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THESIS

**THE INTERNATIONAL NEXUS BETWEEN DRUGS AND
TERROR: LESSONS IN CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY**

by

Kirstie I. Talbot

December 2010

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**THE INTERNATIONAL NEXUS BETWEEN DRUGS AND TERROR: LESSONS
IN CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the nexus that has evolved between terrorism and the illicit drug trade, threatening the sovereignty of countless nations worldwide. The "narcoterrorist" nexus is becoming ever more apparent as the transnational link between narcotics trafficking and terrorism has coerced Mexico into an on-going struggle for survival against powerful drug cartels that are ravaging the region. Does narcoterrorism pose a clear and present danger to America's national security? Is the current U.S. strategy to prosecute it effective? Moreover, are there any lessons that can be derived from the Latin American and Eurasian examples that would afford added insight into this phenomenon and assist U.S. policymaking efforts?

This thesis endeavors to answer these questions through an investigation of two areas of study. First, an examination of the concepts and historical context associated with the nature of narcoterrorism are presented, highlighting numerous issues within the lexicon. Second, to ascertain if previous efforts can offer beneficial perspectives in confronting the current narcoterrorist threat, two in-depth case studies concerning Turkey and Columbia are accomplished. These two components, when combined, offer valuable lessons learned and potential policy recommendations that can be applied to the existing volatile situation.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| AKP | Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi) |
| AUK | United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| DoJ | Department of Justice |
| DEA | Drug Enforcement Agency |
| ELN | National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) |
| EP | Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) |
| EU | European Union |
| FARC | Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| GAO | Government Accountability Office |
| HRK | Kurdistan Freedom Brigade (Hazen Rizgariya Kurdistan) |
| KGK | Kongra-Gel (also referred to as PKK) |
| KADEK | Congress for Freedom and Democracy in Kurdistan (also referred to as PKK) |
| MIT | National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı) |
| Mossad | Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations (HaMossad leModi'in uleTafkidim Meyuchadim) |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NSC | National Security Council |
| ONDCP | Office of National Drug Control Policy |
| PKK | Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan) |
| RP | Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) |
| UNODC | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
| U.S. | United States |

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The events of September 11, 2001, graphically illustrate the need to starve the infrastructure of every global terrorist organization and deprive them of the drug proceeds that might otherwise be used to fund acts of terror.¹

—Statement of Asa Hutchinson, Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration on March 13, 2002 before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information.

This thesis will examine the narcoterrorist nexus that has, for many years, threatened the sovereignty of countless countries in Latin America and Eurasia. The same illegal drug production funds that attack civilized society also destabilize democracies across the globe. The international connection between drugs and terrorism is now threatening the security of the United States. Due to the ongoing struggle for power and supremacy among Mexico's drug cartels, drug-related deaths and violence near the U.S.-Mexican border are accelerating with alarming regularity. The threat of a spillover onto U.S. soil encumbers the crisis as an issue for homeland security. Does narcoterrorism pose a clear and present danger to America's national security? Moreover, is the current United States strategy to prosecute it effective? It is

¹ Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, *Drug Enforcement Administration Congressional Testimony: Executive Summary*, 108th Cong., 1st sess., 2003, <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/cngrtest/ct031302p.html> (accessed May 24, 2010).

apparent that the U.S. government is making strides to address this issue of global significance; however, is enough being done to combat this threat? In addition, can any lessons be derived from the Latin American and Eurasian examples that would facilitate a more coherent understanding of this phenomenon and assist U.S. policymaking efforts?

In order to assess the legitimacy of the posed research question and understand the scope of the issue, it is necessary to divide the research into two areas of study: an investigation of several fundamental concepts dealing with the nature and character of narcoterrorism, and in-depth case studies involving two countries with first-hand experience in dealing with terrorism and the connection to the illicit drug trade. The fundamental concepts will consider narcoterrorism's connection to the war on drugs and the war on terror, and the current U.S. policies and practices implemented to combat the threat. The in-depth case studies will focus on the countries of Colombia and Turkey to ascertain if there are any lessons that can be considered as part of America's overall strategy to counter this threat. Colombia was chosen as an area of interest due to its "importance as a key source country for the coca leaf and as an incubator for organized crime."² Turkey was also found to be an area of significance since, unlike many nations, its government has done a much better job of responding to the narcoterrorist

² Patricia Bibes, "Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism: Colombia, a Case Study," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 17, no. 3 (August 1, 2001), 243, <http://ccj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/17/3/243> (accessed May 28, 2010).

threat by linking organized crime, the drug trade, and terrorist organizations together.³ Both countries are also characterized by a lengthy and checkered past in confronting this palpable menace to democratic stability and reform.

B. IMPORTANCE

Prior to September 11, 2001, the law enforcement community typically dealt with drug trafficking and terrorist activities as two separate issues.⁴ In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania, these two criminal activities became inextricably entwined. The events of September 11 have brought new focus to an old problem, narcoterrorism.⁵ In attempting to combat this threat, the link between drugs and terrorism has been thrust into the spotlight once again. Whether it is a state or a narcoterrorist organization, the connection between drugs and terrorism is dangerously apparent.⁶ Investigating the link between drugs and terrorism has taken on renewed

³ Mitchel Roth and Murat Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 10 (October, 2007), 907-909, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=15&sid=1044a0e2-0863-457a-85d6-7949cdb8744d%40sessionmgr10> (accessed May 28, 2010).

⁴ Senate Judiciary Committee, Committee on the Judiciary, *Narco-Terrorism: International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism - A Dangerous Mix*, 108th Cong., 1st sess., 2003, 103, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/congress/narco_terror_20may03.pdf (accessed May 24, 2010).

⁵ Kimberley L. Thachuk, ed., *Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2007), 25-26.

⁶ *Ibid.*

significance and has heightened the visibility of the threat that was present even before the events of September 11.

Globalization has radically changed the nature of both legitimate and illegitimate ventures.⁷ Criminals, by exploiting advances in technology, finance, communications, and transportation in pursuit of their illegal enterprises, have become criminal entrepreneurs, fusing drugs and terrorism together in an elaborate labyrinth of illicit activities. Not only is the proliferation of illegal drugs perceived as a danger, but the profits from the sale of drugs provide a ready source of funding for other criminal activities, including terrorism.

The international narcotics industry represents a very lucrative and highly problematic illicit endeavor. According to the 2009 Congressional Research Service report entitled "International Drug Control Policy," "Estimates of the global proceeds from illegal drugs vary significantly, ranging from \$100 billion to more than \$1 trillion per year."⁸ Moreover, the connection of this highly profitable criminal enterprise to terrorist organizations is not difficult to envision since,

⁷ Michaelene Cox, *State of Corruption, State of Chaos: The Terror of Political Malfeasance* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 15.

⁸ Liana Sun Wyler, *International Drug Control Policy* Congressional Research Service [2010]), <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34543.pdf> (accessed May 14, 2010).

The global drug trade yields such a staggering amount of money that it is not hard to contemplate how some may illicitly flow into the coffers of some terrorists.⁹

Tracking and intercepting the unlawful flow of drug money is an important tool in identifying and dismantling international drug trafficking organizations with ties to terrorism since terrorist groups, in need of new sources of funds, are turning increasingly to narcotics syndicates and avenues of organized crime. This phenomenon can be attributed to the decline in the state sponsorship of terrorist activities, thanks to a concerted international effort to starve the financial base of every terrorist organization and deprive them of revenue that is used to fund acts of terror and the successful disruption of terrorist communication nodes by the United States and its allies.¹⁰

The significance of the threat created by narcoterrorism was underscored by President Obama in his message delivered at the Opening of the Trans-Pacific Symposium on November 9, 2009:

In recent years, the world has seen a convergence of transnational threats and networks, which are more dangerous and destabilizing than ever.

⁹ David M. Luna, "Narco-Trafficking: What is the Nexus with the War on Terror?" (Lecture on The Whole of Government Approach - Applying Full Spectrum Capabilities in Dismantling Transnational Illicit Networks and Corruption Nodes in the Crime-Terror Continuum in Miami, FL, U.S. Department of State Website, October 8, 2008, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/110828.htm> (accessed May 3, 2010)).

¹⁰ Michael Braun, "Drug Trafficking and Middle Eastern Terrorist Groups: A Growing Nexus?" (Special Policy Forum at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington DC, The Washington Institute, July 25, 2008 <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2914> (accessed May 26, 2010)).

These threats and networks are becoming more fluid and sophisticated; are able to cross borders; and involve elements of international organized crime, particularly illicit finance and trafficking in drugs, arms and persons. This can undermine stability and security, fuel violence and corruption, weaken the rule of law, and subvert legitimate economies. Addressing these 21st century transnational threats is an important priority of the United States.¹¹

Narcoterrorism and its corrosive effects represent a devastating and surreptitious assault on the United States and democratic nations spanning the globe. How serious is the danger posed by the intersection of drugs and terrorism? The same factors have already affected Colombia, and have destabilized Peru, Mexico, and Afghanistan, to name but a few.¹² Ignoring the narcoterrorist threat and the corruption it spreads could have dire consequences for the security of not only the United States but also of democratic nations around the world.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

The basic problem that surfaces as a result of the research question being posed is that if narcoterrorism embodies such a clear and present danger to America's national security, is the current U.S. strategy to combat

¹¹ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "Chair's Report: Trans-Pacific Symposium on Dismantling Transnational Illicit Networks" (Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S. Department of State, November 9-12, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/137311.htm> (accessed May 5, 2010).

¹² Asa Hutchinson, "Narco-Terror: The International Connection between Drugs and Terror" (Heritage Foundation Institute for International Studies, Washington DC, April 2, 2002), <http://www.justice.gov/dea/speeches/s040202.html> (accessed May 28, 2010).

it sufficient? Is America doing enough to impede its devastating consequences? Moreover, are there any lessons that can be obtained from the analysis of other nations' attempts to eradicate this transnational threat?

The startling reality is that the extensive continuum of narcoterrorist activity, which includes smuggling and trafficking offenses, directly impacts U.S. national security because of the influence it has on worldwide stability and its ability to undermine global trade, industry and financial markets.¹³ Top intelligence and national security experts have deliberated the merits and shortcomings of various strategies the U.S. has adopted to defeat this reemerging threat, which is shaped by the "transformation" and "convergence" of large-scale global criminal networks and terrorist organizations. As Thomas Sanderson observed in an article pertaining to the link between terrorism and organized crime,

While there is some debate as to whether these groups are 'converging' or 'transforming,' it is clear that this growing threat is complex and increasingly difficult to counter with standard law enforcement and military counter-measures.¹⁴

My hypothesis is that narcoterrorism does in fact represent a clear and present danger to America's national security. The perceived effectiveness of the

¹³ Mark A. R. Kleiman, *Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service [2004]), <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&doc=40076&coll=documents> (accessed May 31, 2008).

¹⁴ Thomas M. Sanderson, "Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 24, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2004), 49, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sais_review/v024/24.1sanderson.pdf (accessed May 5, 2010).

countermeasures utilized to combat its deadly effects should be scrutinized with renewed intensity since traditional law enforcement and military practices seem to be falling far short of dealing with this endemic problem. The sheer magnitude of narcoterrorism's reach and the global ramifications, if unchecked, point to valuable lessons that can be gleaned from other nations' efforts to confront this transnational scourge. Of the major drug-producing nations in Latin America, the case of Colombia yields an excellent illustration of both the effectiveness and failure in political leadership, military and police involvement to counter the narcoterrorist threat. Its efforts in dealing with the illegal drug trade and the insurgent challenge provide a wealth of lessons and data to review and study. Many important lessons can also be derived from the case of Turkey, which has had extensive experience in dealing with the issue of narcoterrorism due to its geopolitical and geostrategic position. Grasping the relationship between the illegal drug trade and the financing of violence has been an important guiding principle of the Turkish counterterrorism policy.¹⁵

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of published materials relevant to this thesis includes numerous studies, reports and literature produced in the form of government reports, Congressional testimony, journal articles, and scholarly books.

¹⁵ Alexander Yonah, *Combating Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 291-292.

1. Areas of Scholarly Debate

One of the recurring themes throughout the body of literature surveyed is that there are many problems associated with defining a clear strategy to defeat the narcoterrorist threat. This arises from the fact that there is much debate among pundits as to the true meaning of the threat, the extent of the danger, and what measures are necessary to formulate a successful policy approach.

The term "narcoterrorism" has a myriad of definitions and connotations that are subject to interpretation between organizations (governmental and non-governmental), as well as nation states. It can also be noted according to Emma Björnehed in her comprehensive examination of the topic,

that even though the word is frequently used and serves as the foundation of several policy decisions, its definition is ambiguous in that it has different focus and implications depending on what part of the composite word is emphasised.¹⁶

She further indicates that the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) emphasizes the connection to terrorism in its definition by asserting that

narco-terrorism may be characterized by the participation of groups or associated individuals in taxing, providing security for, or otherwise aiding or abetting drug trafficking endeavours in an effort to further, or fund, terrorist activities.¹⁷

¹⁶ Emma Björnehed, "Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror," *Global Crime* 6, no. 3 (August 2004), 306, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17440570500273440> (accessed May 28, 2010).

¹⁷ Björnehed, "Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror," 306.

In contrast to this definition, the Department of Defense (DoD) Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms describes the word "narcoterrorism" to mean

Terrorism conducted to further the aims of drug traffickers. It may include assassinations, extortion, hijackings, bombings, and kidnappings directed against judges, prosecutors, elected officials, or law enforcement agents, and general disruption of a legitimate government to divert attention from drug operations.¹⁸

This divergence in the defining characteristics of the terminology can leave one open to interpret that its meaning can be twofold in nature. Emma Bjornehed contends, in an informative discussion about the dual nature of narcoterrorism, that it is a challenging concept that serves to sometimes make matters worse rather than to open the doors to dialogue regarding the two perspectives it epitomizes.¹⁹

This area of debate is further amplified in the March 18, 2010, Congressional Research Service Report entitled, "International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress." This report provides a macro-level view of transnational crime (to include the narcotics trade) and its relationship to terrorism. It discusses issues associated with the duality of the threat and the obstacles to establishing a coherent and effective U.S. policy. The report argues,

¹⁸ *Joint Publication 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associate Terms* (Washington DC: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010), 317, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict>.

¹⁹ Björnehed, *Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror*, 307.

While the U.S. government has maintained substantial long-standing efforts to combat terrorism and transnational crime separately, questions remain about how and whether issues related to the interaction of the two threats are handled most effectively across the multiple U.S. agencies involved.²⁰

It goes on to further elaborate that efforts to deal with transnational crime can interconnect "in positive and negative ways with counterterrorism policy, raising fundamental questions about how to prioritize combating crime or terrorism aspects of a case when both elements are present."²¹

The ambiguous and complex character of the threat is typified in the 2010 United States National Security Strategy, since the term "narcoterrorism" is not explicitly referenced. The correlation to illicit drug trafficking and terrorism is indirectly alluded to under the subsection, "Deterring Threats to the International Financial System":

Today's open and global financial system also exposes us to global financial threats. Just as we work to make the most of the opportunities that globalization brings, the actors that pose a threat to our national security—terrorists, proliferators, narcotics traffickers, corrupt officials, and others—are abusing the global financial system to raise, move, and safeguard funds that support their illicit activities or from which they derive profit. Their support

²⁰ John Rollins and Liana Sun Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service [2010]), <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&doc=120420&coll=documents> (accessed May 30, 2010).

²¹ Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime*, 45.

networks have global reach and are not contained by national borders. Our strategy to attack these networks must respond in kind and target their illicit resources and access to the global financial system through financial measures, administration and enforcement of regulatory authorities, outreach to the private sector and our foreign partners, and collaboration on international standards and information sharing.²²

The dual nature of the narcoterrorist threat is but one aspect of the dilemma facing policy makers today. How to prosecute the war against this relentless foe is the source of much contention and another area of debate among scholars and policy makers alike. For example, the United States response of crop eradication has been sharply criticized as being too shortsighted and, at the end of the day, counterproductive. Vanda Felbab-Brown, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for International Studies, explores the scope of conventional wisdom that stimulates U.S. foreign policy regarding this topic and subjects it to the test of data and history. In an excellent analysis of this issue, she argues,

Because anti-government forces can derive large financial resources from the drug economy, Washington has given high priority to eradication in its relations with Afghanistan, Colombia, and Peru, among other countries. The United States also insists that other Western countries and local governments adopt the same approach. This view of the drug-conflict nexus, however, neglects crucial underlying dynamics of the interaction of illicit economies and military conflict. Consequently, it frequently undermines

²² Barack Obama, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: The White House, 2010), 33, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf (accessed May 27, 2010).

government stabilization, the war on terrorism, and counter-drug efforts themselves.²³

Critics have thus contended that counternarcotics campaigns aimed at crop eradication, can have the inadvertent consequence of contributing to and further escalating the country's ongoing civil unrest.²⁴

Moises Naim, in his book *Illicit*, provides a convincing assessment of the impact of globalization on worldwide illegal trafficking and emphasizes the interconnections between burgeoning illegal enterprises and how they continually recombine to create new sources of criminal revenue, mar the economy of entire countries and industries, enable terrorists, and even take over governments. He makes the case that there is no evidence to suggest that governments are winning the fight against "illicit trades."²⁵ As he contends,

The death of Pablo Escobar in Colombia did nothing to stem the production and export of drugs. In Mexico, the spectacular arrests of leaders of the Arellano Felix organization and of the Gulf Cartel in 2002-2003 have not led to a reduction in trafficking, but simply a readjustment...²⁶

²³ Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Essay on the Audit of the Conventional Wisdom: A Better Strategy Against Narcoterrorism* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for International Studies [2006]), <https://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/mitcis/mitcis014/mitcis014.pdf> (accessed May 28, 2010).

²⁴ Wyler, *International Drug Control Policy*, 29.

²⁵ Moises Naim, *Illicit* (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 221.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Rhea Siers, in the book *Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life*, expounds upon this point with a little more optimism by contending,

No U.S. strategy will succeed without recognizing that we must all battle smuggling and trafficking abroad by reviving financial institutions, restoring governmental, judicial, and law enforcement integrity, and short-circuiting corruption.²⁷

In contrast to this global prescription, Felbab-Brown suggests that the only viable strategy to combat narcoterrorism is through an aggressive anti-drug campaign to diminish the demand. As she declares,

Ultimately, however, all drug-suppression efforts will continue being a shell-game, and terrorists, once having penetrated a certain aspect of the drug economy, will continue deriving the multifaceted benefits from it, unless major efforts are undertaken in consumer countries to reduce demand for drugs.²⁸

This viewpoint is countered by a 2004 Congressional Research Service report in a concise assessment of narcotics trafficking and the link to terrorism. According to the report,

American drug policy is not, and should not be, driven entirely, or even primarily, by the need to reduce the contribution of drug abuse to our vulnerability to terrorist action. There are too many other goals to be served by the drug abuse control effort. However, the links between the two issues are sufficiently clear that the

²⁷ Kleiman, *Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy*, 20.

²⁸ U.S. Congress, *Narco-Terrorism: International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism - A Dangerous Mix*, 1.

institutions of drug abuse control would be wise to factor the impact of their activities on the terrorist threat into their decision-making.²⁹

Another suggested approach to targeting the discernible connection between drug trafficking and terrorism is through the strengthening of U.S. domestic interagency relationships. An extensive report assessing U.S. drug control policies by the Government Accountability Office was published in March 2009 under the auspices of the U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control. The report emphasized the increased importance of strengthening and building partnerships between agencies chartered to both secure the homeland and combat the issue of the illicit drug trade:

Given the global context of the war on drugs—coupled with growing recognition since September 11, 2001 (9/11), of the nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism - the mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and efforts to forge effective interagency partnerships and coordination are increasingly important.³⁰

It also recommended that,

the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security take actions to enhance the effectiveness of (1) interagency partnerships involving the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection and (2) the

²⁹ Amanda M. Leu, "Fighting Narcoterrorism," *Joint Force Quarterly*, October - December 2008, 56, http://intelros.ru/pdf/jfq_48/16.pdf (accessed April 30, 2010).

³⁰ Government Accountability Office, "Drug Control: Better Coordination with the Department of Homeland Security and an Updated Accountability Framework Can Further Enhance DEA's Efforts to Meet Post-9/11 Responsibilities" (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2009), 1, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0963.pdf> (accessed June 2, 2010).

multiagency Special Operations Division and the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Fusion Center.³¹

2. Areas of Scholarly Consensus

There is widespread agreement and acknowledgement that terrorism, drugs and transnational organized crime represent significant threats to America's national security. In his opening statement at the May 2003 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on narcoterrorism, Senator Orrin Hatch declared,

The problems of terrorism, drugs and international organized crime pose new and significant challenges to our country...these problems occur across our borders and are less and less subject to control by nation states. Terrorists around the world and in every region appear to be increasing their involvement in the trafficking of illegal drugs, primarily as a source of financing for their terrorist operations.³²

Amanda Leu, in the first quarter 2008 issue of *Joint Force Quarterly*, succinctly reiterates Senator Hatch's assertion that terrorists groups are more and more turning to drug trafficking as a way to finance their operations.³³ The Director for Anticrime Programs, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, also emphasized the significance of this connection by stating,

³¹ Government Accountability Office, "Drug Control," 1.

³² Senate Judiciary Committee, U.S. Congress, *Narco-Terrorism: International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism - A Dangerous Mix*, 103.

³³ *UNODC 2010 Annual Report: Cutting the Threads of Drugs, Crime and Terrorism* (Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) [2010]), http://www.unodc.org/documents/frontpage/UNODC_Annual_Report_2010_LowRes.pdf (accessed May 31, 2010).

While the debate moves forward on the extent of the crime-terror nexus, what is a given is that terrorists are indeed engaging in more criminal activities to guarantee success of their actions and evolving into criminal enterprises. It is also true that a few criminal organizations are beginning to adopt more radical, if not more terrorist tactics.³⁴

The nexus between illegal drugs and terrorism is widely regarded to be a product of globalization. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Annual Report for 2010 highlights the fact that advances in globalization have contributed to the convergence of drug trafficking with terrorist activities by

Taking advantage of innovations in technology, communication and transportation, loose networks of criminals or insurgents can easily link with each other, and also with organized criminal groups that operate internationally. They smuggle illicit drugs, weapons, natural resources, counterfeit goods and human beings across borders and between continents for the enrichment of criminals, insurgents and crooked officials. In some cases, they generate economic profits that support terrorist groups as well.³⁵

The Congressional Research Service Report on International Terrorism and Transnational Crime, dated March 18, 2010,

³⁴ Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 1.

³⁵ Ester A. Bacon, "Balkan Trafficking in Historical Perspective," in *Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life*, ed. Kimberly L. Trachuk (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 82.

also supports the claim that globalization has "hastened the expansion of relationships between terrorist and transnational crime groups."³⁶

Another area of consensus concerns Turkey's involvement with terrorism and the illicit narcotic trade. According to Ester Bacon in a historical account of drug trafficking in the Balkans Turkey is

...a transit and originating country for drugs, humans and cigarettes that travel through the Balkan route. It is also a major operating base for international narcotic traffickers responsible for all aspects of trafficking and refining drugs...Turkey is [also] one of the most advanced countries in the region in terms of countering illicit drug trafficking."³⁷

A comprehensive examination of the Kurdish Workers Party by Mitchel Roth and Murat Sever focuses on how this terrorist organization, Turkey's most prominent and devastating, finances its activities through organized crime. The authors argue:

The magnitude of transnational organized crimes is difficult to measure; nonetheless, the estimations and evaluations made by Turkish governmental organizations, especially the Turkish Police, have been used to offer the most dependable perspective for examining the convergence of organized crime and terrorism in Turkey.³⁸

³⁶ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 902.

³⁷ Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 7.

³⁸ Ibid.

Colombia is another country often cited by experts in the field of terrorism and international crime as a good case study that is germane to the analysis of narcotics trafficking and the relationship to terror networks.³⁹ Patricia Bibes' case study of Colombia with respect to organized crime and terrorism provides an insightful account of the complex relationships that exist between drug traffickers, insurgent groups, its citizenry, and the government's military and police forces. The Colombian narcoterrorist threat provides a plethora of paradigms since many of its terrorist organizations, to include the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), have over time morphed their ideology to be compatible with certain types of criminal endeavors such as drug trafficking.⁴⁰

3. Gaps in Scholarly Research

After preliminary examination, it would seem that a finite quantity of convincing and comprehensive intelligence is gathered with respect to the connection between drugs and terrorism. According to the Congressional Research Service report on the ostensible nexus between global terrorism and transnational crime, analysts perceive that there continues to be an intelligence and research gap in the frequency, threat, and prospective trends related to criminal-terrorist links.⁴¹

³⁹ Bibes, *Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism: Colombia, a Case Study*, 243.

⁴⁰ Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 4.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

This claim is further amplified by the report's additional observations:

Some suggest that credible human and signals intelligence sources are essential to countering the threat from the confluence of terrorist and criminal organizations. Such observers also argue that more research on the subject from academic and non-profit communities could also improve the availability of knowledge on the subject. Without such resources, the intelligence community and the wider policy community cannot accurately gauge the scope and nature of relationships between terrorists and criminal actors, as well as to assess convergence trends and predict future connections. In turn, lack of assessment on how, why, and in what ways criminals and terrorists liaise with each other can prevent policymakers from devising appropriate strategies to combat the nexus.⁴²

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

This study uses an analytical approach to examine the historical context of narcoterrorism, as well as current policy practices and trends that define America's strategy toward countering this phenomenon. In-depth case studies are also used to determine whether any lessons, both positive and negative, can be gleaned from the Turkish and Colombian efforts to stem the tide of violence and corruption associated with the narcoterrorist nexus.

To conduct this research, this thesis relies upon several sources of data to assess the current U.S. policy climate with respect to illegal drug trafficking and terrorism. Reports from the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, as well as Congressional testimony are

⁴² Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism*, 4.

also used to ascertain the perceived challenges associated with the complex issue of narcoterrorism. In addition to the sources already identified in the literature review, the insight and observations presented by various non-governmental research organizations and government think tanks, to include the Heritage Foundation and the RAND Corporation, are also leveraged to investigate differing viewpoints with respect to the underlying effectiveness of previous and existing U.S. strategies to combat this threat. Scholarly works by leading experts in the field of narcoterrorism are also consulted. Kimberley Thachuk's book, *Transnational Threats: Smuggling in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life*, provides an extensive collection of essays which explore the connection between international criminals and terrorists engaged in smuggling and trafficking everything from weapons of mass destruction to illicit narcotics, and have the potential to upset regional stability, undermine United States interests abroad, and threaten U.S. national security. Data compiled and presented in the Library of Congress Federal Research Division report on "The Nexus Among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe" is also consulted to further compare and contrast other nation's attempts to counter the threat posed by narcoterrorism.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis provides an analysis of the topic of narcoterrorism through the use of in-depth comparative case studies, examining the countries of Colombia and Turkey to determine if there are any causal relationships and lessons

that can be applied to current U.S. policy initiatives to address the issue of drug trafficking and its ties to terrorism. The first section of the thesis focuses on the historical context of narcoterrorism and its connection to the "War on Drugs" and the "War on Terror." It also considers the issue of supply and demand with respect to the trafficking of illegal drugs and the impact of globalization on the narcoterrorist phenomenon. This section concludes with a survey of existing U.S. policies and practices to combat the threat and current measures adopted to address the convergence of transnational terrorism and organized crime.

This thesis also examines the case studies of Turkey and Colombia by dissecting the nature of the threat, exploring the actions taken by each country to counter the threat, and evaluating the intended and unintended consequences of these actions. The impact of the narcoterrorist organization, the Kurdish Workers Party, on Turkish counterterrorism strategy is also researched to assess any lessons, both positive and negative, that may be applicable to the current U.S. policy toward illicit drug trafficking and the connection to terrorism. The relationship of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to organized crime, the drug trade, and terrorism and its impact on the Colombian government's approach to counterterrorism is also studied to evaluate if additional lessons may provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods to current U.S. policy challenges associated with a coherent narcoterrorist strategy.

The final section of this thesis presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the research conducted. As previously indicated, the initial hypothesis of this thesis is that narcoterrorism poses a significant and pervasive threat to U.S. national security and that countermeasures to date have yet to secure the U.S. homeland or interests abroad. Until America comes to terms with the global nature of the threat, improves interagency cooperative efforts, and is willing to commit a steady stream of resources to the problem, terrorism and organized crime will continue to flourish for the foreseeable future. Establishing effective security in the Hemisphere and keeping allies committed to the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking will require the U.S. to exercise continued vigilance and place increased emphasis on deterring this threat to homeland security and defense.

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II. OVERVIEW OF NARCOTERRORISM

A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND NARCOTERRORISM DEFINED

The United States recognizes that the problems of drug and drug-related violence require a comprehensive solution. Democratic institutions in drug-producing regions must become stronger, more responsive, more inclusive, and more transparent.⁴³

—Assistant Secretary David T. Johnson,
United States Department of State, Bureau of
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
Affairs

1. Introduction

Terrorism and the drug problem pose an enormous threat to the stability of the modern world. While both have moved to the forefront of the world's agenda during the early part of the twentieth century, they have each existed in varying forms and degrees throughout history. The drug phenomenon especially has played an important part in world politics due to modern advances in international transportation and communication capabilities. A review of the historical development of the drug issue in world politics and a consideration of the drug trade's enormous economic potential would shed light on the ways in which it could potentially foster organized crime groups and terrorist organizations. In addition, a survey of the challenges faced when defining the multi-dimensional phenomenon of narcoterrorism will facilitate a more

⁴³ David T. Johnson, "Release of the 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report," U.S. Department of State Website, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/119890.htm> (accessed October 6, 2010).

coherent understanding of the issues at hand and aid in the formulation of recommendations for the future.

2. The Drug Problem

Human beings have always consumed drugs for social, medicinal, holy and dietary purposes. They have used wine, tobacco, opium, marijuana, coffee, coca, hallucinogens and many other drugs that predate history to keep themselves awake, lessen pain and increase virility.⁴⁴ China and several European countries obtained the drug opium from Western Asia until the late pre-modern period. Merchants who traded internationally predominantly carried rare metals, minerals, luxury items, slaves, and exotic crops or products. Among these exotics were rare tree bark and resins, fragrant incense and musk, spices, herbs, and certainly opiate. These exotics were shipped thousands of miles to lands where they did not grow, their rarity ensuring an extremely high profit margin.

Before the early twentieth century, Western nations did not give much thought to drug-related problems. This laissez-faire approach toward drug use enabled drug consumption levels to increase and allowed a rise in the popularity of home remedies over medical science. However, once the negative effects of the abuse of drugs such as cocaine became apparent, Westerners began to approach the drug problem with concern. The decision to be made was not *whether* to regulate drugs, rather *how much* regulation should there be.

⁴⁴ William B. McAllister, *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History* (London: Routledge, 2000), xv-xvi.

The negative side effects of cocaine and opiate addiction became a hot political topic. Social reform groups took up the cause of drug control both for the sake of eradicating drugs and to further their own agendas, using the drug issue to gain the public ear. Often led by fundamentalist Protestant women, these reform groups touted public health care, child welfare, social work and self-control. In the early twentieth century, several organizations, both public and private, began to show an open desire to organize a multi-national effort to combat the drug trade.⁴⁵

The first international conference on drugs, The Shanghai Opium Commission (1909) was organized by the United States (U.S.). There are three main reasons the Americans arranged the Shanghai Opium Commission. First, Americans had never been involved in the opium trade with China, mainly due to moral and religious objections. Western missionaries shaped American perception of China. Americans, like many Westerners at the time, understood little about the Chinese customs, and thus dismissed their culture as immoral and inferior. Secondly, Americans hoped that the Chinese government and people would abandon their long-term enemy, Europeans, and favor the U.S. with profitable trade arrangements like those between China and several Western nations. Lastly, Americans were worried about opium because of addiction problems in their Pacific Island colonies, namely the Philippines. Spain, who formerly controlled the Islands, was selling opium to the

⁴⁵ McAllister, *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*, 14.

U.S. islands for revenue, as were many other European nations, even though Americans were characterized by uprightness by the time.⁴⁶

Americans were not satisfied with the result of Shanghai Opium Commission due to the failure of the nations to solidify an agreement. This inadequacy gave a birth to The Hague Opium Conference and Convention (1911-1912). Only eight months after the Shanghai Commission met, the U.S. sent invitations for the Hague Conference to the same countries who had been in Shanghai. Americans justified this invitation by stressing their own drug problem and the need for international cooperation to overcome the problem, as no country could overcome it by itself.⁴⁷

After these initial attempts to organize international cooperation to solve the drug dilemma, no significant steps were taken toward an effective multinational effort until after World War II. In the 1960s, the U.S., now a major world power, and a big portion of the international community realized that there was still no serious and comprehensive multinational plan to overcome the drug problem. The United Nations then generated its most famous, and perhaps the most regulatory treaties. The 1961, 1971 and 1988 United Nations conventions were revolutionary developments in the worldwide co-operation against the drug problem. The 1961 Single Convention intended to eliminate the illegitimate production of drugs.

⁴⁶ Kathryn Meyer and Terry Parssinen, *Webs of Smoke: Smugglers, Warlords, Spies, and the History of the International Drug Trade* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 21-22.

⁴⁷ Arnold H. Taylor, *American Diplomacy and the Narcotics Traffic, 1900-1939: A Study in International Humanitarian Reform* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1969), 45.

It also sought to regulate the legal production, manufacture, trade, distribution, and consumption of the drugs that are mainly derived from natural plants such as cocaine, heroin and marijuana. The Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and 1972 amendment protocol of Single Convention, addressed the synthetic substances, creating provisions to regulate their trade, selling, distribution and stocking. Finally, after the efforts of the first two conventions proved uninspiring, the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances revisited the issue of international regulations. This last convention intended to improve international cooperation and encourage governments to take serious measures against the drug problem. It has since been instrumental in furthering the implementation of programs that effectively combat drug trafficking and abuse, programs that advocate judicial cooperation, the extradition of traffickers, controlled delivery and the action against the laundering of money derived from illicit drug trafficking.⁴⁸

Despite national and international efforts, drug use and trafficking continue to invade everyday life. According to the United Nations, some 180 million people globally were consuming drugs in the late 1990s. This number includes 144 million consuming cannabis, 29 million people consuming amphetamines, 14 million people taking cocaine and 13 million people abusing opiates, 9 million of

⁴⁸ United Nations, *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 1999* (Vienna: INCB [1999]), http://www.incb.org/pdf/e/ar/1999/incb_report_1999_2.pdf (accessed August 10, 2010).

whom were addicted to heroin⁴⁹. These figures have increased substantially over the past ten years. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates in its Annual World Drug Report for 2010 that,

Globally, . . . between 155 and 250 million people (3.5 to 5.7% of the population aged 15-64) used illicit substances at least once in 2008. Globally, cannabis users comprise the largest number of illicit drug users (129-190 million people). Amphetamine-group substances rank as the second most commonly used drug, followed by cocaine and opiates.⁵⁰

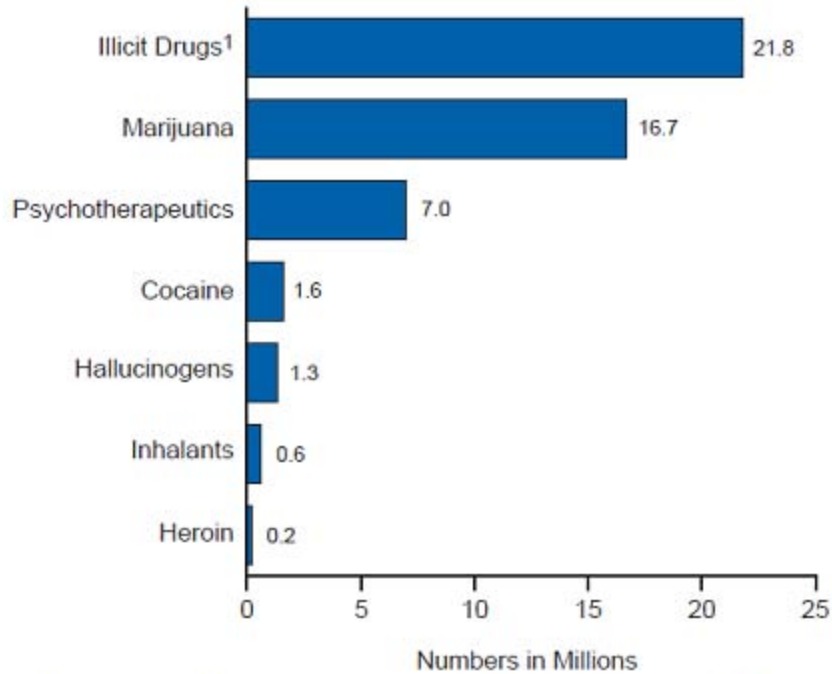
The United States is the largest single consumer of illicit drugs in the world. In 2009, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) estimated that approximately

21.8 million Americans aged 12 or older were current (past month) illicit drug users, meaning they had used an illicit drug during the month prior to the survey interview. This estimate represents 8.7 percent of the population aged 12 or older.⁵¹

⁴⁹ United Nations, *ODCCP Studies on Drugs and Crime Statistics: Global Illicit Drug Trends 2001* (New York: United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) [2001]), http://www.unodc.org/pdf/report_2001-06-26_1/report_2001-06-26_1.pdf (accessed August 16, 2010).

⁵⁰ United Nations, *World Drug Report 2010* (Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) [2010]), http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/World_Drug_Report_2010_lo-res.pdf (accessed August 15, 2010).

⁵¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Volume I. Summary of National Findings* (Rockville, MD: Office of Applied Studies [2010]), <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k9NSDUH/2k9ResultsP.pdf> (accessed August 16, 2010).



¹ Illicit Drugs include marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, or prescription-type psychotherapeutics used nonmedically.

Figure 1. Past Month Illicit Drug Use among Persons Aged 12 or Older: 2009⁵²

Many millions more people around the world take part in the supply side of the drug trade by producing, trafficking, and distributing illicit drugs. The trade in illegal narcotics is a multi-billion dollar global business at some \$322 billion, according to the United Nations World Drug Report, 2007.⁵³ It attracts criminal organizations because the potential profits are significantly more than from other criminal commodities.

⁵² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Volume I*.

⁵³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2007* (Vienna: United Nations [2007]), https://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/wdr07/WDR_2007_2.1_introduction.pdf (accessed August 20, 2010).

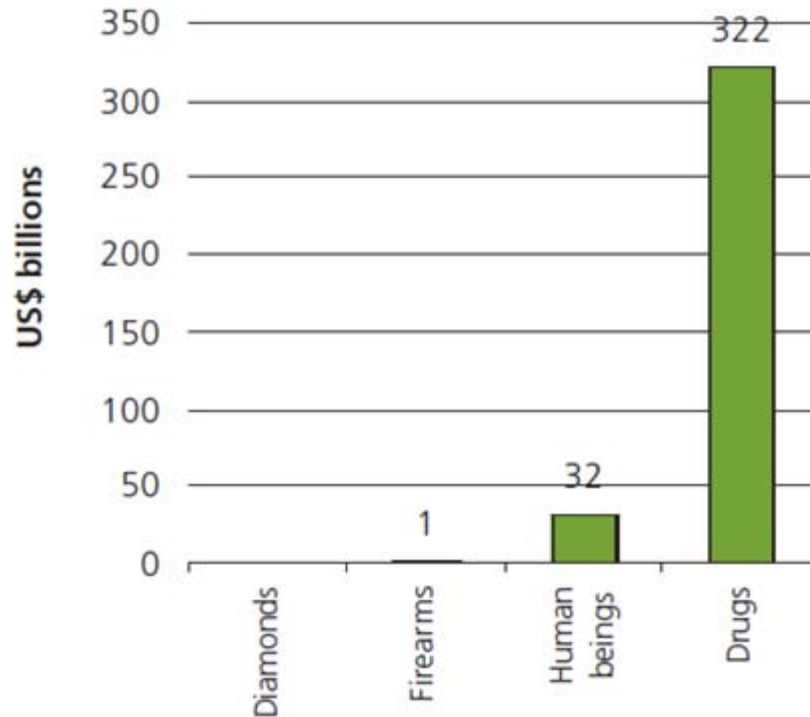


Figure 2. Estimated Global Value of Illicit Markets⁵⁴

As the 2007 report notes, the high value is understandable because “unlike human beings, diamonds or firearms, the drug supply is consumed each year and in need of continuous renewal.”⁵⁵ It is also a global issue because

profits [from illicit drugs] accrue to a wide range of actors, from poor rural farmers to affluent urban dealers. But, in many instances, the single most profitable sector of the market is the process of transporting the drugs internationally. The funds raised by trafficking groups can be used to underwrite other criminal activity and even political insurgency.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2007*.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

This international illicit economy has developed its own underground organizations. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) indicates that international organized crime organizations from a variety of countries control every stage of the illicit drug trade from production to final street-level sale. International terrorist groups also use the structure of these trafficking networks as their organizational model. They control their employees very rigidly, utilizing a highly compartmentalized cell structure that keeps the divide between the production, shipment, distribution, money laundering, communications, security, and recruitment phases, all separate and distinct from one another. Each cell operates independently with no knowledge of the other cells. Drug trafficking organizations are capable of purchasing the most advanced transportation and communication technologies including sophisticated aircraft, land and water vessels, sonar, and radar. They may also have an arsenal of weapons and soldiers to use them. They have established vast counterintelligence capabilities and transportation networks.

Current international crime networks are harder to combat than organized crime syndicates of the past. Today's crime networks have a greater inclination toward violence and have a more sophisticated operating strategy than past networks. Today's groups often corrupt entire governments in order to utilize all of the state's institutions and governmental apparatus. Previously,

organized crime groups simply endeavored to corrupt individuals such as police officers and judges.⁵⁷

3. Terrorism

Terrorism, on the other hand, is a more controversial issue than the drug problem. Its political nature makes it difficult to adequately define. On occasion, an author may attempt to define terrorism. However, such an attempt is often followed by a disclaimer about the possible existence of other definitions. There are hundreds of definitions of terrorism. There is simply no standard. However, the following definitions are useful due to their academic and institutional nature. Grant Wardlaw offers this definition with the belief that a globally accepted definition of terrorism must contain the concept of individual inspiration, social setting, and political rationale as well as general behavioral description:

Political terrorism is the use, or threat of use, of violence, by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims

⁵⁷ Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, Narcotics, and Terrorism, *DEA Congressional Testimony regarding International Organized Crime Syndicates and their Impact on the United States*, 105th Cong., 2nd sess., February 26, 1998, <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/cngrtest/ct980226.htm> (accessed August 20, 2010).; U.S. Government Interagency Working Group, "2000 International Crime Threat Assessment: Chapter I Greater Sophistication of Criminal Organizations," <http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/pub45270chap1.html#4> (accessed August 16, 2010).

with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators.⁵⁸

This is a very comprehensive definition, but it restricts terrorism to political terrorism.

Other definitions state that terrorism is not a tactic for only insurgencies or revolutionaries but also is a tactic employed by some states. Consider the following definitions employed by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the Terrorism 2002-2005 report. The Code of Federal Regulations (28 C.F.R. Section 0.85) defines terrorism as, "The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." The FBI goes on to further express terrorism in terms of its domestic or international character. Which terminology is used is dependent "on the origin, base, and objectives of the terrorist organization."⁵⁹ The institutional perspective of the FBI does not differentiate dramatically from academic perspectives. However, the FBI focuses on the legal and investigative dimensions of the problem while academia concentrates on the political and social consequences of the phenomenon.

Terrorism can be traced as far back as the drug problem. Assassinations were common terrorist acts even in

⁵⁸ Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 16.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terrorism 2002/2005," http://www.fbi.gov/publications/terror/terrorism2002_2005.htm (accessed September 1, 2010).

its infancy. The assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. can be considered a terrorist act.⁶⁰ Caesar, the Roman emperor, was murdered for political gain. This is terrorism, by its very definition; today's political scientists interpret the act of assassination as a terrorist enterprise by defining it as the murder of the leader or another administrator of the state, individually or as a group.⁶¹

The writings of Josephus Flavius provide insight into an early-organized terrorist group called the Sicari, which was an extreme Jewish sect that arose in prominence after the Roman invasion of Palestine. The Sicari used the crowds of religious festivals to camouflage their attacks as they assaulted their rivals with sicas, or "short blades" which were concealed under their coats. They were active mainly in urban areas, a direct contrast to other zealots who employed guerrilla warfare tactics against the Romans in rural areas. Reportedly, the Sicari destroyed the fortress and archives of the Herodian dynasty and killed the renowned priest.⁶²

The Order of the Assassins was another influential radical terrorist group. Hassan Sabah, the founder of the order, manifested an extreme form of the Shi'a Ismaili

⁶⁰ Sue Mahan and Pamala L. Griset, *Terrorism in Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008), 35-36.

⁶¹ Clifford E. Simonsen, *Terrorism Today: The Past, the Players, the Future*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 19.

⁶² Josephus Flavius, "The War of the Jews Or History of the Destruction of Jerusalem," http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0037-0103,_Flavius_Josephus,_De_Bello_Judaico,_EN.pdf (accessed September 15, 2010).

doctrine, an Islamic sect. Initially, the Assassins were established in mountain fortresses. They began by invading the fortress Alamut in 1090 and went on to attack many other strongholds eventually expanding their terror to urban areas. They killed many influential enemies, including the Sultan of Baghdad Nazim al Mulq, Count Raymond II of Tripoli in Syria, and the ruler of the Jerusalem Kingdom, Marquis Conrad of Montferrat. They terrorized Persia, Syria and Palestine for many years. The Order of the Assassins was the first terrorist group on record to utilize disguises and suicide attacks to cripple their opponents.⁶³

A resurgence of guerilla warfare tactics was employed in Russia during the nineteenth century. Anarchists and other opponents of the Russian government employed terrorist lines of attack both as a propaganda tool and to reshape the Russian government. The murder of Tsar Alexander II in March 1881 was one of the most influential terrorist assaults of the nineteenth century. The assassination was perpetrated by the terrorist group, Narodya Volya, nicknamed "the People's Will." It created a centralized, well disguised, and most significant organization in a time of diverse liberation movements in Russia. "In addition to precipitating the beginning of the end of czarist rule the group also deeply influenced individual revolutionaries and subversive organizations elsewhere."⁶⁴

⁶³ Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Secret Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismailis Against the Islamic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 19-22.

⁶⁴ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006), 6-7.

The twentieth century also witnessed the birth of new terrorist organizations and renewed acts of violence. Armenian terrorists carried out a three-step terrorist campaign against the Turks, which continued until the 1980s. The Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) can be considered one of the first examples of state-sponsored terrorism, since it was supported by the Bulgarian Government. Terrorism manifested itself as guerilla movements in agrarian cultures; however, it also emerged in the inner cities of urban societies. Groups such as the Irgun and Stern Gang of Israel, Tuparamos of Uruguay, Red Army of Germany, the Red Brigades of Italy, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) of Ireland, and the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) of Spain are all examples of twentieth century terrorist organizations that flourished during the latter part of the century.⁶⁵

The growing use and impact of nationally sponsored terrorism sparked endless debate and discourse amongst European Leftist groups regarding the validity and morality of terrorism. Many of the principal proponents of the leftist movement refused to employ terrorism preferring open armed conflict to subversive methods. However, two German philosophers, Karl Heintzen and Johann Most, disagreed with this philosophy. They believed assassinations to be a political must. They both moved to the United States from Germany and continued to be theorists of terrorism. Heintzen saw improved technology and weapons of mass destruction to be the key for achieving revolution. Johann Most in his New York newspaper,

⁶⁵ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 2-41.

Freiheit, became an influential anarchist spokesperson. He believed in the effectiveness and necessity of violence, advocating for the development of weapons of mass destruction. Writings published in the *Freiheit* were the inspiration for *The Anarchist Cookbook*, published by the American New Left in the 1960s. To this day, the *Cookbook* is the standard text for terrorists worldwide.⁶⁶

4. Drug-Terrorism Nexus

Neither the drug phenomenon nor terrorism are new issues. Nevertheless, the drug-terrorism connection is a fairly new area of concern for the global community. Drug related terrorism, or "narcoterrorism" is usually considered to take one of two forms. Firstly, terrorist organizations may be directly involved in drug-related activities by producing, trafficking, and distributing illegal drugs as in the case of Afghanistan's Taliban regime. An October 2001 Congressional Research Service Report entitled *Taliban and the Drug Trade*, makes reference to British Prime Minister Tony Blair's growing concern that the Taliban financed a substantial share of its military operations from the drug trade and used income from the opium trade to fund extremists in neighboring countries.⁶⁷ In *Addiction, Crime and Insurgency*, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) documents that a decade ago the Taliban earned \$75-100 million per year by taxing

⁶⁶ Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1999), 13-14.

⁶⁷ Raphael F. Perl, *CRS Report for Congress: Taliban and the Drug Trade* (Washington DC: The Library of Congress [2001]), <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/6210.pdf> (accessed August 18, 2010).

opium poppy cultivation. Since 2005, the Taliban and other insurgents in Afghanistan have derived \$90-160 million per year just from taxing opium production and trade.⁶⁸

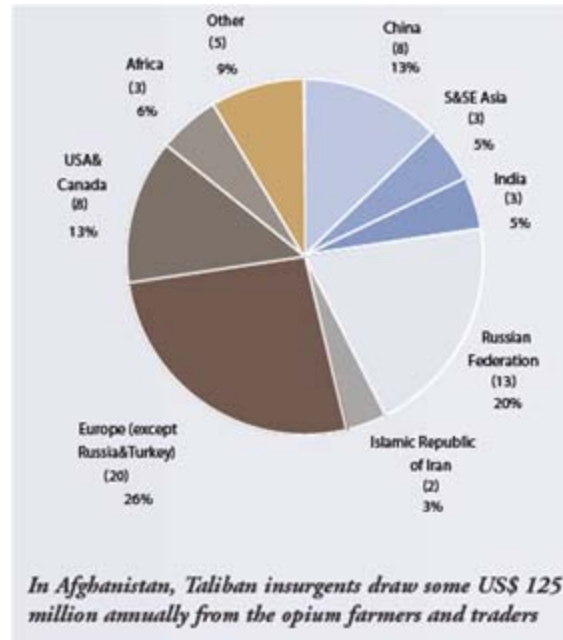


Figure 3. Global Opiate Market Value (US\$ 65 billion/year)⁶⁹

Secondly, narcoterrorism may occur when drug trafficking organizations use terrorist tactics, such as the assassinations, bombings and kidnappings directed against anti-narcotics police forces in Colombia and Peru during the 1980s and 1990s.⁷⁰ In either case, the goal of the narcoterrorist group is to generate revenue. The only difference between a terrorist-based group and a drug

⁶⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Studies and Threat Analysis Section (STAS), *Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium* (Vienna: UNODC[2009]), http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Afghanistan/Afghan_Opium_Trade_2009_web.pdf (accessed August 18, 2010).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Björnehed, *Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror*, 306.

trafficking-based group is the final objective. While terrorist groups seek monetary recompense to finance their violent political activities, drug trafficking networks reach their ultimate aspiration of achieving power and fortune when the exchange of illegal drugs for money transpires. Nonetheless, types of narcoterrorism are not restricted by these two types of distinctions.

Another important aspect of narcoterrorism is its political nature. While certain organizations are considered "terrorist" by some countries, others name them freedom fighters, guerillas or insurgents.⁷¹ These are purely semantic arguments and complicate efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking and international terrorism. For example, in Turkey, which has been a hive of terrorist and illicit drug trafficking activity for several decades, many drug seizures were made during the 1980s and 1990s which pointed to a connection between the terrorist organization the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and an international drug trafficking ring. It was proven that all of these drug traffickers were PKK militants.⁷² Nevertheless, many governments in Europe did not consider the PKK to be a terrorist organization and a threat to regional stability in spite of clearly verifiable PKK violence and evidentiary documentation linking the group to organized crime and drug

⁷¹ Wayne McCormack and Jeffrey Breinholt, "Defining Terrorism: Perfection as Enemy of the Possible," International Assessment and Strategy Center Website, January 17, 2007, http://www.strategycenter.net/research/pubID.141/pub_detail.asp (accessed September 1, 2010).

⁷² Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 7.

trafficking networks.⁷³ Following persistent demands from Turkey that the PKK be added to the Council of the European Union's (EU) list of terrorist organizations, the inclusion of the group was finally heralded on May 2, 2002.⁷⁴

Because it occurs in a variety of forms, it is difficult to provide a universal definition of narcoterrorism. However, a working definition of narcoterrorism would be helpful to establish a basis for discussion. The United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) defines narcoterrorism as the "participation of groups or associated individuals in taxing, providing security for, otherwise aiding or abetting drug trafficking endeavors in an effort to further, or fund, terrorist activities."⁷⁵ Given this definition, narcoterrorism exists in several forms. It may manifest itself as the direct or indirect involvement of terrorist or insurgent organizations in the illicit drug trade. It also may consist of the employment of terrorist-like tactics by drug trafficking organizations. Governments can become narcoterrorist entities by supporting terrorist organizations that smuggle illegal drugs, or by controlling the drug trade through the taxation of illicit crop yields.

⁷³ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 907.

⁷⁴ *Council Decision, 2002/334/EC, Official Journal of the European Communities* (May 2, 2002): L 116/33-L 116/34, <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2002/may/terr330034.pdf> (accessed August 20, 2010).

⁷⁵ Thachuk, *Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms, Drugs, and Human Life*, 26.

Governments may even covertly use their own resources to traffic drugs with the goal of obtaining financial power or destabilizing enemy societies.

Drug trafficking and terrorism are profoundly affected by the politics of world powers. According to some scholars, simply labeling a group as a "terrorist" organization can result in negative and isolating consequences for the group. The term 'drug trafficker' has equally negative connotations. To label a group as both a purveyor of terrorism and illicit drugs creates an extremely negative image for the group in the eyes of the public. Some governments will use the label "narcoterrorist" to describe an organization in an attempt to put the group in public disfavor, effectively neutralizing its power and grip over the populace. This action may be pure governmental denigration or the exaggeration of a few incidents.⁷⁶

Other subject matter experts, however, argue that groups with the propensity to employ terrorist tactics or to traffic illegal narcotics should not be categorized as the victim of political denouncement. Exhibiting sympathy for a drug trafficker because he is incorrectly labeled as a "narcoterrorist" is simply absurd. To date, intellectual sympathy toward revolutionary or insurgent groups has forced many scholars to focus on governmental repression techniques and international imperialistic policies. On the one hand, this focus has exerted pressure on governments to not violate basic human rights. Conversely,

⁷⁶ Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures*, 25.

it has also inadvertently resulted in support for terrorist and drug trafficking organizations. Literature on this issue generally emphasizes the political aspects of narcoterrorism. However, the labeling theory debate encourages the reader to examine both sides of the argument.

Miller and Damask claim that the term "narcoterrorism" has meaning both implicitly and explicitly. The term has generated connotations beyond its own unique and operational definitions. Unfortunately, despite the legal appeal of its two elements, narcoterrorism as a turn of phrase does not convey a definitive understanding of what exactly it is. According to some eminent scholars in the field,

[when] properly analyzed 'narco-terrorism emerges as a political myth based on a stereotypic view of the Andean drug trade, peasant insurgency and the relationships between them. The myth of 'narco-terrorism coincided with the Latin American policy interests of the Reagan and Bush administrations.⁷⁷

Moreover, the evolution and politicization of this concept has hindered both scholarship and policy making with respect to the nexus between terrorism and narcotics trafficking.⁷⁸ The subsequent years following its introduction to the global lexicon yielded a contemplation of the term "narcoterrorism" and ultimately resulted with the expression being applied with more frequency and fervor.

⁷⁷ Abraham H. Miller and Nicholas A. Damask, "The Dual Myths of 'Narco-Terrorism'; how Myths Drive Policy," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1996), 114 (accessed June 8, 2010).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

A distinct approach to the narcoterrorist phenomenon is provided by Peter Lupsha. He delineates the precise theoretical distinctions inherent in the subject and tries to create a typology of narcoterrorism. Lupsha, like many other scholars, recognizes the ambiguous and imprecise nature of the term narcoterrorism. He declares,

As a concept from which one can develop better models for understanding both drug trafficking and issues of insurgent conflict, "narcoterrorism" is currently a badly defined and politically contaminated term.⁷⁹

B. U.S. STRATEGIES TO COMBAT NARCOTERRORISM: THE SYNTHESIS OF COUNTERTERRORISM AND COUNTERDRUG APPROACHES

The dual nature of the narcoterrorist threat that is epitomized by its nebulous defining characteristics is but one aspect of the dilemma facing policy makers today. How to prosecute the war against this relentless foe and the disposition of the link between terrorists and drug traffickers are the source of much contention and controversy and yet another area of debate among scholars and policy-makers alike. It has been assessed by many analysts that the debate on measures to counter narcoterrorism is parallel to the debate on measures to

⁷⁹ P. A. Lupsha, "Towards an Etiology of Drug Trafficking and Insurgent Relations: The Phenomenon of Narco-Terrorism," *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 1989), 70, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=122206> (accessed August 20, 2010).

counter transnational illicit drug trafficking.⁸⁰ What has clouded both of these debates is how to reconcile the priorities of counternarcotics policies with counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and finance reform policies.⁸¹ Complicating matters still further is the number of organizations involved in the policy-making process and its implementation.

America's struggle to come to grips with and tackle the affiliation between crime and terrorism "are a subset of broader policy responses to transnational crime and international terrorism individually,"⁸² according to the 2010 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, which explores the linkages between international terrorism and transnational Crime and assesses potential policy implications. The report goes on to further elaborate that even though many U.S. strategies and policy agendas are intended to handle international terrorism and transnational crime as discrete issues, fewer efforts concentrate exclusively on dealing with the merger of terrorism and crime and the tangential issue of the interaction between drug trafficking and terrorist

⁸⁰ Michael Kenney, "From Pablo to Osama: Counter-Terrorism Lessons from the War on Drugs," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 2003), 188, <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a780011871> (accessed June 3, 2010).; Kleiman, *Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy*, 1.

⁸¹ Liana Sun Wyler, *International Drug Control Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service[2009]), <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/130205.pdf>. (accessed May 14, 2010).

⁸² Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 32.

financing.⁸³ Moreover, Professors Harold Trinkunas and Jeanne Giraldo assert in the book *Terrorist Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective*, U.S. decision-making efforts are flawed from the start by the mistaken belief that the nature of the relationship between terrorists and drug traffickers is

a strategic alliance instead of the more common marriages of convenience or even antagonism that characterizes such ties...although some nexus between terrorism and the illegal drug trade is clear-according to a survey of 38 countries, about half of them noticed some link between the two-the exact nature of this relationship has often been misunderstood.⁸⁴

In contrast to this point of view and again reiterating the divergence of opinion when it comes to narcoterrorist policies, the 2004 Congressional Research Service report entitled "Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy," makes the distinction that no matter the exact nature of the motives which provide the impetus for the fusion of terrorism and the booming illicit narcotics trade, the utter magnitude of this industry is a significant indicator of the part it may play in terrorist financing operations:

Whichever aspect of the potential drug/terror connection we look at, the sheer scale of the illicit drug industry (measured in dollars) is an important determinant of the contribution it may make to terrorism. The correct weighting of drug control objectives against anti-terrorist

⁸³ Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 32.

⁸⁴ Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas, eds., *Terrorism Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 26.

objectives depends in part on how much drug trafficking actually contributes to the threat of terrorist action, and how much antidrug efforts could do to reduce that contribution. Those factors, in turn, are likely to vary from drug to drug.⁸⁵

Policy papers and strategic guidance dating back to the Clinton Administration have recognized the potentially budding nexus between criminals and terrorists as a source of trepidation.⁸⁶ According to the above-mentioned 2010 CRS report on international terrorism and transnational crime, current strategy documents that endeavor to address this evolving threat include the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's 2009 *National Intelligence Strategy*,

which identifies violent extremist groups, insurgents, and transnational criminal organizations as the top three non-state and sub-state threats to U.S. national interests.⁸⁷

The report also cites The Office on National Drug Control Policy's 2009 *National Drug Control Strategy* stating that it

justifies the policy goal of disrupting the market for illegal drugs in part because of the illicit profits and potential alliances cultivated by the drug trade that also facilitate the activities of international terrorists and transnational criminals.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Kleiman, *Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy*, 9.

⁸⁶ Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 32.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

Moreover this policy assessment also references, the 2008 *Law Enforcement Strategy to Combat International Organized Crime* published by The Department of Justice asserting that it recognizes "criminal logistical and other support to terrorists as one of the top threats posed by international organized crime."⁸⁹ However, it is the conclusion of this report, along with several other analyses on the subject, that the policies outlined in these national strategies fail to equip the U.S. government with a "comprehensive or whole-of-government approach" to isolating and fighting the connection between global illicit enterprises and terrorism.⁹⁰

The U.S. oversees or manages a majority of the actions to counter narcoterrorist activities around the world, and the volume of knowledge utilized by such actions is derived mainly from American analyses and intelligence reports.⁹¹ Within the bureaucratic entities of the U.S. government, the organizational responsibility for narcoterrorism policy is distributed amongst a consortium of domestic and foreign policy-oriented agencies. The White House-based Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the National Security Council (NSC) are officially designated as the

⁸⁹ Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy and Considerations for Congress*, 32. This report also references the CRS report R40525, "Organized Crime in the United States: Trends and Issues for Congress," by Kristin M. Finklea for additional details on the DOJ's domestic law enforcement efforts to fight organized crime.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; Barry P. Creed, "Integrating the Global War on Terrorism with the War on Drugs" (U.S. Army War College), 10, <http://www.hsdl.org/?view&doc=83189&coll=public> (accessed May 14, 2010).

⁹¹ Jonas Hartelius, *Narcoterrorism Policy Paper* (Sweden: EastWest Institute and the Swedish Carnegie Institute [2008]), <http://ewi.live.echoditto.com/system/files/reports/Narcoterrorism.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2010).

principal organizations for the synchronization of narcoterrorism policy, and they are responsible for coordinating actions amongst a myriad of departments and agencies to include the Departments of Health and Human Services (Centers for Disease Control and National Institutes of Health), Justice (Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Marshals, United States Attorneys, and the Bureau of Prisons), Treasury (United States Secret Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms), Homeland Security (Bureau of Immigration, United States Border Patrol, and United States Customs), Education, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Defense, and State.⁹² This lengthy list of organizations illustrates one of the many challenges associated with deriving a coherent policy with respect to narcoterrorism. Unity of action becomes increasingly complex when policy decisions involve many different agencies and departments from within the U.S. government's infrastructure.

The issue of whether the problem of narcotics trafficking resides with the consuming or producing nation has predominantly driven U.S. policy regarding narcoterrorism. The United States has been at the heart of the deliberations between producer and consumer countries for decades, with the debate focused on the issue of culpability, both sides perceiving the other responsible

⁹² Chris J. Dolan, "United States' Narco-Terrorism Policy: A Contingency Approach to the Convergence of the Wars on Drugs and Against Terrorism," *Review of Policy Research* 22, no. 4 (2005), 454-455, <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/118672440/PDFSTART> (accessed June 4, 2010).

for solving the problem.⁹³ From the producer nation's perspective, typically underdeveloped or developing countries, the economic nature of the issue is emphasized. It is deemed critical for the consumer nation to eliminate or at least decrease the demand for illegal narcotics, thereby stemming the flow of drug money into the country. The high demand for drugs is viewed as the root cause of the problem. Hartelius contends,

From the perspective of the producer countries, the emergence of narcoterrorism is just another domestic consequence of the problem, which is created by the ongoing demand.⁹⁴

Consumer countries, most notably the U.S., regard the source of the problem lies with the producer country.⁹⁵ Thus, U.S. policy has been to directly assail the drug problem at its source from within the consumer country in a vain attempt to thwart the drugs from reaching the illicit marketplace. It involves creating policies that concentrate on crop eradication, interdiction, and arrest in the supply-side countries and it applies pressure to known locations of drug trafficking routes before the illicit commodities reach the United States. This policy has been implemented using various lines of attack that, over the years, have met with limited successes.

The approach of crop eradication, one of the tactics employed by the U.S. in prosecuting its policy of a direct assault on the narcoterrorist threat, has been sharply criticized as being far too shortsighted and at the end of

⁹³ Hartelius, *Narcoterrorism Policy Paper*, 9.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

the day counterproductive. This technique is highlighted due to the fact that it has become one of the most controversial aspects of the U.S. counterdrug strategy. Vanda Felbab-Brown from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for International Studies explores the scope of "conventional wisdom" that stimulates U.S. foreign policy debate regarding this topic. She contends that,

Because anti-government forces can derive large financial resources from the drug economy, Washington has given high priority to eradication in its relations with Afghanistan, Colombia, and Peru, among other countries. The United States also insists that other Western countries and local governments adopt the same approach. This view of the drug-conflict nexus, however, neglects crucial underlying dynamics of the interaction of illicit economies and military conflict. Consequently, it frequently undermines government stabilization, the war on terrorism, and counter-drug efforts themselves.⁹⁶

Critics have thus argued that counternarcotics campaigns aimed at crop eradication, can have the inadvertent consequence of contributing to and further escalating the country's ongoing civil unrest. Additionally, this policy approach toward countering the narcoterrorist threat has placed "significant attention on the increased utilization of American military power."⁹⁷ This approach has, in turn, led to further criticism over concerns of the application of the military in what have normally been regarded as law enforcement and societal matters.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Felbab-Brown, *Essay on the Audit of the Conventional Wisdom: A Better Strategy Against Narcoterrorism*, 1.

⁹⁷ Dolan, *United States' Narco-Terrorism Policy: A Contingency Approach to the Convergence of the Wars on Drugs and Against Terrorism*, 468.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 468.

Another policy tactic employed by the U.S. government to target the discernible connection between drug trafficking and terrorism has been through attempts at strengthening domestic as well as international interagency relationships. An extensive report assessing U.S. drug control policies by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) was published in March 2009 under the auspices of the U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control. The report emphasized the increased importance of strengthening and building partnerships between agencies chartered to both secure the homeland and combat the issue of the illicit drug trade by asserting,

Given the global context of the war on drugs—coupled with growing recognition since September 11, 2001 (9/11), of the nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism - the mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and efforts to forge effective interagency partnerships and coordination are increasingly important.⁹⁹

It also recommended that,

the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security take actions to enhance the effectiveness of (1) interagency partnerships involving the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection and (2) the multiagency Special Operations Division and the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Fusion Center.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Government Accountability Office, *Drug Control: Better Coordination with the Department of Homeland Security and an Updated Accountability Framework can further Enhance DEA's Efforts to Meet Post-9/11 Responsibilities* (Washington DC: Government Accountability Office [2009]), <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0963.pdf> (accessed June 2, 2010), 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) acknowledged that these recommendations were necessary. The Department of Homeland Security responded to the report by stating that discussions with the DOJ were continuing and it neither overtly agreed nor disagreed with the GAO's recommendations. Moreover, it identified several areas of the report that required further modification. The GAO did not make any revisions to the report.¹⁰¹

The tenuous relationship that exists among the various agencies within the U.S. government, which converge on the issue of narcoterrorism, is highlighted in the March 2010 CRS report on the connection between international terrorism and the proliferation of transnational criminal networks. The report aptly points out it is generally perceived that most attempts at harnessing interagency cooperation are hindered by

the lack of a U.S. government-wide strategy to combat crime-terrorism links and the difficulty of quantifying resources devoted to combating crime, terrorism, or the combination of the two [and] it is at times difficult to assess the relative priority an agency may apply to counterterrorism and combating transnational crime.¹⁰²

Varying degrees of collaboration and efforts to focus on the issue of narcoterrorism can be seen via such governmental entities as the U.S. Departments of State, Treasury, Defense and Justice however as articulated in the CRS report,

¹⁰¹ Government Accountability Office, "Drug Control," 1.

¹⁰² Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 34.

It does not appear that DHS has an organization or program specifically focused on foreign borne risks to the homeland stemming from the confluence of terrorism and crime.¹⁰³

Therefore, it seems that currently no new agreements or levels of cooperation have been established between the DOJ and DHS per the recommendations outlined in the 2009 GAO "Drug Control" report.

¹⁰³ Rollins and Wyler, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, 41.

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III. THE LINK BETWEEN DRUG TRAFFICKING AND TERRORISM: COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

A. COLOMBIA: THE ROLE OF LEFTIST GROUPS AND PARAMILITARIES IN THE DESTABILIZATION OF THE STATE

We stand firm in the fight against terrorism and firm in our conviction that a sustained and permanent victory depends upon the success of each individual country in the struggle for social cohesion. In projecting our security policy to become an axiom of the State, we conceive it to be inexorably linked to the constant improvement of the social conditions of our people.¹⁰⁴

– Álvaro Uribe Velez, President of Colombia addressing the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 17, 2005.

1. Introduction

Money from the illicit drug trade has increasingly helped to finance terrorist and insurgency groups worldwide, but perhaps nowhere has this development been more significant and palpable than in Colombia.¹⁰⁵ In recent years, funding derived from the cocaine and heroin industry has largely financed the societal upheavals of this troubled country. The primary leftist groups with drug connections are the Armed Revolutionary Forces of

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2005: Chapter 5 - Western Hemisphere Overview," <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64346.htm> (accessed September 5, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ Mark S. Steinitz, "Insurgents, Terrorists and the Drug Trade," *The Washington Quarterly* 8 (Fall 1985), 141-153 (accessed August 15, 2010); Stefan Leader and David Wiencek, "International Drug Money: The Fuel for Global Terrorism," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 12, no. 2 (February 1, 2000); Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*, 210-225.

Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). Colombian right-wing terrorists, collectively referred to as paramilitaries, also have longstanding ties to drug traffickers. Since 1997, the paramilitaries have often been known by the name of their main umbrella organization, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia.¹⁰⁶



Sources: UNODC, Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey, June 2009 and previous years.

Figure 4. Colombian Coca Cultivation and Size of Illegal Armed Groups (FARC and ELN)¹⁰⁷

The drug-related money of these rural-based terrorists has come primarily from “taxes” and fees imposed on traffickers in return for the protection of illicit crops, labs, and shipments. During the latter part of the 1990s, however, the FARC and the AUC became directly involved in

¹⁰⁶ GlobalSecurity.org, "United Self-Defense Forces/Group of Colombia (AUC - Autodefensas Unidas De Colombia)," <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/auc.htm> (accessed August 1, 2010).

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Crime and Instability: Case of Transnational Threats* (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, 2010), 10

drug trafficking.¹⁰⁸ For example, these terrorist organizations produced and transported drugs—usually cocaine in its various stages of processing—and then provided the drugs to traffickers in exchange for money and arms.¹⁰⁹ The majority of the trafficking activity by the FARC and the AUC has occurred within Colombia or neighboring countries at the early and middle stages of the drug pipeline, with traditional criminal syndicates continuing to handle distribution and sales in the United States and Europe.¹¹⁰ By moving beyond the collection of taxes, the two terrorist organizations reaped greater profits and were able to extend their influence deep into the heart of the Colombian state.

Right-wing terrorists, such as the AUC, have traditionally been more prone to engaging in criminal economic activity and to forging links with the underworld than have their leftist counterparts. With the demise of communism in the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, leftist groups in Colombia increasingly became a hybrid of

¹⁰⁸ Andres Lopez Restrepo and Alvaro Camacho Guizado, "From Smugglers to Warlords: Twentieth Century Colombian Drug Traffickers," *Canadian Journal of Latin American & Caribbean Studies* 28, no. 55/6 (2003), 260.

¹⁰⁹ Sanderson, *Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines*, 51.

¹¹⁰ Alfred W. McCoy, "The Stimulus of Prohibition: A Critical History of the Global Narcotics Trade," in *Dangerous Harvest: Drug Plants and the Transformation of Indigenous Landscapes*, eds. Michael K. Steinberg, Joseph J. Hobbs and Kent Mathewson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 86-87.; Stephanie Hanson, "Backgrounder - FARC, ELN: Colombia's Left-Wing Guerrillas," Council on Foreign Relations Website, http://www.cfr.org/publication/9272/farc_eln.html (accessed August 5, 2010).; Rensselaer W. Lee, "Colombia's Cocaine Syndicates," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 16, no. 1 (1991), 5, <http://www.springerlink.com/content/h444ug55r3klq08v/fulltext.pdf> (accessed August 21, 2010).

politics and criminal enterprise.¹¹¹ This does not mean that left-wing insurgents have always cooperated with drug traffickers. Their relationship with the "narcos" has been a varied and fluctuating one, containing elements of friction and competition as well as cooperation and synchronization. The popular idea of a "narcoterrorist alliance" can be misleading. Still, what is worrisome is that these leftist terrorists and drug traffickers, despite their differences, have managed to collaborate as much as they have contributing to the destabilization of the social, economic, and governmental infrastructure of the Colombian state. Through an examination of Colombia's violent history of insurgency and counterinsurgency stimulated and fueled by drug trafficking, this case study will endeavor to discuss and analyze the relationship of left-wing and paramilitaries groups with the Colombian state and how these sometimes corrupt associations have shaped its national politics, economy and society.

2. Country Overview

Colombia is a resource-rich but socially divided country, in which the wealth of the urban elite has trickled down only modestly to the majority of mixed race and rural populations, resulting in a weakened state with a history of inter-communal conflict. Surprisingly, however, its democratic institutions remain among the strongest in the Andean region, although they have to some extent been weakened and undermined by the country's 45-year-old revolution, which has set government forces in opposition

¹¹¹ Sanderson, *Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines*, 51.

against two main leftist rebel groups: the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). The insecurity triggered by the leftist insurgencies was worsened by demobilized right-wing paramilitaries reforming into organized crime networks. All of the conflicts are fuelled by the proceeds of drug trafficking - Colombia is the world's biggest cocaine producer, ahead of Peru and Bolivia - and it is the main reason behind America's ongoing commitment of military aid to the country.¹¹²

Terrorism expert Peter Waldmann contends that Colombia epitomizes a "culture of violence" that reflects the morals and customs of its society. According to Waldmann, the lineage of this tradition is profoundly entrenched in the annals "of a weak state unable to impose the rule of law, a popular tradition of settling private disputes and social problems through violence, a small and weak middle class unable to extend nonviolent spaces beyond a few pockets of major cities, and robust criminal networks with roots deep in the Colombian power structure, who place no value on human life."¹¹³

¹¹² "Executive Summary, Colombia," Jane's Online.

¹¹³ Douglas Porch and Maria Jose Rasmussen, "Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation Or Transition?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (June 2008), 534, http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/555617_793890206_794121722.pdf (accessed August 20, 2010).

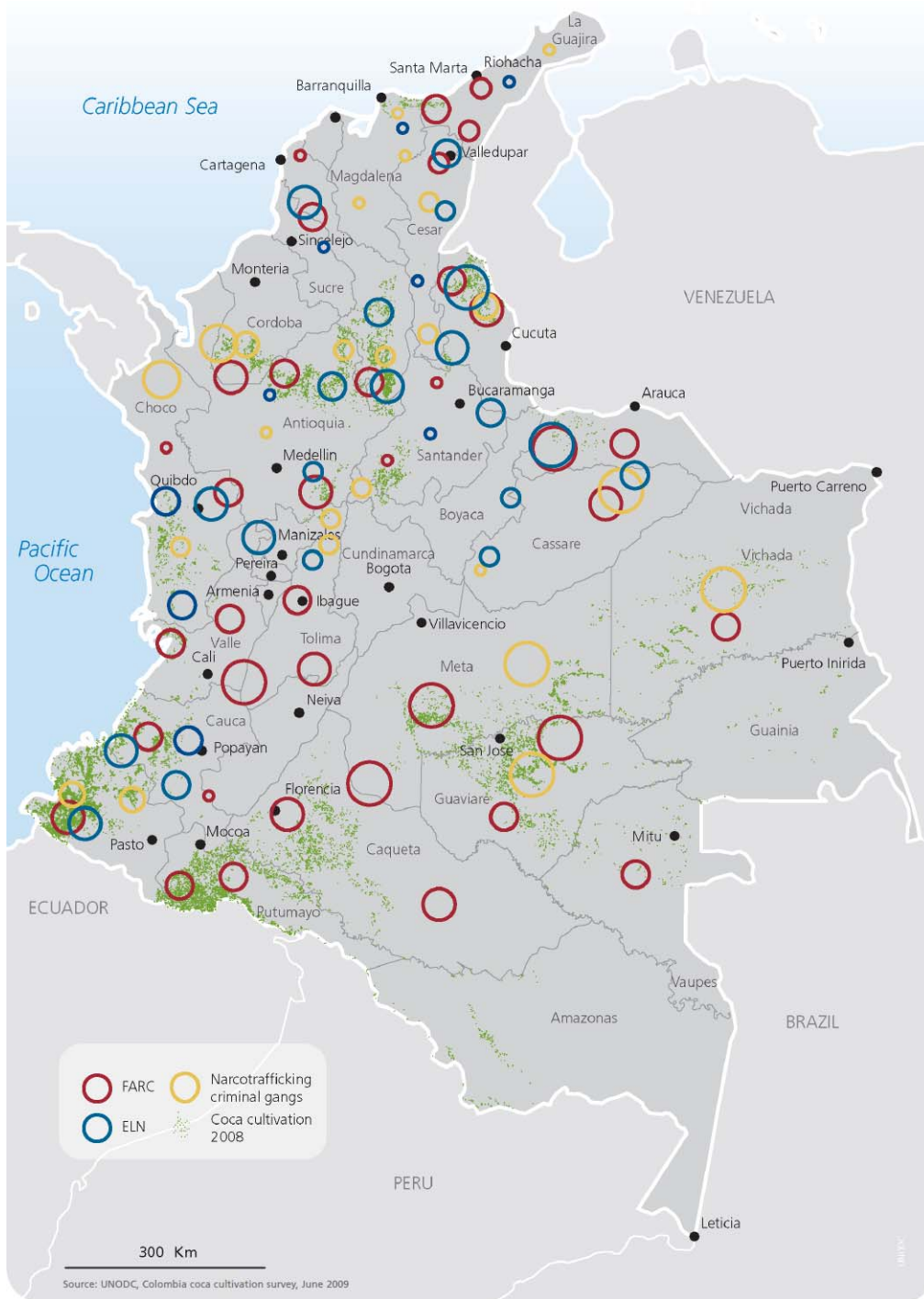


Figure 5. Illegal Armed Groups and Coca Cultivation in Colombia, 2008¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Crime and Instability: Case of Transnational Threats*, 12.

3. The State's History of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

It would be a mistake to regard Colombia's long-standing history of conflict as only a terrorist or drug problem. Nor should it be considered a classic Marxist insurgency or counterinsurgency. It is, rather, a combination of all these elements. The FARC, the AUC, and the ELN fought not just the Colombian state, but also each other and the country's civil society. All three groups were also, in a sense, criminal gangs: the FARC and the AUC supported themselves primarily through the coca and poppy industries and ancillary kidnapping, extortion, and assassination rackets¹¹⁵; the ELN specialized in kidnapping and also regularly targeted Colombia's other major resource, oil.¹¹⁶ Colombia's two main rebel movements, the aforementioned FARC and the ELN, were founded in the 1960s, but their origins lay further back, in la "Violencia." From 1948 to 1963, followers of the Liberal and Conservative parties fought a civil war that cost the lives of some 200,000 people.¹¹⁷ The appalling violence of the period was ostensibly about party politics. Predominantly rural, la Violencia was a volatile and brutal expression of

¹¹⁵ William M. LeoGrande and Kenneth E. Sharpe, "Two Wars Or One? Drugs, Guerillas, Colombia's New 'Violencia'," *World Policy Journal* 17, no. 3 (Fall 2000), 4-5, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/40209699.pdf?acceptTC=true> (accessed August 8, 2010).

¹¹⁶ "Ejercito De Liberacion Nacional (ELN) National Liberation Army," GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/elc.htm> (accessed August 5, 2010).; Michelle Tsai, "A Field Guide to the Leftist Militias of Latin America," Slate Magazine Online, <http://www.slate.com/id/2185626> (accessed August 10, 2010).

¹¹⁷ John A. Booth, "Rural Violence in Colombia: 1948-1963," *Political Research Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December 1974), 658-661.

peasant grievances and local disputes. Weak governmental institutions in many localities contributed to the growth of armed self-defense groups with varying ideological beliefs. These same factors, along with the added fuel provided by revenue from the drug trade, remain central to understanding Colombia's contemporary violence.

La Violencia ended with the creation of the National Front in 1958, a pact between Liberal and Conservative leaders to form a power-sharing system in which the two parties alternated in power and had mutual control of the government. The consequence of this elite arrangement was that other political parties and movements were effectively excluded from politics, an exclusion enforced by repression and tyranny when required. The armed forces remained formally subordinate to civilian rule but exercised near autonomy on issues of national security and enjoyed impunity despite frequent and serious human rights violations. The National Front officially ended in 1974, but the two traditional parties continued to share government offices between them into the mid-1980s.¹¹⁸

Colombia's guerrilla movements arose in resistance to the National Front. Founded in 1966, the FARC developed out of rural self-defense groups organized by the Colombian Communist Party during la Violencia. Its leader, Manuel "Tirofijo" ("Sureshot") Marulanda, took up arms in 1949 at the age of 19. The ELN was organized by students inspired by the example of Fidel Castro's Cuban Revolution, and

¹¹⁸ Robert H. Dix, "Consociational Democracy: The Case of Colombia," *Comparative Politics* 12, no. 3 (April 1980), 307-310, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/421928.pdf?acceptTC=true> (accessed August 20, 2010).

focused its attention on the oil industry, blowing up pipelines and kidnapping oil executives for ransom. In the 1970s, several new guerrilla groups developed, the most important of which was the Movimiento 19 de Abril (April 19 Movement, M-19), founded in reaction to alleged fraud in the 1970 presidential election.¹¹⁹

During the 1960s and 1970s, Colombia's guerrilla wars were low-intensity affairs. None of the half-dozen guerrilla groups (which operated independently) could seriously challenge the armed forces for control of the state, but neither could the armed forces defeat the guerrillas, especially those with a well-established rural base. For three decades, an impasse existed.

Every Colombian president since Belisario Betancur (1982-86) has recognized the need to find a political solution to the insurgency. In 1984, Betancur signed a cease-fire with the FARC and M-19, which lasted for about a year, despite efforts by the armed forces to subvert it. The cease-fire with the M-19 ended when guerrilla commandos seized the Palace of Justice and the military assaulted the building without presidential authorization, leading to the death of 11 Supreme Court justices.¹²⁰

The FARC used the cease-fire to test the openness of Colombian politics. In 1985, it organized the Union Patriótica (Patriotic Union, UP), which achieved some modest electoral success in 1986, winning about a dozen

¹¹⁹ Angel M. Rabasa and Peter Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and its Implications for Regional Stability* (Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2001), 30-31.

¹²⁰ Alfredo Molano, *The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History* NACLA Report on the Americas [September/October 2000]).

seats in the national legislature and several dozen municipal posts. A wave of repression ensued, in which some 3,000 UP activists, candidates, and elected officials were murdered by right-wing paramilitary groups, thereby eliminating the Patriotic Union as a viable party. The FARC had no incentive to lay down its arms, and the war went on. Presidents Virgilio Barco, Cesar Gaviria, and Ernesto Samper all conducted negotiations with various guerrilla groups, leading to the demobilization of the M-19 and several smaller organizations in 1991. However, talks with the FARC and the ELN made no headway, as these larger groups refused to settle for amnesty alone, demanding negotiations on a fuller agenda of social and economic improvements.¹²¹

During the 1980s and 1990s, Colombia's violence became more intense and more complex. Intensification of the war was fueled by revenue from the drug trade. Estimates of how much money the FARC raises from taxing drug production and commerce in its zones of control vary enormously, from a low of about \$100 million a year to a high of \$500 million. Regardless of the amount, there is no doubt drug revenue has enabled the FARC to significantly expand its ranks, increase its firepower, and extend its area of operations. In 1986, the FARC had about 9,000 combatants operating on 27 "fronts" (local self-supporting and semi-

¹²¹ Wolfgang S. Heinz, "Guerrillas, Political Violence and the Peace Process in Colombia," *The Latin American Research Review* 24, no. 3 (1989), 254-255.

autonomous units). By 1999, it had 15,000 combatants on some 60 fronts, and was active in 40 percent of Colombia's municipalities.¹²²

The war became more complex with the rise of the paramilitary right, or "self-defense" groups, many of which made their appearance in the 1980s. The genesis of the paramilitaries was diverse. Some were organized and financed directly by drug traffickers in retaliation for guerrilla kidnappings of their relatives. Others were organized by local landowners and mid-level military officers intent on eliminating grass-roots activists and leftist politicians. Still others were organized by the armed forces as part of a national counterinsurgency strategy (that U.S. military advisers helped design) in which local self-defense militias would confront the guerrillas in areas where the military's presence was weak.¹²³

The paramilitaries flourished as a result of two enabling conditions: financing from the drug trade and tolerance (and sometimes active assistance) on the part of the Colombian armed forces. Most of the paramilitary groups were financed by drug money; they were paid either directly by traffickers, engaged in trafficking themselves, or by the revenue of taxed drug commerce in areas they controlled. The paramilitaries banded together around the leadership of Carlos Castano and his United Self- Defense

¹²² Jeremy McDermott, "Colombian Report shows FARC is Worlds Richest Insurgent Group," *Jane's Intelligence Review Online* (September 1, 2005).

¹²³ Bilal Y. Saaba and Alexandra W. Taylor, "Criminality and Armed Groups: A Comparative Study of FARC and Paramilitary Groups in Colombia," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 32, no. 6 (2009), 455-459.

Forces of Colombia (AUC), an alliance formed in 1997 to give the paramilitaries a national political voice and "to retaliate against leftist guerillas fighting the Colombian government and the landed establishment."¹²⁴

Civilian governments in Colombia have long considered the activities of the paramilitaries to be unlawful and criminal but have struggled to suppress them until recent history due to the close ties these groups have formerly enjoyed with the armed forces of the state. The military has a long, well-documented record of condoning and collaborating with paramilitary operations. As the military came under mounting pressure and scrutiny from national and international human rights groups, the abuses by the armed forces were dramatically reduced, but abuses by the paramilitaries escalated, prompting some analysts to conclude that state-sponsored violence was being privatized.¹²⁵

By the late 1990s, Colombia's anguish appeared to be reaching a point of catastrophe. The guerrilla war was expanding and escalating. Paramilitary violence against suspected leftist sympathizers and other "social delinquents" was mounting rapidly. Kidnappings by guerrillas and paramilitaries alike had grown to epidemic proportions. From 1987 to 1997, a rising tide of criminal

¹²⁴ U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2007: Chapter 2 - Western Hemisphere Overview" (Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism [April 2008]), <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105904.pdf> (accessed August 10, 2010).

¹²⁵ Mauricio Romero, "Changing Identities and Contested Settings: Regional Elites and Paramilitaries in Colombia," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 14, no. 1 (Fall 2000), 66; McCoy, *The Stimulus of Prohibition: A Critical History of the Global Narcotics Trade*, 88.

as well as political violence took the lives of more people than were killed in la Violencia. The government seemed unable to provide any degree of personal protection for its populace.¹²⁶

4. The FARC, the Paramilitaries and the Traffickers: Relationships of Convenience and Conflict

Prior to the cocaine boom, Colombia's oldest and largest terrorist group, the FARC, obtained much of its financing from kidnapping, extortion and, to some extent, state support. Although the FARC did not initially seem to encourage coca cultivation and cocaine processing in its territory—mainly in southern Colombia—it did not register opposition.¹²⁷ The group apparently did not want to risk losing the support of peasants employed in those drug activities. The FARC imposed a fixed rate, generally 10 percent, on coca leaf or paste transactions in return for protecting the traffickers from authorities. Initial relations between the FARC and the drug cartels, including the Medellín, were mutually beneficial.¹²⁸ The FARC used its connections with traffickers to obtain weapons. In December 1988, Jamaican authorities seized a vessel containing 10 tons of arms. The cache included 1,000 assault rifles, 250 machine guns, 10 mortars, and 600

¹²⁶ Molano, *The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History*, 1.

¹²⁷ Saaba and Taylor, *Criminality and Armed Groups: A Comparative Study of FARC and Paramilitary Groups in Colombia*, 459-460.

¹²⁸ Jorge Orlando Melo, "The Drug Trade, Politics and Economy: The Colombian Experience," in *Latin America and Multinational Drug Trade*, eds. Elizabeth Joyce and Carlos Malamud (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 80.; María Jimena Duzán, *Death Beat: A Colombian Journalist's Life Inside the Cocaine Wars*, ed. Peter Eisner, trans. Peter Eisner (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), 104.

mortar rounds destined for the FARC. Interrogation of the conspirators revealed that Colombian cocaine dealers who worked with the terrorist group had underwritten the operation.¹²⁹

The late 1980s, however, also brought serious problems between the FARC and the drug industry. First, a violent dispute erupted over drug-related "business" issues with Medellín cartel member Gonzalo Rodríguez-Gacha. He purchased huge tracts of real estate in northern and central Colombia to invest his narco dollars, he came into further conflict with the FARC because he pushed the peasant populace off the land. Moreover, his land became subject to FARC "revolutionary taxes" and property requisitions. Other traffickers had trouble with the FARC because of land acquisition, but none more so than Rodríguez-Gacha, who reportedly became Colombia's biggest private landowner. The Medellín drug lord already had numerous gunmen ("sicarios") on his payroll, but needed additional strength against the FARC. He infused money and resources into small, private armies that legitimate cattlemen and landowners had established earlier to fend off FARC encroachment. In addition to providing Rodríguez-Gacha an alternative to FARC protection for his trafficking activity, these paramilitaries, as previously mentioned, increasingly became a potent weapon in the hands of the political ultra-right, including some members of the armed forces and security services. Revitalized with drug money and promoting a violent, anti-communist agenda, the

¹²⁹ Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith, *Drugs and Security in the Caribbean: Sovereignty Under Siege* (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 155.

paramilitaries helped to conduct a terrorist campaign of assassinations against leftist politicians and other civilians sympathetic to the FARC.¹³⁰

As the 1980s gave way to a new decade, a rough geographic division emerged in the FARC's relations with the narcos: strained relationships mainly in northern and central Colombia, where the paramilitaries generally had influence and power, but stronger ties in the south, where the FARC enjoyed greater strength in the immense countryside. Highlighting this regional dichotomy, a Colombian specialist on terrorism has noted that Rodríguez-Gacha

"allied himself with the army" against the FARC in the strategic Middle Magdalena region (in central Colombia), while his partners in the Medellín cartel "simultaneously" gave arms to the FARC to "protect airstrips and drug processing plants in the southwestern plains from the army."¹³¹

5. The Involvement of the FARC and Paramilitaries in the Illicit Drug Trade

As previously emphasized, drugs in Colombia are perhaps the greatest factor in the political and social instability of the country. All sub-state armed groups in Colombia have primarily funded their activities with

¹³⁰ Patrick L. Clawson and Rensselaer W. Lee, *The Andean Cocain Industry* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), 185-190.; Daniel Pécaut, "From the Banality of Violence to Real Terror: The Case of Colombia," in *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*, eds. Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (London: Zed Books, 1999), 144-145.; McCoy, *The Stimulus of Prohibition: A Critical History of the Global Narcotics Trade*, 87.

¹³¹ Daniel García-Peña Jaramillo, "Light Weapons and Internal Conflict in Colombia," in *Lethal Commerce: The Global Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons*, eds. Jeffrey Boutwell, Michael T. Klare and Laura W. Reed (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1995), 100.

illegal incomes. Changes in the dynamics of the Colombian drug trade in the 1990s helped set the stage for both the FARC and the right-wing paramilitaries to earn a greater amount of money from that source. The timing was especially fortuitous for the FARC. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the intensification of Cuba's economic woes curtailed whatever aid was still flowing in from those governments.

A Colombian government offensive against the Medellín cartel, which controlled 80 percent of the cocaine business, claimed the lives of its top leaders, Rodríguez-Gacha and Pablo Escobar and severely, disrupted their empire. The rival Cali cartel rapidly filled Medellín's place in the market. Cali's preeminence was short-lived, however. Under intense pressure from Washington because of revelations that he accepted Cali cartel money as a candidate in 1994, President Ernesto Samper cracked down on the Cali drug lords and, albeit reluctantly, jailed many of them.¹³²

Although the fall of these two narco empires had little impact on the overall flow of cocaine to the United States, it led to a more diffuse trafficking system composed of numerous, smaller networks. Often lacking their own extensive resources, these newer trafficking rings relied very heavily on FARC and paramilitary protection. With the proliferation of trafficking networks, a smaller, left-wing Colombian terrorist group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), which specialized in

¹³² McCoy, *The Stimulus of Prohibition: A Critical History of the Global Narcotics Trade*, 86-87.

extorting money from oil companies, increasingly supplemented its income by taxing the drug business.¹³³

When Colombia catapulted from third place into first among Andean coca producers the FARC, in particular, gained greater access to drug money. As a result of Colombia's neighbors' actions—Perú's air bridge crackdown and Bolivia's tougher stance against coca cultivation—Colombian coca production more than doubled between 1995 and 2000.¹³⁴ Most of this increase occurred in the southern regions of Guaviare, Caquetá, and Putumayo, FARC bastions where peasant cultivators of coca have provided the group with its strongest rural base of support ever.¹³⁵ Not to be outdone, the paramilitaries expanded southward, partly to wrest control of coca cultivation from the FARC.¹³⁶ As the FARC's sphere of influence expanded, the state's military forces responded by backing the violent paramilitaries, particularly the United Self-Defense Forces (USDFC), lead by Carlos Castano who was a former deputy to drug lord Pablo Escobar.

¹³³ U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2006: Chapter 2 - Western Hemisphere Overview," <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82735.htm> (accessed September 5, 2010).

¹³⁴ Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resource, *Statement by Donnie R. Marshall before the House on Government Reform*, 1st Cong., 107th sess., 2001, , <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/cngrtest/ct030201.htm> (accessed August 15, 2010).

¹³⁵ Frank Safford and Marco Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 357, 362-363.

¹³⁶ J. F. Hornbeck, *The Andean Trade Preference Act: Background and Issues for Reauthorization* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service [January 3, 2001]), http://www.sice.oas.org/TPD/USA_ATPA/Studies/CRS2001_e.pdf (accessed September 1, 2010).

In August 1997, the USDFC reliance on cocaine was confirmed with the seizure of a complex of four sophisticated labs and 700 kilograms of finished cocaine in Cundinamarca.¹³⁷

In addition, in the 1990s Colombia moved into heroin production, using opium cultivated principally in the southwestern areas of Tolima, Huila, and Cauca. Heroin from Colombia quickly captured a sizeable share of the U.S. east-coast market. By mid-decade, a close correlation existed between poppy cultivation and areas of FARC or paramilitary control, mainly the former.¹³⁸

In 1998, the Colombian government estimated that money from the drug trade was the single greatest source of income for the country's terrorist groups, on both the left and the right. That year, they reportedly earned a total of US\$551 million from drug links, US\$311 million from extortion, and US\$236 million from kidnapping.¹³⁹ In the case of the FARC's income that year, the government estimated that 48 percent came from drug sources, 36 percent from extortion, 8 percent from kidnapping, 6 percent from cattle rustling, and the remainder from bank robbery and other illegal activities.¹⁴⁰

The size of the group's war chest explains why it has been able to pay its new recruits three times more than the

¹³⁷ McCoy, *The Stimulus of Prohibition: A Critical History of the Global Narcotics Trade*, 86-87.

¹³⁸ McDermott, *Colombian Report shows FARC is Worlds Richest Insurgent Group*.

¹³⁹ Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and its Implications for Regional Stability*, 32.

¹⁴⁰ Alfredo Rangel Suárez, "Parasites and Predators: Guerrillas and the Insurrection Economy of Colombia," *Journal of International Affairs* 53, no. 2 (Spring 2000), 585 (accessed August 6, 2010).

Colombian army pays its new soldiers.¹⁴¹ The FARC had an estimated 7,000 active members organized into 60 fronts in 1995; by 2000, it had 15,000–20,000 in more than 70 fronts.¹⁴²

| INCOME | PESOS | USD | % |
|--|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| Trafficking of cocaine | 1,728,263,570,880 | 617 million | 45.49 |
| Extortion | 1,569,315,000,000 | 560 million | 41.30 |
| Kidnapping | 256,400,000,000 | 91.6 million | 6.75 |
| Earnings from investments | 115,440,158,884 | 41.2 million | 3.04 |
| Cattle rustling | 52,668,700,000 | 18.8 million | 1.39 |
| Theft of hydrocarbons | 42,000,000,000 | 15 million | 1.11 |
| Tax on coca base | 20,256,812,400 | 7.2 million | 0.53 |
| Taxes on illegal airstrips | 7,154,100,000 | 2.55 million | 0.19 |
| Bank robbery | 2,780,073,527 | 992,000 | 0.07 |
| Protection of crystallizing drug labs | 2,621,469,840 | 936,000 | 0.07 |
| Security for coca leaf | 953,261,760 | 340,000 | 0.01 |
| Protection of coca base laboratories | 886,235,543 | 316,000 | -0.1 |
| Security of coca fields | 541,626,000 | 193,000 | -0.1 |
| Material captured from security forces | 152,500,232 | 54,000 | -0.1 |

Table 1. 2005 FARC Income¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Leader and Wienczek, *International Drug Money: The Fuel for Global Terrorism*, 50.

¹⁴² Tsai, "A Field Guide to the Leftist Militias of Latin America"; Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, *Statement by Donnie R. Marshall before the House on Government Reform*.

¹⁴³ McDermott, *Colombian Report shows FARC is Worlds Richest Insurgent Group*.

In Colombia's post-cartel drug market, the AUC was an unusual organization. While many Latin American drug traffickers, small Colombian drug producers and the FARC did not participate in all aspects of the drug market, "the paramilitaries' drug business [was] vertically integrated throughout the chain of production, from control over crops to international distribution."¹⁴⁴ The AUC acquired 30 percent of its income from contributions and donations—mostly protection payments from the landholding elite — and 70 percent from drug activities, though estimates of the net amount of this income varied from \$20 million to \$200 million. The AUC grew, refined, and domestically moved its own cocaine, and even trafficked its drugs to international markets. While the FARC taxed coca farmers operating within its territories, the AUC established ownership of the land to engage in coca production. To gain a foothold in a drug-producing region, the AUC offered lower taxes and better buy rates than did the FARC. However, "once they penetrate[d] an area, the paramilitaries start[ed] up their own crops and displace[d] farmers and peasants."¹⁴⁵

6. The Road to Diplomatic Negotiations Is Paved With Good Intentions: The State's Tenuous Relationship With the Left and the Right

On November 7, 1998, with the hope of negotiating a peace settlement and bring about an end to the ongoing Colombian armed conflict, President Andrés Pastrana granted the FARC a 42,000 km² (16,200 mi²) safe haven, centered

¹⁴⁴ Alexandra Guaqueta, "The Colombian Conflict: Political and Economic Dimensions," in *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict*, eds. Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003), 81.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

around the San Vicente del Caguán settlement, and which was intended to serve as a confidence building measure.¹⁴⁶



Figure 6. 2000 Map of FARC Demilitarized Zone¹⁴⁷

Diplomatic relations between the Government of President Pastrana and the FARC guerrilla forces from January 7, 1999 to February 20, 2002, are generally regarded as a failed attempt at peaceful negotiations. After a series of high-profile guerrilla terrorist actions, including the hijacking of an aircraft, attacks on several small towns and cities, and the kidnapping of several prominent political figures, Pastrana ended the peace talks

¹⁴⁶ Francisco E. Thoumi, "Illegal Drugs in Colombia: From Illegal Economic Boom to Social Crisis," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 582, no. 1 (July 2002), 106, <http://ann.sagepub.com/content/582/1/102.full.pdf+html>.

¹⁴⁷ Jeremy McDermott, "Colombia's Peace Laboratory," BBC News Website, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1026286.stm> (accessed September 2010).

on February 21, 2002, and ordered Colombian armed forces to begin retaking the FARC controlled zone.¹⁴⁸

For most of the period between 2002 and 2005, the FARC was believed to be in a strategic withdrawal due to increasing military and police actions of President Álvaro Uribe, which led to the capture or desertion of many fighters and medium-level commanders. Uribe ran for office on an anti-FARC platform and was determined to defeat guerilla insurgency in a bid to create "confidence" in the country. Uribe's own father had been killed by the FARC in an attempted kidnapping in 1983.¹⁴⁹ In 2004, President Uribe launched a large-scale military operation called "Patriot Plan" involving 15,000 government soldiers who pushed into FARC- controlled territory in an attempt to wrest part of the countryside from rebel hands and capture key guerilla leaders. The plan forced the FARC to retreat and lose territory they had controlled for decades. However, the Patriot Plan was limited in the success of its objective to capture key FARC leaders and produced apprehension since most of the group's top leaders were driven deeper into hiding.¹⁵⁰

By 2005, President Uribe's efforts to increase pressure on the FARC appeared to have some partial success, decreasing the intensity of attacks on Government forces. However, statistics demonstrated that while the intensity

¹⁴⁸ "Colombian Army Moves Against Rebels," BBC News Website, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1832060.stm> (accessed September 5, 2010).

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2007: Chapter 2 - Western Hemisphere Overview," <http://www.state.gov/s/ctls/crt/2007/103710.htm> (accessed August 10, 2010).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 1-312.

of attacks had decreased the frequency of clashes remained the same. There was a resurgence of violence in early 2005 when 50 Colombian soldiers were killed in the month of February. Moreover in 2005, three Irish Republican Army (IRA) members who were awaiting final sentencing for training the FARC on IRA bomb tactics fled Colombian custody only to resurface in Ireland. They were detained and questioned by the Irish national police and released without charge. The Colombian government requested their extradition unfortunately Ireland does not have an extradition treaty with Colombia and the case remains under review and the three fugitives at large.¹⁵¹

In November 2007, President Uribe agreed to a request of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Colombian Senator Piedad Cordoba, to act as intermediaries for a possible "humanitarian exchange" of FARC-held hostages for FARC prisoners in Colombian jails. The Colombian government-sanctioned effort ended in November after Chavez and Cordoba repeatedly failed to adhere to Colombia's guidelines. Nevertheless, Chavez continued his efforts to gain the release of hostages including a failed effort at year's end involving the promised release of three Colombian hostages (Clara Rojas, her son Emmanuel, and Consuelo Gonzales de Perdomo) to an international delegation that included former-Argentine President Nestor Kirchner. The Colombian government revealed that the FARC had turned over Emmanuel to a sympathizer, who had in turn placed the child in Colombian social services. Confusion

¹⁵¹ U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2008: Chapter 2 - Western Hemisphere Overview," <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122435.htm> (accessed September 1, 2010).

over Emmanuel's whereabouts coupled with the FARC allegations that the Colombian military was operating in the area led the FARC to temporarily call off the release. The FARC, under intense public pressure, eventually turned over Rojas and Gonzales to President Chavez.¹⁵²

In March 2008, Colombia forces mounted a raid against the FARC in Ecuador, leading to the capture of laptop computers and other intelligence. The raid resulted in an immediate regional crisis over the apparent Colombian violation of Ecuadoran sovereignty, with both Ecuador and Venezuela mobilizing military forces. The Colombian authorities initially suggested that the raid had been conducted with Ecuadoran approval, but later appeared to back away from this assertion. In return, Colombian authorities claimed the intelligence recovered provided evidentiary documentation that there were verifiable links between the governments of both Ecuador and Venezuela and the FARC. The crisis and potential military confrontation were later resolved, but an investigation continued into the allegations of regional support for the FARC.¹⁵³

President Uribe can also point to success in confronting the right-wing paramilitaries. Since December 2002, the paramilitary groups adopted a cease-fire and entered into peace negotiations with the Colombian. In 2003 after the announced cease-fire, the AUC, in accordance with promises made during negotiations with the government,

¹⁵² U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2008: Chapter 2 - Western Hemisphere Overview," <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122435.htm> (accessed August 26, 2010)."

¹⁵³ U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2006: Chapter 2 - Western Hemisphere Overview."

begun to demobilize some its forces. In 2006, 4000 AUC soldiers turned in their weapons to government officials and disbanded from the illegal paramilitary group. While the AUC appears to be losing power, it has been heavily debated whether they have in fact gained influence and power over the region. The group, which had selected mayoral, governor, and council representatives in regions they had strong influence, claimed in 2006 to have control of 30% of the Colombian Congress.¹⁵⁴ In addition to playing a strong role in Colombian politics, the AUC has threatened to halt the ceasefire and demobilization unless the government adopts amnesty terms acceptable to the paramilitary group's leaders. A major point of contention was the abolishment of laws allowing for AUC members to be extradited and detained in the United States. By 2007, as a result of a large demobilization process vigorously pursued by President Uribe, most of the AUC's centralized military structure had been dismantled, and all of the top paramilitary chiefs had stepped down with the majority being held in a maximum security facility.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Saaba and Taylor, *Criminality and Armed Groups: A Comparative Study of FARC and Paramilitary Groups in Colombia*, 461-463.

¹⁵⁵ Porch and Rasmussen, *Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation Or Transition?* 528.

| Year | Collective demobilizations (AUC) | Individual demobilizations (FARC, ELN, AUC) |
|-------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2002 | n/a | 730 |
| 2003 | 1,035 | 2,538 |
| 2004 | 2,645 | 2,972 |
| 2005 | 10,417 | 2,564 |
| 2006 | 17,574 | 1,618* |
| Total | 31,671 | 10,422 |

*Includes demobilizations through August 2006.

Figure 7. Demobilizations During the Presidency of Alvaro Uribe (August 2002–August 2006)¹⁵⁶

The smaller of the left-wing rebel groups, the ELN, has been engaged in tentative dialogue with the Colombian government since late 2006, but a formal peace process remains elusive. After abandoning talks with a Mexican intermediary, the ELN began preliminary talks with the Colombian government in December 2005 in Cuba. The group continued to fight but had limited resources and dwindling membership. The ELN had its first mass desertion in June 2006, when a 29-person unit surrendered to officials. In 2006, it conducted several rounds of peace talks, but no agreements were reached. The group remained in the field, but with limited resources, a dwindling membership, and reduced offensive capability. In addition, during this time period the ELN and FARC routinely clashed over territory in northeastern Colombia, which further weakened this leftist guerilla insurgency.¹⁵⁷ Peace talks between the government of Colombia and the ELN remained stalled

¹⁵⁶ Porch and Rasmussen, *Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation Or Transition?* 528.

¹⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2006: Chapter 2 - Western Hemisphere Overview."

throughout 2008 due to ELN unyieldingness. International and local efforts to persuade the ELN back to the negotiating table—including efforts by former ELN leader Antonio Bermúdez (“Francisco Galán”), who announced his resignation from the group to focus on peace talks in 2008—made little progress. The ELN remained in the field, but with reduced resources, a declining membership base of approximately 2,000 fighters, and reduced offensive capability. In spite of these set-backs, the group still managed to inflict casualties on the Colombian military through increased use of land mines and it continued to fund its operations through narcotics trafficking. Numerous ELN fronts increased their drug trafficking activities in an effort to curtail the losses suffered by the Colombian government and the FARC.

In the longer term, the ELN faces the prospect of extinction as its remaining framework, as an ideologically-inspired insurgency, is either effectively merged with the FARC or evolves into criminal networks. Clashes with FARC insurgents in the eastern Arauca region bordering Venezuela in May 2010 underscored the ongoing localized hostilities with the larger insurgent group.¹⁵⁸

The Colombian state is today challenged by the formation of criminal gangs formed by demobilized paramilitaries and other individuals. Unlike the AUC, the new criminal factions make little claim to fighting insurgents and are more clearly illicit ventures concentrated primarily on drug trafficking, other lucrative illegal activities, and manipulating regional politics to promote their illegal enterprises.

¹⁵⁸ U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2008: Chapter 2 - Western Hemisphere Overview."

These new criminal groups are not a reconstituted AUC, but they recruit heavily from the pool of former AUC members. A large part of their leadership appears to be former mid-level paramilitary commanders who did not participate in demobilization.¹⁵⁹

7. Conclusion

The aforementioned history of the Colombian state reveals a legacy of violence and corruption. It also exposes how difficult it has been for the Colombian state to consolidate its authority. Initially, guerilla insurgency groups challenged central-state rule, and later, regional paramilitaries did the same. Drug traffickers have played a central but not exclusive role in this process. The state's inability to integrate the left-wing guerrilla movements as members of the polity or to defend the ranchers, merchants, landowners, and businessmen from rebel violence led to the formation of the AUC - sponsored at first by drug traffickers and then by other business groups, and facilitated by the military resistance to the presidency's dialogue with the leftist guerrillas. The emergence of the AUC suggests that the near-monopoly of the means of coercion by the state is the result of a social process and is not an inherent attribute of state organization. It further reveals that state capacities are not absolute, but relational. It is not merely a question of strength but also of the potential of the different social divisions to collaborate with or defy state intercession.

¹⁵⁹ Porch and Rasmussen, *Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation Or Transition?* 14-16.

To be both a developing nation and one ravaged by violent conflict is a challenging scenario for any country to face. Colombia's newly inaugurated President, Juan Manuel Santos, must continue to embrace a spectrum of political views and ideas on how to resolve its complex issues. It is essential for the current administration to continue to implement the policies of President Uribe, with a strong emphasis on combating the illicit drug trade and guerrilla insurgency so as not to revert to the tradition of violence that the country has known for far too long and which has eroded the social and political foundations of the state. The creation of rebel groups has represented, on some level, a failure of the Colombian government to completely address the needs of a significant segment of its citizenry. Therefore, the country's leadership will need to continue to resolve this dilemma if there is to be any hope of solving the myriad of challenges that lie ahead for the Colombian state and maintain the course of resurrecting itself from the ashes of violence and oppression.

B. TURKEY: CONVERGENCE OF TERRORISM AND DRUG TRAFFICKING THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE KURDISTAN WORKERS PARTY (PKK)

The cooperation between the PKK and Kurdish criminal clans has been similar to the cooperation among Sicilian mafia families. The PKK is a multilevel business organization that is involved in all phases of the narcotics trade, from production to retail distribution.

- Turkish security officer¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 913.

1. Introduction

Academics and researchers alike have long acknowledged that terrorist groups have engaged in transnational organized criminal endeavors to further their cause to include weapons and drug trafficking, immigrant smuggling, and money laundering.¹⁶¹ This case study will continue to examine the central theme of this thesis, the convergence of terrorism and drug trafficking, through the lens of the Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan: PKK) by analyzing its involvement in the illicit narcotics trade which has been used to finance their terror agenda. The PKK, along with the aforementioned Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), is one of only a few organizations worldwide designated by the U.S. government as both a terrorist organization and a significant foreign narcotics trafficker.¹⁶²

Established as a separatist insurgency in 1984, the PKK – now known as the People's Congress of Kurdistan, or Kongra-Gel (KGK) – has caused tremendous social upheaval in Turkey spanning a period of several decades. Its legacy is one of violence and bloody insurrection. It is also widely considered the country's most influential terrorist organization. It has not only victimized more than 30,000

¹⁶¹ John T. Picarelli and Louise I. Shelley, "Organized Crime and Terrorism," in *Terrorism Financing and State Responses*, eds. Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 42-48.

¹⁶² U.S. Department of State Website, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009," (Washington DC: Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2009), 236-237, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/141114.pdf> (accessed September 1, 2010).

non-combatants and security personnel since the inception of its armed wing in 1984, but has also stifled the Turkish economy.¹⁶³

In May 2003, Steven W. Casteel, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) assistant administrator for intelligence, testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee regarding the phenomenon of international drug trafficking and terrorism. Casteel stated:

The Government of Turkey consistently reports that the PKK, as an organization, is responsible for much of the illicit drug processing and trafficking in Turkey. Turkish press reports state that the PKK produces 60 tons of heroin per year and receives an estimated income of forty million dollars each year from drug trafficking proceeds.¹⁶⁴

From the DEA's own intelligence report, Casteel added that evidence showed that among the PKK's modes of drug-profiteering were producing opium, taxing traffickers who pass through their cross-border territories, and "possibly controlling a significant portion of the heroin markets in Europe."¹⁶⁵

The PKKs activity in the international drug trade is hardly a new phenomenon. The PKK has reportedly financed its Kurdish nationalist aspirations through the illegal drug trade since as early as the 1980s, participating in every stage of the supply chain from processing to

¹⁶³ The Central Intelligence Agency, "The CIA World Fact Book: Turkey," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html> (accessed September 14, 2010).

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Congress, *Narco-Terrorism: International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism - A Dangerous Mix*, 54.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

marketing.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, Interpol data reveals that the PKK managed close to 80 percent of the European illegal drug market by 1992 and other sources similarly indicate that they controlled between 60 to 70 percent of this same market in 1994.¹⁶⁷ Currently, 80 percent of the European illicit drug market reportedly flows from the PKK-controlled Turkish narcotics sector.¹⁶⁸

| Route | Size of flows (mt) | Percentage (rounded) |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|
| Balkan route (Afghanistan-I. R. of Iran-Turkey-Southern Europe-Rest of Europe) | 85 | 80% |
| Northern route (Afghanistan-Central Asia-Russian Federation-East Europe) | 4 | 4% |
| Northern Balkan route (Afghanistan-I. R. of Iran-Caucasus-Southern Europe) | 7 | 7% |
| Directly from Pakistan to West and Central Europe | 5 | 5% |
| Through Africa to Western and Central Europe | 2 | 2% |
| Directly from South and South-East Asia (except India) to West and Central Europe | 1 | 1% |
| Through the Middle East and the Gulf area to West and Central Europe | 1 | 1% |
| Directly from India to West and Central Europe | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 106 | 100% |

Figure 8. 2010 UNODC Breakdown of Heroin Flows to Europe¹⁶⁹

The PKK was added by the U.S. State Department to its list of terrorist organizations in October 1997, and as late as May 2002 was included on the European Union's (EU)

¹⁶⁶ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 907.

¹⁶⁷ "US Labels PKK Drug Smuggling Kingpin," *Today's Zaman Web Edition*, sec. News Diplomacy, June 2, 2008, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=143648> (accessed November 10, 2010).

¹⁶⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2010* (Vienna: United Nations, 2010), 54-55, http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/World_Drug_Report_2010_lo-res.pdf.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2010*, 55.

list of foreign terrorist organizations.¹⁷⁰ It was renamed the Congress for Freedom and Democracy in Kurdistan (KADEK) in 2001.¹⁷¹ On November 14, 2003, the State Department reaffirmed the group's status as a foreign terrorist organization by declaring, "The PKK/KADEK under any alias, is a terrorist organization, and no name change or press release can alter that fact."¹⁷²

2. Country Overview

Modern Turkey was founded in 1923 from the Anatolian remnants of the defeated Ottoman Empire by national hero Mustafa Kemal, who was later honored with the title Atatürk or "Father of the Turks."¹⁷³ Under his authoritarian leadership, the country adopted wide-ranging social, legal, and political reforms. After a period of one-party rule, an experiment with multi-party politics led to the 1950 election victory of the opposition Democratic Party and the peaceful transfer of power. Since then, Turkish political parties have multiplied, but democracy has been fractured by periods of instability and intermittent military coups (1960, 1971, 1980), which in each case eventually resulted

¹⁷⁰ Audry Kurth Cronin and others, *CRS Report for Congress: Foreign Terrorist Organizations* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2004), 54, <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL32223.pdf> (accessed September 24, 2010).

¹⁷¹ 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), 18, http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/WestEurope_NEXUS.pdf.

¹⁷² Cronin and others, *CRS Report for Congress: Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, 53.

¹⁷³ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, "Background Note: Turkey," U.S. Department of State Website, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3432.htm> (accessed September 15, 2010).

in a return of political power to civilians.¹⁷⁴ In 1997, the military again helped engineer the ousting of the then Islamic-oriented government, popularly dubbed a "post-modern coup."¹⁷⁵

For a decade preceding the November 2002 general elections, Turkey was governed by a succession of fractious coalitions, which were characterized by persistent allegations of corruption and which conspicuously failed to curb soaring inflation, create employment or provide economic stability.¹⁷⁶ In February 2001, a run on the Turkish lira generated the worst economic recession in Turkey since the Second World War.¹⁷⁷ Widespread public disillusion with the existing political parties coincided with the foundation of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi: AKP) in August 2001.¹⁷⁸ The AKP had its roots in the Turkish Islamist movement. Most of its founding members belonged to a younger generation of Islamists who had broken away to form their own party after the Turkish secular courts closed down first the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi: RP) and then its successor the Virtue

¹⁷⁴ Steven A. Glazer, "Historical Setting," in *Turkey, A Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz, 5th ed. (Washington DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1996), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/trtoc.html#tr0010> (accessed September 1, 2010).

¹⁷⁵ "Turkey and the Art of the Coup," Reuters Global News Journal Online, <http://blogs.reuters.com/global/2008/07/09/turkey-and-the-art-of-the-coup/> (accessed September 1, 2010).

¹⁷⁶ Hakan Yavuz, ed., *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Islam, Democracy, and AK Parti* (Salt Lake City, UT: The University of Utah Press, 2006), 1.

¹⁷⁷ Nesecan Balkan and Sungur Savran, *The Ravages of Neo-Liberalism: Economy, Society and Gender in Turkey* (Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2002), xiv.

¹⁷⁸ Yavuz, *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, 1.

Party (Fazilet Partisi: FP).¹⁷⁹ However, the relative youth of the AKP's founders meant that few had served in the government and were thus untainted by the aforementioned parties' track record in power. They were led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who had been mayor of Istanbul from 1994 to 1998.¹⁸⁰ Following the foundation of the AKP, Erdogan repeatedly disavowed the radicalism of his youth, declaring that the AKP was a "conservative democracy" rather than an Islamist party and committed himself to working within the secular system.¹⁸¹

Turkey's location between Europe and the Middle East, its position on the energy corridor carrying exports of oil and natural gas from the Caucasus and Central Asia to western European markets¹⁸², and its status as the only secular Muslim country and (along with Albania) the only predominantly Muslim member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)¹⁸³, all ensure that it will remain a geo-strategically pivotal state on the world stage.

¹⁷⁹ Hakan Yavuz, "Adalet Ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP)," Oxford Islamic Studies Online, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0924#bibHead1> (accessed September 5, 2010).

¹⁸⁰ "Profile: Recep Tayyip Erdogan," BBC News Europe Online, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6900616.stm> (accessed September 5, 2010,).

¹⁸¹ Yavuz, *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, 95, 334.; *Profile: Recep Tayyip Erdogan*.

¹⁸² Richard Weitz, "Turkey and Russia Deepen Energy Partnership," *The Turkey Analyst - Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Joint Center* 3, no. 1, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100118B.html> (accessed September 1, 2010).

¹⁸³ "Obama Declares 'America Is Not at War With Islam'," *Mail Online*, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1167982/Obama-declares-America-war-Islam-Sarkozy-warns-Turkeys-relationship-EU.html> (accessed September 20, 2010).



Figure 9. Map of Turkey and the Surrounding Region¹⁸⁴

However, the election of the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002, and its re-election in 2007 and again in 2009, raised questions about the future not only of secularism in Turkey but the country's Western-oriented foreign policy, particularly after fading hopes of imminent European Union (EU) membership were dealt another blow by the EU decision in December 2006 to suspend negotiations on eight of the 33 chapters of the accession process.¹⁸⁵ Meanwhile, the failure to meet the cultural and political expectations of the country's Kurdish minority continues to fuel a violent campaign by the PKK, which in turn is exacerbating the dramatic disparity between living standards and socio-economic conditions in the predominantly Kurdish southeast and the rest of the

¹⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State Website, "Turkey Country Page," <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/tu/> (accessed November 10, 2010).

¹⁸⁵ Vincent Morelli and Carol Migdalovitz, *European Union Enlargement: A Status Report on Turkey's Accession Negotiations* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 6-7, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22517.pdf>.

country, not to mention creating tensions with Iraqi Kurds over the presence of the PKK's main bases and camps in northern Iraq.¹⁸⁶

| Party | Orientation | Percent of Vote | Change ^a |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Justice and Development Party (AKP) | Moderate Islamist/Centrist | 38.1% | -7.8% |
| Republican People's Party (CHP) | Nationalist Left | 23.1% | +2.2% |
| Nationalist Action Party (MHP) | Nationalist Right | 16.1% | +1.8% |
| Democratic Society Party (DTP) | Kurdish | 5.6% | b |
| Felicity Party (SP) | Islamist | 5.2% | +2.4% |

a. From 2007 national election.

b. DTP did not compete as a party in 2007 because of the 10% of the vote threshold for parties to enter parliament. Instead, it worked around that obstacle by sponsoring independent candidates and won 20 seats.

Table 2. Results of 2009 Turkish Municipal Elections¹⁸⁷

3. Origins of the Terrorist Movement

"Kongra-Gel" is the latest in a long series of names for the PKK. Established in 1974 as a Kurdish Marxist-Leninist group by Abdullah Ocalan (currently serving a life sentence for treason against the Turkish state), the organization's use of violence has vacillated over time. Initially, the PKK sought the establishment of an independent Marxist-Leninist Kurdish state and in its foundation statement made reference to the liberation of

¹⁸⁶ Emrullah Uslu, "PKK Intensifies Violence to Bring Turkey into Confrontation with the European Union," *Terrorism Monitor* 8, no. 27, <http://medyanews.com/english/?p=2856> (accessed September 21, 2010); Gareth Jenkins, "Unwelcome Guests: The Turkish Military Bases in Northern Iraq," *Terrorism Monitor* 6, no. 6, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=4807](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=4807) (accessed September 25, 2010).

¹⁸⁷ Carol Migdalovitz, *Turkey: Politics of Identity and Power* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 9, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R41368.pdf> (accessed October 20, 2010).

Kurds scattered throughout Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq.¹⁸⁸ More recently it claims to focus on the long-term objective of securing a bi-national Turkish-Kurdish state, however many experts contend that this is merely a ruse to proliferate the expansion of socialism in Eurasia, "a Kurdish state was never the ultimate goal, but rather its aim was to use this as a subterfuge to spread socialism in the region."¹⁸⁹

The founder of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, attended Ankara University as a student of political science. He was inspired by the revolutionary leftist ideas of the Turkish People's Liberation Army and became a member of the left-wing Revolutionary Youth Organization. However, he soon came to believe, like many radical activists of the period, that even the Turkish left wing was unwilling to support the Kurdish cause.¹⁹⁰ Due to this disillusionment, Ocalan subsequently abandoned the Turkish leftist movement and established his own fundamentalist faction that called for Kurdish independence and the creation of a separate, autonomous Kurdish State.¹⁹¹

In the southern Turkish city of Diyarbakir on November 27, 1978, the PKK was formally established by six central committee members, and their undisputed leader Abdullah

¹⁸⁸ United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009," 261.

¹⁸⁹ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate," 904.

¹⁹⁰ Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey and the PKK: A Pyrric Victory?" eds. Robert J. Art and Louise Richardson (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 347.

¹⁹¹ Jerrold M. Post, *The Mind of the Terrorist: The Psychology of Terrorism from the IRA to Al-Qaeda* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 72.

Ocalan and his wife. This meeting is more commonly referred to as the First Congress of the PKK.¹⁹² The group advocated for a communist revolution through the use of guerilla warfare with the ultimate goal of creating a separate Kurdish state.¹⁹³ Ocalan was forced to flee Turkey following the military coup of 1980. He took refuge in the Syrian-Controlled Bekaa Valley located in East Lebanon, a region with a long tradition in the cultivation of illicit crops, where he established a PKK training camp.¹⁹⁴ The PKK orchestrated its Second Congress in Damascus, Syria during the period of August 20-25, 1982.

It was during this meeting that the group decided to initiate a violent armed campaign in order to further its goal of establishing an independent Kurdish state.¹⁹⁵

The PKK began its guerilla war against the Turkish government in 1984.¹⁹⁶ It launched its insurgency in August 1984 attacking police stations in southeast Turkey.¹⁹⁷ Following successful attacks against Turkish security forces it shifted its activities from rural to urban

¹⁹² Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate," 904.

¹⁹³ Nur Bilge Criss, "The Nature of PKK Terrorism in Turkey," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 18, no. 1 (January 1995), 18, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=9508223579&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 19

¹⁹⁵ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate," 905.

¹⁹⁶ United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009," 261.

¹⁹⁷ Gareth Jenkins, *Turkey and Northern Iraq: An Overview* (Washington DC: The Jamestown Foundation, February 2008), 11.

targets.¹⁹⁸ Among its tactics were suicide bombings, car bombs, kidnapping foreign tourists, attacking Turkish diplomats in Europe, as well as symbolic representatives of the Turkish state in the Southeast, such as teachers.¹⁹⁹ It was with the commencement of this armed terror campaign that officials began to realize the rapidly escalating threat the PKK posed to the Turkish state.

4. The PKK's Involvement in the Illicit Drug Trade

A decade after its initial strike, the PKK became arguably one of the most robust and prolific terrorist groups operating in the Middle East and Europe with its active cadres of tens of thousands of guerrillas and several hundred thousand supporters.²⁰⁰ Its broad offensive campaigns required enormous financial support. As in the case with Colombia's FARC, the lure of a sizeable income entices many terrorist organizations to engage in illicit drug trafficking to finance their activities. The PKK is no exception to this trend.

The PKK has long been suspected of substantial involvement in drug trafficking, particularly of heroin, which is believed to have become a more important source of income after state support was withdrawn...The war in Iraq is also believed to have further facilitated this source of

¹⁹⁸ United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009," 262.

¹⁹⁹ Cronin and others, *CRS Report for Congress: Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, 53.

²⁰⁰ Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey* (New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 101.

income, as substantial amounts of heroin formerly transiting Iran are now re-routed through Iraq.²⁰¹

In October 2009, as a result of the PKK's increasing activity in the international illicit drug trade, the U.S. Treasury Department designated three of the group's leaders as "significant foreign narcotics traffickers."²⁰²

Narcotics smuggling constitutes a major part of the PKK's financial system, alongside extortion, blackmailing, robbery, arms smuggling and illicit labor trafficking. It is actively engaged in all phases of narcotics trafficking, from the producing and processing of the drugs to their smuggling and marketing. The revenue generated from illicit drug trafficking is channeled to fund its arms purchases, which in-turn is used to sustain its terrorist activities.²⁰³ The PKK finances its operations in large part through a combination of "revolutionary taxes" imposed on the Kurdish population and its dealings in the global heroin trade.²⁰⁴ While the PKK's participation in the

²⁰¹ Michael Jonsson and Svante Cornell, "Kurds and Pay - Examining PKK Financing," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (2008), http://search.janes.com/Search/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdat/mags/jir/history/jir2008/jir10346.htm@current&pageSelected=allJanes&keyword=PKK&backPath=http://search.janes.com/Search&Prod_Name=JIR& (accessed October 5, 2010).

²⁰² "Treasury Designates Three Leaders of the Kongra-Gel as Significant Foreign Narcotics Traffickers," U.S. Department of the Treasury, <http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/tg318.htm> (accessed October 6, 2010).

²⁰³ Curtis and Karacan, *The Nexus among Terrorists, Narcotics Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe*, 19; Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 907-911.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 907-908.

trafficking of illegal narcotics is undeniable, the precise extent of their involvement in this illicit trade is uncertain.

According to Interpol's records in Ankara, 298 people connected with the PKK were arrested for drug trafficking between 1984 and 1993. More than half the arrests were made in Germany. The Turkish police believe that drug trafficking has become more important to the PKK since then. In 2005, 10,283 kg of heroin was seized in Turkey, according to the 2007 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*.²⁰⁵

The PKKs involvement with illegal narcotics in many ways stems from Turkey's position as a pivotal transit route for Southwest Asian opiates flowing into Europe.²⁰⁶ Mitchel Roth and Murat Sever emphasize this point in a case study that examines how the PKK funds terrorism through organized crime,

The PKK has been able to take advantage of Turkey's central location for conducting terrorist and transnational organized criminal activities. Situated at the crossroads of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, and bordering eight countries, including Iran, Iraq, Georgian Armenia, Syria, Greece, Bulgaria, and Azerbaijan, Turkey offers the PKK access to 5,000 miles of coastline as well.²⁰⁷

Turkey's position astride the "Balkan route" has made it somewhat effortless for the PKK to capitalize on its

²⁰⁵ Jonsson and Cornell, *Kurds and Pay - Examining PKK Financing*.

²⁰⁶ Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, Vol. I Drug and Chemical Control (Washington DC: The United States Department of State, 2007), 503, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/82201.pdf> (accessed October 6, 2010).

²⁰⁷ Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate," 906.

geographical fortune. Via this route, the PKK clandestinely traffics morphine base and heroin from Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan into Turkey traversing its eastern borders.

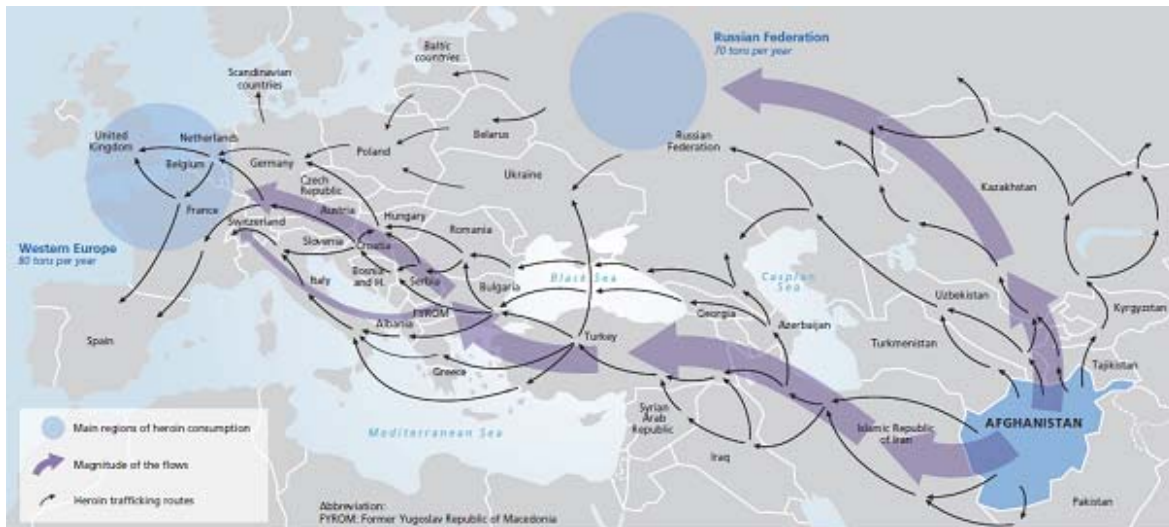


Figure 10. Map of the Northern and Balkan Drug Trafficking Routes²⁰⁸

Since the late 1980s, the PKK has been involved in every aspect of the drug trade from production to smuggling.

The terrorist organization has, instead of trafficking externally produced heroin, opted for a more profitable way of producing heroin from non-heroin opiates. To this end, the PKK refines base morphine into heroin in mobile laboratories near Istanbul and in the southeastern parts of Anatolia. The PKK also cultivates opium and

²⁰⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2010*, 54.

cannabis in the Bekaa Valley (Lebanon) and in the isolated regions of southeastern Anatolia and northern Iraq.²⁰⁹

5. The State's Response to the Insurgency: A Hard-Line Approach to the Threat

From the outset, the Turkish government assumed an unyielding posture toward the insurgency. "Rooted in the decades-old position that the Kurds did not really exist, the state sought a military solution."²¹⁰ By 1980, Turkey's internal security situation had deteriorated markedly. The PKKs violence had extended to Turkish government personnel, rival organizations, and dissidents within the PKK's own ranks. Largely due to the destabilizing influence of terrorism on Turkey's social, political, and economic spheres, on September 12, 1980, General Kenan Evren, chief of the Military General Staff, seized power, suspended the constitution, dissolved the Assembly, proclaimed martial law, and installed a military-civilian cabinet.²¹¹ From 1978 to 1982, the Turkish National Security Council recorded approximately 43,000 incidents of terrorism in Turkey and an average of 28 terrorist-related deaths per

²⁰⁹ Stephen R. Barnhart, *International Terrorism and Political Violence: The Entity of Trans-National Criminal Organizations and New Terrorisms in the Balkans-Middle East and Eastern Europe, and its Effect on the Entire World* (Victoria, B.C., Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2002), 120.

²¹⁰ Barkey, *Turkey and the PKK: A Pyrric Victory?* 345.

²¹¹ Metin Heper and Aylin Güney, "The Military and Democracy in the Third Turkish Republic," *Armed Forces & Society* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1996), 622-626, <http://afs.sagepub.com/content/22/4/619.full.pdf+html> (accessed September 25, 2010).

day.²¹² Until November 1983, the nation remained under martial law and Evren held the presidency for a seven-year term.

Turkey pursued hard-line tactics toward the PKK's (and other separatist groups) violent insurgency following the military's assumption of power. Increased numbers of security forces were mobilized in a government campaign of mounting intensity. However, the government's stance toward Kurdish nationalists only fuelled the ire of the PKK's supporters and the military's "scorched-earth" strategy turned a considerable portion, if not most, of the populace of the Kurdish areas into vigorous antagonists of the state.

The often brutal methods of the Turkish security forces, including widespread human rights abuses and the use of death squads to kill suspected Kurdish nationalists, ensured that the PKK retained a strong following among Turkey's Kurds.²¹³

One wing of the PKK, which eluded the authorities during the military coup of 1980, escaped and re-grouped in Syria under the protection of its government.²¹⁴ Abdullah Ocalan took up residence in Damascus, Syria. Another faction of the PKK settled in Germany. While consolidating

²¹² Ulkumen Rodoplu, Jeffrey Arnold and Gurkan Ersoy, "Special Report: Terrorism in Turkey," *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* 18, no. 2 (February 6, 2004), 155, http://pdm.medicine.wisc.edu/Volume_18/issue_2/rodoplu.pdf (accessed October 20, 2010).

²¹³ Jenkins, *Turkey and Northern Iraq: An Overview*, 11.

²¹⁴ Meliha Benli Altunisik and Ozlem Tur, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations," *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 2 (2006), 232, <http://sdi.sagepub.com.libproxy.nps.edu/content/37/2/229.full.pdf+html> (accessed October 1, 2010).

its position in the Bekaa Valley, and West Germany, the PKK strengthened its resolve to wage guerrilla warfare by organizing a military wing, the Kurdistan Freedom Brigade (Hazen Rizgariya Kurdistan: HRK).²¹⁵

During the mid-1990s, the Turkish security forces gradually seized the initiative in southeast Turkey,

more aggressive battlefield tactics and a scorched earth policy – which included the razing of an estimated 3,500 villages—enabled the Turkish military to regain control of the countryside.²¹⁶

In 1998, with the PKK in retreat on the battlefield, the government turned its attention to Syria. In the fall of 1998, the Turkish military massed 10,000 troops on the border with Syria and threatened to invade unless the Syrian government expelled Ocalan and withdrew its support for the PKK.²¹⁷ “On October 20, 1998, Syria signed an agreement with Turkey designating the PKK as a terrorist organization. Ocalan was forced to leave Syria.”²¹⁸

After several failed attempts to take refuge in the Netherlands, Italy and Russia (no European country would grant him asylum) Ocalan arrived in Greece, a rival to Turkey and supporter of the PKK. His contacts within the Greek intelligence services arranged for him to be transported to the Greek embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. However, in a joint operation between the U.S. Central

²¹⁵ Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 47.

²¹⁶ Jenkins, *Turkey and Northern Iraq: An Overview*, 11.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

²¹⁸ Aaron Mannes, *Profiles in Terror: The Guide to Middle East Terrorist Organizations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 182.

Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı: MIT), and the Israeli Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations (HaMossad leModi'in uleTafkidim Meyuchadim: Mossad), Ocalan's movements were tracked to the Greek diplomatic compound and on February 15, 1999 he was apprehended and brought back to Turkey to stand trial.²¹⁹

On June 29, 1999, Ocalan was found guilty of multiple charges of insurrection and sentenced to death. The punishment was automatically commuted to life imprisonment when Turkey abolished the death penalty in August 2002, which, according to some foreign policy analysts, was done "in order to improve its chances of being accepted into the EU, which opposes the death penalty."²²⁰ Since 1999, Ocalan has been the sole inmate on the prison island of Imrali in the Sea of Marmara. He is kept in isolation and can communicate only with the outside world through visits from relatives and his lawyers. However, he has continued to determine strategy for the PKK from his prison cell, communicating with the organization through his lawyers—conversations that are both monitored by the Turkish intelligence service and published on the Internet by pro-PKK websites.²²¹ Ocalan's isolation has arguably enhanced

²¹⁹ Svante E. Cornell, "The Land of Many Crossroads: The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics," *Orbis* 45, no. 1 (2001), 31, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/TURKEY_KURDS.pdf (accessed September 21, 2010).; Mannes, *Profiles in Terror: The Guide to Middle East Terrorist Organizations*, 182.; Roth and Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as a Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," 905.

²²⁰ Mannes, *Profiles in Terror: The Guide to Middle East Terrorist Organizations*, 182.

²²¹ Katharina Kirchmayer, *The Case of the Isolation Regime of Abdullah Ocalan* (Norderstedt, Germany: Grin Verlag, 2010), 9, 43-45.

the reverence with which he is regarded by PKK members, adding a mystique to his already iconic status and endowing him with the image of a living martyr.

The PKK continued to conduct operations following Ocalan's expulsion from Syria and his capture and return to Turkey. However, Ocalan's escape and eventual imprisonment ruptured the chain of command within the organization and severely damaged its already deteriorating morale. PKK activity continued at a relatively low level until August 1999 when Ocalan announced an indefinite unilateral ceasefire commencing September 1, 1999.²²²

6. The Current Situation and Conclusions

While the PKK's use of violence has subsided, it still maintains an active armed wing—and it was this wing that, after seizing control of the group in 2004, annulled the PKK's five-year-long cessation of hostilities, declared by Ocalan in 1999 following his arrest. Since June 2004, the PKK has pursued a two front strategy comprising a rural insurgency in southeastern Turkey and an urban bombing campaign in the west of the country. Both are primarily designed to exert political leverage in the hope of forcing concessions such as greater Kurdish autonomy from the Turkish State rather than seizing territory or achieving a military victory. For propaganda purposes, responsibility for the bombing campaign has frequently been claimed by an organization calling itself the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons

²²² United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009," 262.

(Tayrbazen Azadiya Kurdistan: TAK).²²³ In reality, TAK is comprised of PKK militants under the overall command of its Executive Committee.²²⁴

In the absence of a state sponsor, the PKK appears unlikely to be able to increase its military capabilities either to the levels of the early 1990s or to the point where it poses a military threat to the Turkish state. Nevertheless, it has the capacity to continue to inflict casualties.²²⁵ In addition, the group appears to have no difficulty in attracting new recruits. "Turkish intelligence sources report that around one half of the 4,500 to 5,000 PKK militants currently under arms in Turkey and in the Qandil mountains have joined the organization since 1999."²²⁶ Similarly, although it lacks the means to procure sophisticated weaponry, the PKK appears to have the benefit of adequate fiscal means to continue its rural insurgency at its current level almost indefinitely. The U.S. designations of the PKK and its subordinate entities underscore that it operates as more of a hybrid terrorist and drug-trafficking cartel than a conventional terrorist organization.

Having received unequivocal backing from voters in the constitutional referendum, the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) has moved to address Turkey's

²²³ United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009," 262.

²²⁴ Aliza Marcus, *The PKK and Kurdish Fight for Independence: Blood and Belief* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 2007), 295.

²²⁵ Jenkins, *Unwelcome Guests: The Turkish Military Bases in Northern Iraq*, 4.

²²⁶ "Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK)," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism* (2010).

structural problems, most notably the Kurdish question, through a combination of domestic measures, as well as regional and international diplomacy. The resolution of the Kurdish issue has been one of the main targets of the AKP government. The AKP first sought to address this issue through domestic political reforms in the early 2000's, also benefiting from the relative calm prevailing in southeastern Anatolia, thanks to the outlawed PKK suspending its operations.²²⁷ However, granting greater cultural rights to the Kurds as part of Turkey's European Union accession process or devising socio-economic policies proved to be ineffective. The threat posed by the PKK's separatist terrorism lingered, as the organization managed to maintain its manpower in safe havens in Northern Iraq.

The PKK's resumption of its campaign of violence in the second half the decade caught Ankara by surprise, triggering a heated debate. Faced with the PKK's deadly attacks against Turkish military outposts from its bases in Northern Iraq, the AKP bowed to pressure and considered seriously pursuing stronger military measures to tackle this problem. Coordinating its policies with the U.S. and the Northern Iraqi Kurdish authorities, the Turkish army undertook incursions into Northern Iraq in pursuit of PKK militants in the winter of 2007-2008.²²⁸

In 2009, the Turkish government and the Turkish General Staff acquiesced to the idea that military action

²²⁷ Murat Somer and Evangelos G. Liaras, "Turkey's New Kurdish Opening: Religious Versus Secular Values," *Middle East Policy* XVII, no. 2 (Summer 2010), 153, http://home.ku.edu.tr/~musomer/research_files/SomerLiaras,%20MEP%20Summer%202010.pdf (accessed November 5, 2010).

²²⁸ Jenkins, *Turkey and Northern Iraq: An Overview*, 20.

alone against the PKK would not be adequate to eradicate it as a terrorist threat.²²⁹ The government began an ambitious initiative, now known as the National Unity Project, to contend with the social and economic disparities in Turkish recruitment and to comply with EU demands. According to the U.S. State Department's 2009 Country Report on Terrorism, "Concrete steps within the scope of the Project were clearly devised to drain the PKK's support, by, for example, liberalizing laws governing the use of the Kurdish language in broadcasting, education, and state buildings; reducing the application of counterterrorism laws to non-violent crimes; and providing legal incentives to bring members of the PKK who have not engaged in violence back into civil society."²³⁰ Unfortunately, the AKP government failed to garner popular and political support for the measure, also referred to as the "Kurdish opening." The government's mishandling of the opening, coupled with the PKK and pro-Kurdish parties' uncooperative attitude, turned the entire Kurdish initiative into a near fiasco.²³¹

²²⁹ Cengiz Candar, "The Kurdish Question: The Reasons and Fortunes of the 'Opening'," *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 4 (2009), 14, http://www.insightturkey.com/Insight_Turkey_2009_4_Cengiz_Candar.pdf (accessed October 20, 2010).

²³⁰ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009," 108.

²³¹ Migdalovitz, *Turkey: Politics of Identity and Power*, Summary.

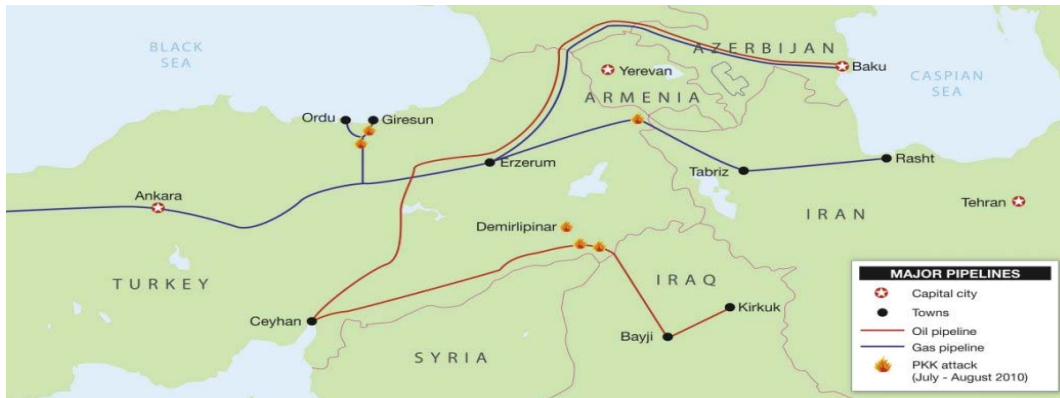


Figure 11. PKK Attacks Between July and August 2010²³²

PKK violence, however, continued throughout the spring and summer of 2010, which exposed the failure of the Turkish security apparatus in fighting the PKK formations inside and outside of Turkey. The escalation of the conflict was avoided only through the PKK's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire prior to the recent Turkish constitutional referendum and was, in part, facilitated by various civil society organizations.²³³ Following this referendum, the PKK sent signals that it would resume its campaign, unless Turkish security forces halted their operations by a self-declared deadline of September 20,

²³² Gareth Jenkins, "Target Practice - PKK Militants Attack Turkish Infrastructure," *Jane's Intelligence Review Online Resource Watch* (September 7, 2010).

²³³ "Southeastern Civil Society Up in Arms Against PKK Violence," *Today's Zaman Web Edition* (2010), <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-214426-southeastern-civil-society-up-in-arms-against-pkk-violence.html> (accessed October 26, 2010); Sevil Kucukkosum, "PKK Likely to Declare Unilateral Truce as a Result of Civil-Society Calls," *Hurriyet Daily News and Economics Review Online*, sec. Turkey Politics, August 12, 2010, <http://www.hurriyetaonline.com/n.php?n=pkk-responds-civil-society8217s-calls-likely-to-declare-unilateral-truce-2010-08-12> (accessed October 25, 2010).

2010.²³⁴ A deadly mine explosion killing nine civilians on September 16 reignited the debate on terrorism. Though the PKK denied its involvement in the attack, it was a stark reminder that the PKK remains a potent force that could deal a serious blow to Turkey's security.²³⁵

Faced with the double-edged challenge of resolving the Kurdish question and defeating the narcoterrorist threat posed by the PKK, the AKP seeks to address these issues through diplomatic negotiations. As part of Turkey's ongoing effort to achieve a peaceful solution to the problem, there have been numerous visits undertaken by cabinet members and security officials to neighboring Middle Eastern states as well as to the U.S. On September 28, 2010, a U.S. delegation led by Lloyd James Austin, commanding general of U.S. forces in Iraq, visited Turkey to discuss joint efforts. These cooperative ventures are undertaken within the framework of a joint "action plan" agreed to in April, 2010 to combat the PKK, and are a direct result of the trilateral security mechanism between Turkey, the U.S. and Iraq.²³⁶ Through closer cooperation with the U.S. and the Iraqi Kurds, the action plan would assist Turkey in taking stronger military measures to eliminate the threat posed by the PKK, which to date have

²³⁴ Ayse Karabat, "PKK Declares It Will Stop Attacks Until September 20," Today's Zaman Web Edition, August 16, 2010, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-219149-pkk-declares-it-will-stop-attacks-until-september-20.html> (accessed November 5, 2010).

²³⁵ Yesim Comert, "PKK Denies Role in Deadly Mine Blast," CNN World online, http://articles.cnn.com/2010-09-16/world/turkey.minibus.landmine_1_pkk-ethnic-kurdish-minority-firat-news-agency?_s=PM:WORLD (accessed October 29, 2010).

²³⁶ "Turkey Urges US to Apply Pressure on Terror," *Hurriyet Daily News and Economic Review Online*, sec. Turkey Politics, September 28, 2010, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=pkk-to-extend-cease-fire-2010-09-28> (accessed October 5, 2010).

proven ineffective, but which could jeopardize and frustrate future diplomatic solutions.

Although the recent joint initiatives seek to address the security aspect posed by the PKK's terrorist activities, security cooperation through the trilateral mechanism might be secondary to the AKP government's agenda of exploring a non-military solution to the problem in a new political climate. The goal of the diplomatic negotiations is to somehow convince the PKK to extend its unilateral ceasefire, halt its operations inside Turkey, and transform its non-action into a permanent truce. Once the guns fall silent, the Turkish government hopes to find a suitable environment within which it can address the Kurdish problem through domestic political reforms.²³⁷ The crux of the issue is what will happen to the thousands of PKK militants? In this process, the PKK will possibly withdraw its forces from Turkey into Northern Iraq. In the most optimistic scenario, PKK militants might voluntarily turn themselves in and reintegrate themselves into civilian life, if the AKP's diplomatic solution succeeds. Since this is highly unlikely, Turkey expects the Iraqi Kurds and the U.S. to take steps towards the disarmament of these PKK militants and eventually end the PKK's military presence.²³⁸ However, given the uncertainty over the future of Iraq and

²³⁷ "Kurdish Issue Reaches New Threshold in Turkey," *Hurriyet Daily News and Economic Review Online*, sec. Turkey National, September 27, 2010, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=kurdish-issue-seizes-center-stage-in-turkey-2010-09-27> (accessed November 5, 2010).

²³⁸ "Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict Or Cooperation?" *International Crisis Group Middle East Report*, no. 81 (November 13, 2008), ii, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Iraq/81Turkey%20and%20Iraqi%20Kurds%20Conflict%20or%20Cooperation.ashx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Iraq/81Turkey%20and%20Iraqi%20Kurds%20Conflict%20or%20Cooperation.ashx).

the U.S. military presence in the region, it might be unrealistic to expect either the U.S. or the Iraqi Kurds to demilitarize the PKK. Turkey will still need to maintain its operational capability to carry out maneuvers inside Iraq, as reflected by the government's decision to extend the Turkish army's mandate to do so.²³⁹ It seems that there is no easy choice between the use of force and diplomacy.

Contending with the PKKs illicit transnational activities, which cover the spectrum of terrorism and narcotics trafficking, requires increased international cooperation. Greater security collaboration and intelligence sharing between Turkey, the U.S. and Iraq and enhanced military operations inside Turkey are certainly important and may halt the PKK's terrorist attacks. However, in the long term these actions could deliver the unintended consequences of fostering further discontent amongst Turkey's Kurdish populace and impede diplomatic resolutions. Nonetheless, given the group's central role in European narcotics trafficking, formalizing U.S.-EU-Turkish efforts, both diplomatic and otherwise, to deal with the PKK is in the national and regional security interests of all parties concerned.

²³⁹ "Iraq Hopes Turkey's Cross-Border Military Operations Limited," *Xinhuanet.Com English News*, sec. World, September 29, 2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-09/29/c_13534375.htm (accessed October 11, 2010).

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IV. CONCLUSION

A. LESSONS LEARNED

The United States and the international community are involved in a fierce confrontation against terrorism and, to a lesser degree, organized crime. Theoretically, as the two threats to America's national security collaborate or imitate one another, it would be beneficial for the government to exploit the lessons gathered from combating each style of organization such as the FARC in Colombia and the PKK in Turkey. However in actuality, the threats presented by both organized crime and terrorism are morphing on a regular basis, and both entities are learning to adapt from previous missteps while scrutinizing the latest lines of defense created by beleaguered nation states. These adaptable organizations are relentlessly confronting the lethargic, state-centric responses to their irregular warfare techniques. Although some terrorist organizations are hierarchical in makeup, a cell-based, shapeless structure like that of Al Qaeda, which decentralizes power and authority to self-sufficient or semi-independent groups spanning many countries, is more representative of the structure of most transnational terrorist organizations. Such structures radically increase the difficulties associated with government efforts at combating these groups.

Michael Kenney, assistant professor of public policy at the School of Public Affairs at Pennsylvania State University, observes that al Qaeda has altered and adjusted its organizational philosophies in much the same way that

Colombian narcotics trafficking groups did after U.S. and Colombian law enforcement agencies rigorously pursued drug cartel leadership.²⁴⁰ Their similar modes of operation may be useful to U.S. and foreign law enforcement and counterterrorism units seeking to dismantle al Qaeda's leadership and ultimately destroy its organizational foundation. The main strategy for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to stop cell-based and vertically-organized terror groups and organized crime syndicates will demand much greater indigenous intelligence than currently exists, and a deeper understanding of personalities, protocols, culture, and organizational financing. Unfortunately, based on the past performance of U.S. programs devised to eradicate illegal drug trafficking the results to date do not predict a positive outcome for similar efforts to immobilize terror groups also involved in the drug trade.

Leadership interdiction is another element that is clearly necessary in the prosecution of the narcoterrorist threat. However, it is also an area where negative lessons can be extracted. The most significant lesson learned by two decades of violent insurgency fuelled by the illicit drug trade in Colombia is that, according to Kenney,

[a] strategy premised on leadership interdiction runs the risk of merely weeding out the most notorious networks and providing opportunities for lesser known, but equally, if not more, sophisticated groups to materialize.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Kenney, *From Pablo to Osama: Counter-Terrorism Lessons from the War on Drugs*, 192-196.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

Moreover, the consequences that flowed from a preoccupation with eliminating the FARC's leadership, as well drug trafficking kingpins, point to ways in which the current Mexican narcoterrorist threat might be more effectively confronted.²⁴²

Turkey's line of attack in dealing with the PKK's campaign of terror, funded by its involvement in the illicit drug trade, also provides another example of where valuable lessons can be derived for prosecuting the current narcoterrorist threat. The state's hard-line, military approach, albeit heavy-handed, did eventually immobilize the PKK's terrorist activities and dealt a fundamental blow to its structural hierarchy and morale with the arrest of its self-proclaimed leader, Abdullah Ocalan. However, the government's tough and often controversial response to the PKK's narcoterrorist activities did not completely eliminate the threat to the state, as is evidenced today, with the vestiges of PKK leadership rallying the Kurdish war cry. Nor did this response endear the Turkish state to its Kurdish minority. Henri Barkey, Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean international relations scholar, aptly champions this point by affirming,

While the PKK no longer constitutes the kind of military or political threat it did to Turkey in the 1990s, the return to armed attacks is a powerful reminder of things to come...after almost a century of efforts, Turkey is still struggling to come to grips with its Kurdish minority.²⁴³

²⁴² Kenney, *From Pablo to Osama*, 188.

²⁴³ Barkey, *Turkey and the PKK: A Pyrric Victory?* 343.

Eleven years after the downfall of Turkey's longest Kurdish-inspired revolt, Ankara's Kurdish question lingers largely unanswered. A military solution to the narcoterrorist threat provides a short-term solution to a situation requiring a long-term, sustainable response. Diplomacy, conciliation and mediation are the first steps in the right direction of addressing internal negligence and strife, and Turkey is finally acknowledging this fact. However, a continued commitment to this effort is required if any progress is to be made in the future. The same can be said of the current narcoterrorist crisis and civil unrest in Mexico.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

As discussed throughout this thesis narcoterrorism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon as well as a pervasive threat to democratic regimes worldwide. Successfully combating the trafficking of illegal drugs and its ties to transnational terror organizations requires a long-term commitment, well-organized agencies, and effective cooperation on the part of the U.S. government both on the domestic and international fronts. Long-term commitments should consist of long-term plans, and should utilize organizations that are capable of carrying out these plans. These organizations should also be centralized under one principal agency chartered to lead the effort. Furthermore, international collaboration is a vital element in the struggle against the illicit drug trade. Creating an international community that is sensitive to the issue and aware of the seriousness of the problem is the first prerequisite of this cooperative international effort.

Since drugs are a global dilemma, no single country can effectively combat the problem without the assistance of other nations. This assistance should encompass numerous forms of mutual aid to include information exchange, financial support, joint operations, and international law and treaty reform designed to assist in targeting illicit drug trafficking networks. This is not to say that these efforts are not currently underway in some shape or fashion; however, a more focused and concentrated effort needs to be undertaken as long as this clear and present danger continues to threaten not only America's national security, but that of nations around the world.

Terrorism, the second dimension of the narcoterrorism conundrum, requires the same commitments that are needed in the fight against illegal drug trafficking. Effective international cooperation is vital to establish national and international security. Terrorism becomes even more damaging when it is merged with illicit drug trafficking. Because of the huge financial gains associated with the illegal drug industry, terrorist organizations are given the opportunity to arm themselves with more sophisticated and lethal weapons, including nuclear and biological weapons of mass destruction. To avoid the unimaginable consequences of such cataclysmic events, the ties between terrorist organizations and the sale of illegal drugs must be severed. The best way of doing this is to completely eliminate both threats. This, however, is not an easy undertaking and cannot be achieved in the short-term; it is a gradual and iterative process. Therefore, a more

immediate solution to this problem is to place renewed emphasis on severing the financial capacity of transnational terror networks.

C. CLOSING THOUGHTS

After researching the complex issues associated with the narcoterrorist nexus and examining its impact on such countries as Colombia and Turkey, I contend that the proposed thesis statement of this treatise is correct and highly plausible. Narcoterrorism and its corrosive effects constitute a destructive and surreptitious assault on the United States and democratic nations spanning the globe. This phenomenon represents a threat to the security of not only the nations where it has taken root and that must suffer its devastating consequences but to the international community where it has risen to the forefront of global politics and continues to threaten worldwide stability. How serious is the danger posed by the intersection of drugs and terrorism? The same factors have already affected Colombia, and have destabilized Peru, Mexico, and Afghanistan, to name but a few.²⁴⁴ Ignoring the narcoterrorist threat and the ensuing corruption it propagates could engender dire consequences for the security of not only the United States but also of democratic nations around the world.

The international nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism poses a significant and pervasive threat to U.S. national security and countermeasures to date have yet to decisively secure the U.S. homeland or interests abroad.

²⁴⁴ Hutchinson, *Narco-Terror: The International Connection between Drugs and Terror*.

One only need cast an eye down toward America's Southern border to realize the all too destructive influence of the narcoterrorist connection. Due to the ongoing struggle for power and supremacy among Mexico's drug cartels, drug related deaths and violence near the U.S. and Mexican border are escalating with alarming regularity. The threat of a spillover onto U.S. soil encumbers the crisis as an issue for homeland security.

Until the United States comes to terms with the global nature of the threat, improves interagency cooperative efforts, and is willing to commit a steady stream of resources to the problem, terrorism, organized crime and by extension the illicit narcotics industry will continue to flourish for the foreseeable future. Establishing effective security in the Hemisphere and keeping allies committed to the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking will require the U.S. to exercise continued vigilance and place increased emphasis on deterring this threat to homeland security and defense.

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