighting networks”³¹⁶ against criminal networks. As previously mentioned, terrorist and criminal organizations are highly capable of adapting themselves. They can easily change their traditional structures. Oscar Palma, a professor at Universidad del Rosario in Colombia, notes that terrorists expand their networks beyond their primary targets’ borders in order to avoid the limitations of a single state and collaborate with other terrorists in their regions.³¹⁷ He also points out the network theory, which suggests that “structures can survive unless 5–15% of hubs are disabled simultaneously.”³¹⁸ Therefore, raids against commercial terrorists must simultaneously target their military, financial, and political wings. Otherwise, the organization can regenerate itself several times like a lizard that loses its tail. Former Turkish Chief of General Staff İlker Başbuğ states that the PKK has been defeated militarily at least five times since 1984.³¹⁹ However, thanks to its financial and political wings in multiple places, the organization managed to recruit new people and continued its destabilizing project in Turkey.

³¹⁵ Rosenthal, “For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs,” 494.

³¹⁶ Luna, “Threat Convergence: Subversion, Destabilization, and Insecurity.”

³¹⁷ Oscar Palma, “Transnational Networks of Insurgency and Crime: Explaining the Spread of Commercial Insurgencies Beyond State Borders,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26, no. 3 (2015), 477.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 491.

³¹⁹ “Sözün Bittiği Yerdeyiz” [At the point, where there is no need to talk]. *Milliyet*, July 6, 2010, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/sozun-bittigi-yerdeyiz-siyaset/haberdetay/06.07.2010/1259717/default.htm>

The strikes against transnational organized crime groups must be coordinated between countries. Every country should contribute their efforts in all aspects against the common enemy of humanity. Godson states:

As transnational organized crime has become ubiquitous, devising, and implementing effective counter measures has become an international security imperative. Independent national responses will not suffice... the response needs to be extensive in scope, multilateral in form, to the extent possible, global in reach.³²⁰

By taking coordinated actions against TOCs, countries can provide a better and securer environment for their citizens. Otherwise, a threat that seems far would not take long to threaten them in future.

3. Sharing Information

An important and possible type of cooperation is sharing information between countries. Expecting every country to have the same experience in countering TOC policies and knowledge about all worldwide groups is utopian. Therefore, international mechanisms should provide countries with a common ground to rapidly share their experiences. The UN can introduce a list of transnational organized crime groups. By doing so, every member of the UN can identify transnational criminal groups and the UN can compel its members to act in accordance with its conventions and protocols, which they signed.

Transnational organized crime groups use some countries as their "service states,"³²¹ which provide them strict banking privacy, low tax rates, and unlimited reach to the global banking system. These countries give them the opportunity to launder their money and keep it in safety. Sheltering criminals by providing them safe vaults and trying to catch them is a tragic irony. Transparency International, a non-governmental organization to fight against corruption, expresses this dilemma by reporting:

³²⁰ Godson and Williams, "Strengthening Cooperation Against Transnational Crime," 70.

³²¹ Ibid., 67, 68.

Financial institutions should be fully cooperative in official investigations to combat money laundering, such as from funds linked to stolen assets. Once stolen assets have been placed in the banking system, recovery is extremely complex. It can be difficult to locate funds concealed in a web of multiple accounts with multiple layers of secrecy. Freezing assets that have been identified as stolen can be slow. In addition, cross-jurisdictional investigations can be challenging and expensive. It is estimated that 99 per cent of illicit funds remain undetected and 0.2 per cent of all funds uncovered have been seized.³²²

Therefore, countries that have stricter privacy policies should make them more transparent. Being cooperative with and equal to all international judicial warrants can restrict the room for criminals and on the contrary expands the reach of law.

4. Education

Education is another dimension of the fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism. When one considers the recruitment pool of the PKK, it can be seen that most of the members are young, uneducated, unemployed, and anti-social.³²³ Most of them see working for the organization as a well-paid job. The organization also provides them some level of socialization. Individuals who were neglected in their families or communities are also good candidates for the PKK's fronts. Education is a long, but an absolute solution to the criminality problem.

In Turkey, education can be achieved in four main segments: formal education, mass-media education, religious education, and constantly reporting. To defeat the effects of illiteracy, Turkey should reform its national education programs to decrease the tendency towards bad habits and criminality. For older citizens, the best way is mass-media education. Government should encourage

³²² Transparency International, *Incentivising Integrity in Banks* (Working Paper # 02/2015) (Berlin: Transparency International, July 30, 2015), 6.

³²³ Süleyman Özeren, Alper Sözer and Oğuzhan Başibüyük, "A Field Study on Factors that Affect Individuals' Decision to Join the Terrorist Organization: The PKK/KCK Case," *International Journal of Security and Terrorism* 3, no. 2 (2012), 72, 85.

or subsidize researchers and film producers to document the facts about the transnational organized crime and terrorist groups. They can produce documentaries or film series for popular consumption. The PKK is highly skilled at propagandizing via social media and satellite television programs. Therefore, the educational measures must be competent to show every citizen the crimes that the PKK is committing. Mass-media education can diminish smuggling, human trafficking, and opium or cannabis cultivation. The education can inform people about the threats and encourage them to report people who are collaborating in these kinds of illegal activities.

The people that are constantly abused by the PKK mostly claim to be religious Muslims. The Friday sermons are good opportunities to reach local men. They can be informed about the harms of drugs, the wrath of people who are trafficked and forced to criminality or prostitution, the harms of tax fraud, the harms of contraband cigarettes, and the virtues of a legal life.

Turkish authorities are publishing their documents mostly in Turkish. Due to this language barrier, international scholars cannot use Turkish sources and experiences. Therefore, the research on the PKK is not proportional to the threat it poses against the international community. Turkish authorities also must release their findings in other languages.

5. Economic Precautions

Bribery and life threats are the most effective tools of organized crime groups against countering organizations. By considering the Balkans after the Yugoslavia era, Sanderson indicates “poorly equipped and underpaid border guards”³²⁴ as one of the thriving factors of transnational organized crime. Because of this, smugglers and traffickers earn huge amounts from illegal trade. They try to attract law enforcement and customs officials by offering ‘big money.’ Mincheva and Gurr note that the corruption level in surrounding states (Iraq,

³²⁴ Thomas M. Sanderson, “Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines,” 57.

Syria, Iran, Armenia, Bulgaria) has been an important factor for the PKK's survival.³²⁵ Turkey's corruption level is way below the regional standards. However, the PKK uses many countries as transit countries for its illegal operations.

The wages for government officials must be satisfactory to keep them in ethical borders. Awardings for successful personnel should be competitive. Annual awarding amounts should be anonymously publicly announced. To respond to the PKK, Turkey should reform its anti-smuggling law. Adopting more punitive laws against smugglers may be more of a deterrent. Currently, Turkey awards both informers and capturers about smuggling cases. However, the law limits the awarding amount for individual officials. The maximum amount an official can get cannot exceed approximately 4,000 USD annually.³²⁶ The level of the award is not much when it is compared with possible offers. Increasing or abolishing the annual limit may be more rational and motivational.

Ways to improve the effectiveness of the current border regime is an area of possible future research. Increasing the number of custom points between Turkey and its eastern neighbors can decrease the volume of the current border gates. Turkey should equip its southern and eastern borders with more technological innovations like unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and automated gun systems. These systems may help law enforcement units control the multiple tracks in the mountainous terrain.

³²⁵ Mincheva and Gurr, *Crime-Terror Alliances and the State: Ethnonationalist and Islamist Challenges to Regional Security*, 19.

³²⁶ 5607 Sayılı Kaçakçılıkla Mücadele Kanununa Göre Muhbir Ve El Koyanlara İkramiye Ödenmesi Hakkında Yönetmelik [Statute of awarding about the anti-smuggling law], Public Law 26685, Resmi Gazete (Official Gazette) (2007).

C. LAST WORDS

David M. Luna points out that “fighting terrorism must go in hand with fighting transnational organized crime.”³²⁷ The PKK, as a transnational organized crime group, not only threatens the stability of Turkey, but also threatens humanity even in very remote areas from its target country. The organization has a vague political motive; however, its economic motives are obvious. The best way to defeat transnational organized crime groups is to defend the rule of law and stand firm against them. If the international community can collectively gain this approach, no illegal organization can survive and hide itself from justice.

³²⁷ David M. Luna, “Narco-Trafficking: What is the Nexus with the War on Terror?” (Miami, Florida, U.S. Department of State, October 8, 2008), <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/110828.htm>.

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