

**Overlooked Emerging Security Challenges: A Role for NATO in Combating
Drug Trafficking**

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University Honors International Studies

Spring 2013

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Abstract

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been the bulwark of Euro-Atlantic security since its inception in 1949. Today, NATO faces a crisis from within: member states are reticent to invest in an outdated alliance, especially in light of European austerity measures and a costly decade in Afghanistan. NATO's New Strategic Concept outlines a plan to overcome this crisis by adapting the Alliance to face 'emerging security challenges' and initiating an ongoing dialogue on Alliance transformation. The dialogue centers on NATO's values in counter-terrorism, WMD non-proliferation, energy security, and cyber security, but overlooks drug trafficking as a serious emerging security challenge.

NATO has come face-to-face with the security threats from drug trafficking in Afghanistan and the Balkans. This study aims to bring drug trafficking into the NATO transformation dialogue by analyzing the danger drug trafficking poses to regional security in NATO's sphere of operations – from Africa through the Balkans to Central Asia. Based on interviews with multiple NATO policymakers, the study demonstrates that NATO has certain comparative advantages over other international institutions to contribute to this emerging security challenge. These include operational experience and legitimacy, training, intelligence sharing, and intelligence analysis capacities. Additionally, this study posits that NATO's ongoing transformation represents a window of opportunity to institutionalize lessons learned from Afghanistan after a decade of failed counter narcotics policies. Finally, this study argues that NATO needs to be as dynamic as the unconventional threats its members and partners face to prove its value in the 21st century security environment. Facing a threat as complex and serious as drug trafficking will prove NATO's relevancy and value to the Alliances' members and partners.

Introduction

The dissolution of the Soviet Union caused tectonic shifts in the existing international order. The traditional East-West divide that had defined the world order and calcified Europe's dissection for over four decades dissipated seemingly instantaneously. Through the four tumultuous and uncertain decades, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) served as the bulwark of collective military defense for the United States and its Canadian and European allies against anticipated Soviet aggression. With the fall of the Soviet Union came the fall of NATO's supposed *raison d'être*. For a variety of reasons – uncertainty over the fledgling Russian Federation's future, fears of an irredentist united Germany, a mechanism to bring former Soviet Bloc countries 'in from the Cold' to the West, or simple bureaucratic inertia – NATO survived this initial crisis of faith to maintain its status as the preeminent political-military alliance on the world stage. The Alliance manifested its continued relevancy when it first went operational in 1995 in Bosnia, followed by operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya, humanitarian relief support missions, and Operation Active Endeavor. However, NATO faces an uncertain future in the wake of members' austerity measures and the impending drawdown of its forces in Afghanistan after a decade of exhaustive and expensive years of counterinsurgency and state building.

NATO has responded to its uncertain future by initiating a long and arduous transformation process. NATO aims to better face new, untraditional security threats and reassure its members of the Alliance's utility. As current NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen articulated, the Cold War alliance was 'NATO 1.0,' the crisis

managing and peacekeeping operations from 1991-2011 was ‘NATO 2.0,’ and “the time has now come for NATO ‘3.0’ to focus on emerging security challenges, strategic partnerships, and enhancing military-civilian cooperation.”¹ NATO has identified four emerging security challenges: terrorism, cyber attacks, WMD proliferation, and energy security.²

As NATO undergoes this monumental transformation, one issue of critical security importance is entirely missing from the debate: drug trafficking. NATO forces and individual NATO members have come face to face with the insurmountable threat posed by drug trafficking organizations to peace, security, and government stability. Ostensibly, combating drug trafficking is strictly a law enforcement and public health concern. This fact alone perhaps gives policymakers engaged in NATO’s transformation debates comfortable distance from the issue. Yet policymakers should reconsider drug trafficking as a functional security threat for NATO. First, drug trafficking is a substantial threat and in some cases even an existential threat to areas of the world in NATO members’ spheres of security, from the Balkans to Central Asia to North and West Africa. NATO forces in Afghanistan have seen firsthand the debilitating impact drug trafficking can have on a state’s security and development in its decade in Afghanistan, which today produces over 90% of the world’s heroin.³ Despite this, NATO forces deployed to Afghanistan under the auspices of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) have no cohesive drug

¹ Rasmussen, Anders Fogh. "The New Strategic Concept: Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Speech by Nato Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the German Marshall Fund of the United States (Gmf)". Brussels, Belgium, 2010. NATO. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_66727.htm>.

² Ruhle, Michael. "Nato and Emerging Security Challenges: Beyond the Deterrence Paradigm." American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (2012).

³ “Corruption in Afghanistan” U.N. Office of Drug and Crime, January 2010

policy. Second, NATO members need to institutionalize the lessons they learned on drug trafficking from their involvement in the Balkans and Afghanistan. This could prove decisive in any potential future NATO operations, whether they are in the Middle East or West Africa. Third, NATO has comparative advantages in legitimacy, operational capacity, and geography that other international organizations (such as the EU or UN) lack. Fourth, for NATO to survive, it needs to remain a viable utility for both its members and partners. If it cannot market its utility to members and partners, it risks losing their political, military, and financial investment in the Alliance. Drug trafficking is a serious problem for all NATO members and partners, and in many cases a full-blown national security threat. Two striking examples of this are Turkey, a NATO member for over 60 years, and Russia, perhaps NATO's most important non-member partner. With the impending 2014 troop withdrawal in Afghanistan, a cohesive NATO drug strategy on the tactical level would be too little, too late.

Current literature and discussion of NATO's role in countering drug trafficking is relegated to NATO's involvement in Afghanistan.⁴ NATO does not have a unified policy on drugs in Afghanistan. Dialogue on NATO and drug trafficking is severely limited outside the prism of Afghanistan, and sorely needed in light of both the growing threat of drug trafficking and the ongoing debate surrounding NATO's transformation. Militaries should not lead the fight against drug trafficking, yet NATO is no longer purely a military alliance. Discounting drug trafficking as a threat outside 'NATO 3.0's purview would be myopic. As NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges Gábor Iklódy stated, "as long as every debate in NATO is viewed as preparing military

⁴ See: Felbab-Brown, 2013; Paul Gallis, 2008; DuPee, 2011; Peters, 2009; Nopens, 2010; Stepanova, 2012

operations, a forward-thinking, enlightened debate about emerging 21st century challenges will remain elusive.”⁵

NATO’s 21st Century Transformation

A Response to 21st Century Security Challenges

NATO’s blueprint for its internal transformation is the “Strategic Concept For the Defence and Security of The Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation” adopted in 2010, known as NATO’s 2010 Strategic Concept.⁶ The 2010 Strategic Concept reconfirms NATO’s “fundamental and enduring purpose...to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means.”⁷ It defines the Alliance’s broad strategies as collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. It also emphasizes enhancing “a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organizations around the globe.”⁸ Leading up to NATO’s 2010 Summit in Chicago, Secretary General Rasmussen said that NATO “must be able to do 21st century crisis management...We’ve learned that there is often no military solution to crises and conflicts.”⁹ The 2010 Strategic Concept demonstrates that “NATO needs to work more closely with civilian partners, on the ground, and at the political level.”¹⁰

⁵ Iklódy, Gábor. "New Challenges - New Nato". 2010. NATO Review: NATO Lisbon Summit Edition. <<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2010/Lisbon-Summit/New-Nato/EN/>>.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ “Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation”. Lisbon, Portugal: NATO, 2010. Adopted by Heads of State and Government in Lisbon.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Rasmussen, Anders Fogh. “The New Strategic Concept: Active Engagement, Modern Defence” (Speech, German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels, Belgium, October 8, 2010).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Over the past 20 years, NATO has evolved from a critical mass military deterrence alliance to a “general security organization.”¹¹ According to former NATO Secretary general Lord George Robertson, NATO ensured this security by “build[ing] the Euro-Atlantic security environment of the future – where all states share peace and democracy, and uphold basic human rights.”¹² NATO manifested its commitment this in its peacemaking and peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya.

The world today faces non-traditional security challenges that do not neatly fit into the traditional Westphalian concept of sovereign states. The term ‘non-traditional security challenges’ captures the zeitgeist of the post-9/11 security environment, when policymakers realized that non-state actors could pose as much of a threat to a states as the threats they faced from standing armies. Mainstream analysis predicts that “the coming decades will see a decline in state sovereignty, a power shift from states to international or non-state networks, and an increase in the destructive power of these non-state actors.”¹³ Another non-traditional security challenge is the emergence of ‘failing states.’ Contrary to popular opinion, these failing states are not ‘ungoverned spaces,’ but rather spaces governed by illegitimate non-state groups including terrorist groups and criminal networks.¹⁴ Failing states become training grounds for terrorist groups or safe havens for criminal networks in West Africa, pirates off the Gulf of Aden, or drug traffickers in Central Asia. The September 11th, 2001 attacks demonstrated that the

¹¹ Sundarajan, Anita R. "The Sustainability of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Addressing the Security-Development Nexus in the 21st Century." Georgetown, 2012.

¹² Moore, Rebecca. *NATO's New Mission* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007), 1.

¹³ Ruhle 278

¹⁴ Ruhle 279; Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty. Ed. Anne L. Clunan, Harold A. Trinkunas. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010.

security implications of these states failing “reach far beyond the place of their origin.”¹⁵

Implications for NATO’s New Role

What strategic and operational implications do these changes have for an organization such as NATO? First, traditional deterrence outlined in Article V of NATO’s founding Washington Treaty, notes that “an armed attack against one or more [NATO members] ... shall be considered an attack against them all”.¹⁶ Article V is the cornerstone of NATO, but it risks becoming a Cold War relic at least in terms of its original intention in light of NATO’s evolving mission and newly emerging non-state threats. Article V was invoked for the first time, and thus far only time, in the wake of 9/11. Yet the purpose of Article V – to deter an attack on alliance members – is lost on non-state actors such as terrorist groups or cyber hackers who don’t adhere to traditional ‘laws of deterrence’ embedded in Cold War strategies. The intended Article V reaction – collective deterrence and collective defense by all members against the aggressor, is difficult to initiate without a clearly defined state from which to deter or defend the Alliance.¹⁷ Twelve years of posterity has mentally prepared NATO members to comprehend an Article V invocation in response to a 9/11-type attack. Yet impending threats, smaller-scale attacks, or cyber attacks are difficult to respond to through the Article V lens. In June 2012, a Turkish fighter jet was shot down by the Syrian military. Ankara invoked NATO’s Article IV, when a member can “convene a meeting of NATO

¹⁵ Ruhle 279

¹⁶ "The North Atlantic Treaty." NATO. Washington, DC 1949. Received from NATO official website.

¹⁷ "Interview with Deputy Director of the Brent Scowcroft Center for International Security, Atlantic Council of the United States." Personal interview. 15 Feb. 2013.

members to ‘consult’ when it feels its independence or security are threatened.”¹⁸ Turkey had previously only invoked Article IV in 2003 prior to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.¹⁹ If this is a bellwether for future incidents, NATO needs to ensure that it can articulate collective defense for members facing non-Article V threats. Small-scale attacks as in the case of the Turkish-Syrian incident, terrorist attacks below the scale of 9/11, or low-intensity threats from non-state actors do not constitute Article V invocations. But NATO must address these threats in some capacity to retain legitimacy and utility for its members.

Second, the passive, deterrence-based approach of critical mass force demonstration worked in the Cold War. It did not work against warring third parties in the Balkans in the 1990’s or Al Qaeda in 2001. NATO shifted to proactive peacemaking and peacekeeping missions to adapt to the post-Cold War environment, but it needs to adapt again, this time to non-traditional security challenges. Successful adaptation relies on “prevention and enhancing resilience.”²⁰ NATO seeks to safeguard the security of almost 900 million citizens, so “this means a significant change in the way it thinks and acts.”²¹ Collective military operations “are likely to remain the core business of NATO” and the realm where NATO retains the most significant added value, but prevention and resilience “will have to occupy a much more prominent place” on NATO’s long-term strategic political and military agenda.²²

¹⁸ Coalson, Rovert. "What Are Nato's Articles 4 and 5?" Radio Free Liberty Radio Europe May 7, 2013.

¹⁹ "Nato and the 2003 Campaign against Iraq". NATO official website.
<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51977.htm>.

²⁰ Ruhle 278

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Ruhle 281

Third, NATO operations as well as efforts to bolster prevention and resilience against non-traditional threats are not consigned to traditional Euro-Atlantic geography. Former Senator Richard Lugar said that in a world in which attacks on NATO members can be planned in Germany, financed in Asia, and implemented in the United States, “old distinctions between ‘in’ and ‘out-of-area’ have become meaningless. NATO must be able to act beyond Europe...if it is going to fulfill its classic mission today.”²³ Leading up to NATO’s 2010 Summit in Chicago, Secretary General Rasmussen argued that NATO “must be able to do 21st century crisis management...We’ve learned that there is often no military solution to crises and conflicts.”²⁴ In short, NATO must incorporate prevention and resilience into its collective operations, and retain its willingness to operate outside of both European territories and functionally outside of purely military operations.

In light of austerity measures, ongoing conflicts around the world, and a shift towards emerging non-traditional security challenges, NATO was “forced to reassess its collective goals and purposes.”²⁵ NATO has pivoted its reassessment around specific security functions. These functions are reflected in NATO’s ‘Emerging Security Challenges Division,’ created by Secretary General Rasmussen in 2010 to focus on four primary security concerns: terrorism, cyber attacks, threats to energy supply, and weapons of mass destruction proliferation. The emerging security challenges are “interconnected but mutually reinforcing,” an attractive trait for an organization facing

²³ Lugar, Richard. “NATO After 9/11” (Speech, Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002).

²⁴ Rasmussen, “The New Strategic Concept: Active Engagement, Modern Defence”

²⁵ Sundajaran 1

austerity measures.²⁶ These four seemingly varying challenges share three common characteristics. First, they “do not necessarily affect Allies in the same way.”²⁷ Second, they do not necessarily require a military response, meaning NATO’s purely military solutions “no longer suffice.”²⁸ The third characteristic these four threats have in common is that since they “require a holistic approach” since they are not strictly foreign or domestic, military or economic, regular or irregular threats. Thus, NATO needs to “be much better connected to the broader international community.”²⁹ This requires “building structured relations with a range of civilian actors,” from international organizations to non-profit organizations to private energy and information technology industries.³⁰

Drug Trafficking: A Serious 21st Century Threat

Western European leaders see the impact of drug trafficking on their own soil. According to Interpol, the Andean region of South America produced over 80% of the world’s cocaine supply. Afghanistan produces 90% of the world’s heroin supply, and a substantial portion of the cocaine and heroin travels to lucrative European consumer markets once it is processed.³¹ Drug trafficking in Europe has increased by 4.2% in the last decade from already high volumes. Cocaine consumption has nearly doubled in

²⁶ Zyga 2

²⁷ Iklody

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Ruhle 281

³⁰ Iklody

³¹ INTERPOL. "Drugs: Interpol's Response". International Criminal Police Agency. <<http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Drugs/Drugs>>.

Europe in the past 10 years.³² While the United States has seen a drawdown in cocaine use, “the volume of cocaine consumed in Europe has doubled in the last decade.”³³ Drug trafficking is not only a threat to public health, but also to regional stability in areas of the world prone to conflict and political upheaval. They have debilitating impacts on regional stability and security in conflict and post conflict zones such as Afghanistan and the Balkans respectively, as well as regions with a high potential for future conflict such as West Africa.

Drug Trafficking in the Balkans: A Battle Against Corruption and Institutional Legitimacy

Drug trafficking is notably absent from NATO’s established list of ‘emerging threats’ despite the fact that NATO has come face-to-face with the debilitating effects of drug trafficking on state security during its operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan. The threat from drug traffickers to stability and security in the Balkans is moderate compared to the drug trafficking problems the Afghan or North and West African governments face. However, countries in the Western Balkans “face a crisis domestic institutional illegitimacy” from systemic corruption at all government levels, an outcome of state collusion with drug trafficking and criminal organizations.³⁴ NATO and the EU have invested substantial political, military, and economic capital in the region for two decades.

³² Olson, Pammy. "Europe's Crime Capitals." *Forbes Online*. Forbes Magazine, 15 July 2008. Web. Apr. 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/2008/07/15/europe-capitals-crime-forbeslife-cx_po_0715crime.html>.

³³ Thibault Le Pichon. "The Transatlantic Cocaine Market: Research Paper." Ed. UNODC, Regional Office in Senegal and the Integrated Programme and Oversight Branch of. Senegal: UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011.

³⁴ Subotic, Jelena. "Perceptions of Legitimacy in the Western Balkans." Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Working Paper: The Working Group on the Western Balkans.

Thus, by extension, NATO and EU legitimacy are inextricably linked to the legitimacy of the Balkan governments they support. In a speech with Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Đukanovic, NATO's Secretary General Rasmussen reflected the widely held sentiment in Brussels that Euro-Atlantic integration should be a strategic imperative for Western Balkan governments because "the security conditions for democracy [are] so closely tied to integration."³⁵

"Every State has its Mafia, but only in Serbia does a Mafia have its State"

The Balkans have historically been at the focal point illicit trafficking networks, serving as the primary geopolitical and economic hub between Europe, Turkey, the Middle East, and Russia.³⁶ For hundreds of years, the region became the frontline of the constant struggle for control between the Ottoman Turkish Empire and European Christian kingdoms. Historians have traced evidence of transnational organized crime in the Balkans back to the early 19th century Napoleonic era, when Greek criminals introduce commodities from the East into European ports, where sanctions against Napoleon's France caused commodity prices to skyrocket.³⁷ Through the Balkans Wars, both World Wars, and the Cold War, illicit trafficking networks dug their roots into the Balkans.

Yugoslavia during the Cold War flourished as the conduit for Soviet Bloc countries to

³⁵ Rasmussen, Anders Fogh and Milo Đukanovic. "Joint Press Point by Nato Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the Prime Minister of Montenegro, Milo Đukanović". 2013. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-9B901154-AE745327/natolive/opinions_99305.htm>.

³⁶ Antonopoulos, Georgios A. "The Balkans as a 'laboratory (for the Study) of Illegal Markets': Introduction to the Special Issue on 'Illegal Markets in the Balkans'." *Trends in Organized Crime* 11 (2008): 316.

³⁷ Antonopoulos 316

receive precious and contraband Western goods. Illicit markets were “highlighted, tolerated, or even politically sponsored” in this era.³⁸

Yugoslavia’s Balkan unity became tenuous following the Soviet Union’s dissolution in 1991. A politically uncertain future exacerbated by politicians stoking ethnic tensions to shore up political support sowed the seeds of war. The Balkans lived up to its reputation articulated by Winston Churchill as a “laboratory of history” that “produced more history than it could consume.”³⁹ NATO came face to face with this realization during its Operation Joint Endeavor in the Bosnian War in 1995 and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo in 1999. Traffickers that had perfected their operations during the Cold War now provided Milosevic’s Yugoslavia and other Balkan state governments with much-needed contraband supplies to bypass strict international sanctions. The international sanctions “were a boon to organized crime in the region.”⁴⁰ When the wars ended, traffickers, paramilitary fighters, and criminals maintained their government relationships in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Kosovo. NATO’s SFOR and KFOR forces in Bosnia and Kosovo respectively found that criminals that had flourished during the wars “found their way into” law enforcement, politics, and state security services, severely undermining fledgling governments’ security and legitimacy. A popular saying in Serbia summed up the country’s systemic drug and criminal network problem: “every state has its mafia, but only in Serbia the mafia has its state.”⁴¹

³⁸ Antonopoulos 317

³⁹ Dimitras, Panayote. "Writing and Rewriting History in the Context of Balkan Nationalisms." *Southeast European Politics* (2000): 41-59.

⁴⁰ Costa, Antonio Maria. "Crime and Its Impact on the Balkans and Affected Countries." UNODC Report, 2008. 51.

⁴¹ Mladenovic, Nemanja. "The Failed Divorce of Serbia's Government and Organized Crime." *Journal of International Affairs* 66.1 (Fall/Winter 2012): 196

The Balkans: A Drug Trafficker's Conduit

The Balkans region is now the main conduit for trafficking heroin from Afghanistan and cocaine from South America to Europe, the largest drug consumer market in the world. The primary drug pipeline for heroin goes from Afghanistan through Iran and Turkey to the Balkans, then onto European consumer markets. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that about \$30 billion in heroin make it to Western Europe, an amount larger than most Balkan countries' GDP's.⁴² Balkan countries have relatively low drug consumption rates themselves, suggesting that the flow of heroin and cocaine "has been conducted by highly organized groups determined to command the highest return for their product," as opposed to a diffuse network of couriers "who may 'spill' some of the heroin" into the local markets for quick, easy money.⁴³

Zoran Djindjic and the Political-Criminal Nexus

This is not merely a public health or domestic law enforcement problem. Drug trafficking organizations pose a serious threat to the tenuous peace and fragile democracies in the Balkans for which NATO and the broader international community risked lives and invested billions of dollars. One acute example of drug trafficking organizations' destabilizing impact on the region is Zoran Djindjic's assassination.

Djindjic was Serbia's first democratically elected prime minister, who campaigned as a staunch opponent of Slobodan Milosevic on a platform of pro-democratic reform and

⁴² Costa 63

⁴³ Costa 59

European integration. During the Serbian-Kosovo war, Djindjic took the international community by surprise by asking NATO to “facilitate the return of up to a thousand Yugoslav security troops to Kosovo,” then appealing to U.S., Russian, and British leaders “to request their intervention in ‘the crisis in Kosovo.’”⁴⁴ He authored one of the first viable peace proposals to settle the Serbian-Kosovar dispute, proposing a federalized system of two distinct autonomous ethnic communities.⁴⁵ In short, Djindjic was represented the pro-reform flag around Serbs could rally to step out of the shadow of the Milosevic era.

On March 11, 2003, Zvezdan Jovanovic, a former Serbian special forces operative stopped the politician’s promising future political career short when he assassinated him with a high caliber sniper rifle.⁴⁶ The assassin was affiliated with a criminal network known as the Zemun gang, who saw Djindjic’s efforts to reform Serbia’s political system a threat to their profitable drug trafficking operations. The Zemun gang’s primary source of revenue was drug trafficking. Djindjic had previously adopted a Law on the Fight against Organized Crime, attempted to clean the BIA from ties to drug trafficking, and established a Special Prosecutor for Organized Crime.⁴⁷ During the course of the investigation surrounding Djindjic’s assassination, prosecutors established that “leading members of the Zemun gang underwent special training courses” by Serbia’s Security Intelligence Agency, the BIA, and the gang received special protection from the agency

⁴⁴ Matic, Vladimir. *Serbia after Djindjic: Can Invigorated Reforms Be Sustained?* : Public International Law & Policy Group, 2003.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Mladenovic 199

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

during its drug smuggling operations.⁴⁸ Serbia's Special Court for Organized Crime sentenced Zvezdan and 11 other men to a total of 378 years of prison in 2005 for their involvement in Djindjic's assassination.⁴⁹ One of the 11, Milorad Ulemek, was the former head of BIA under Milosevic. Ulemek had "strong personal ties with the criminal underground in Serbia" to conduct smuggling operations for Milosevic after the international community imposed sanctions on Serbia (then known as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).⁵⁰ Many of Djindjic's former associates speculate that the Zemun gang was not solely responsible, and that the true masterminds of the assassination plot were never uncovered.⁵¹ Much of that speculation falls on the BIA, which "remains a serious potential obstacle to reforms and the fight against organized crime."⁵² If the political sponsors responsible for Djindjic's assassination are not uncovered and indicted, the bullet that killed Djindjic "will continue to rip through weak Serbian institutions."⁵³

A Decade of Progress Hangs in the Balance

Nine years after Djindjic's assassination and nearly 20 years after NATO's first intervention in Bosnia, it is important to point out the considerable progress Balkan countries have made in combating low intensity conflict risks, organized crime, and drug trafficking. Many attribute the progress to the attractive end-goal of NATO and EU accession. NATO has tremendous influence over countries in the Balkans seeking European integration. Croatia is set for EU accession in the summer of 2013, following

⁴⁸ Anastasijevic 2

⁴⁹ Mladenovic 195-196

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ GMF Blog: Expert Commentary. "Ten Years after His Assassination, Zoran Djindjic's Legacy Lives On." German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2013.

⁵² Anastasijevic 3

⁵³ Mladenovic 196

NATO accession in 2009. The Croatian government has “shown significant progress in suppressing organized crime,” and is the sole Balkan country besides Romania with a national strategy to combat organized crime – all moves spurred by the promise of accession.⁵⁴ In April 2013, Serbia and Kosovo signed a landmark agreement brokered by the EU where Serbia would accept the Kosovar government’s authority in exchange for Kosovo granting a measure of autonomy to the ethnic Serbs living in Northern Kosovo.⁵⁵ Though the deal was EU-brokered, both negotiating parties incorporated NATO into their strategic calculus. The Serb side only moved forward on the negotiations after assurances from NATO that their security forces would not enter northern Kosovo, demonstrating NATO’s continued influence in the region.⁵⁶ Serbia’s end goal is EU accession, without which there would likely be no deal.⁵⁷

Reform and integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions demonstrate progress in the Balkans, but presently they are obscured by the systemic government corruption fostered by drug trafficking and organized crime. Optimists for the region point the surprisingly low conventional crime statistics, some Balkan countries have lower homicide and armed robbery rates than Western European countries. However, the absence of conventional crime is coupled with pervasive organized crime, meaning organized crime in the Balkans is highly organized and “involves a limited number of well-connected

⁵⁴ Chonkova, Blagovesta, Andras Horvath, and Gorana Mistic. *Dynamics of European Migration. A Comparative Assessment of Croatia, Bulgaria and Hungary*. Rep. Central European University: Center for Policy Studies. Print. Policy Research Reports.

⁵⁵ “Balkan breakthrough: Serbia and Kosovo agree at last”

⁵⁶ Mottesty, N. "Belgrade Received Guarantees from Nato." *In Serbia*. 2013.
<<http://inserbia.info/news/2013/04/belgrade-received-guarantees-from-nato/>>

⁵⁷ Gvosdev, Nikolas K. "Kosovo and Serbia Make a Deal: Debalkanizing the Balkans." *Foreign Affairs* (2013).

individuals” and groups.⁵⁸ Another crime that must be taken into account is corruption. This crime is far outside of NATO’s purview but inextricably linked to NATO’s state and capacity-building, peacekeeping, and development operations. Corruption in the Balkans is systemic and a crucial predicate crime to drug trafficking. In April 2013, for example, the Bosnian Federation President Zviko Budimir was sentenced to prison for accepting bribes to pardon drug traffickers from prison.⁵⁹ He was one of 18 officials arrested in a police operation investigating the group for “abuse of office, illegal intermediation, receiving and giving bribes, organized crime and drug trafficking.”⁶⁰ This severely undermined the Bosnian public’s trust in the federal government, already weak from contentiously political divisions between the Bosniak Muslim, Croat, and Serb populations.⁶¹

Balkan drug trafficking networks’ operations are not relegated to the Balkans. The ‘Saric gang’ demonstrates the degree to which Balkan drug trafficking groups can be organized on a global scale and their negative impact on state legitimacy. On October 17th, 2009, Uruguayan maritime police intercepted a yacht carrying over 2.7 tons of cocaine. The yacht was destined for Montenegro, 9,000 miles away across the Atlantic Ocean and through the Mediterranean Sea. The shipment was to be smuggled into Northern Europe where the shipment had a street value of over \$170 million.⁶² Darko Saric, a Serbian national, had orchestrated trafficking operations such as this one in collusion with South

⁵⁸ Costa

⁵⁹ "Bosnian Federation President Detained for Bribery." EuroNews 2013.

⁶⁰ YahooNews. "President Arrested in Bosnia Corruption Crackdown." 2013.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² "Darko Saric's Gang Members Admit Guilt." *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*. 27 Apr. 2012. Web. <<http://www.reportingproject.net/occrp/index.php/en/ccwatch/cc-watch-briefs/1493-darko-sarics-gang-members-admit-guilt>>.

American drug traffickers for years before a shipment this large could be traced back to his gang. The operation taking on Saric required coordination by Argentinian, Uruguayan, and Serbian law enforcement, Serbian intelligence services, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, demonstrating the need for coordination across national, functional, jurisdictional, and geographic planes.⁶³

State Collusion with Drug Traffickers

Intrinsically, the Saric gang's operations are not a serious threat to regional stability or relevant to NATO's activity in the Balkans. The real threat stems from Saric's capacity to corrupt government officials and undermine state legitimacy.⁶⁴ This is critical challenge for the EU and NATO as these states move towards accession, particularly for a state such as Montenegro or Kosovo, which organized crime expert Moises Naim labeled "mafia states."⁶⁵ NATO and the EU should be reticent to accept new members with such flagrant ties to organized crime and drug traffickers to maintain the democratic and legal values that uphold their institutions. Yet in NATO's case, there is no explicit mechanism with which to accept or deny a member based on government links to corruption or illicit networks.

Nineteen people were indicted in the wake of the Saric gang's drug seizure. Six, including Saric, are still at large primarily due to Montenegrin state collusion with Saric.

⁶³ "Balkan Warrior Expanded to Two New Suspects." *B92*. TANJUG, 21 Jan. 2010. Web. May 2012. <<http://www.b92.net/eng/news/crimes-article.php?yyyy=2010>>.

⁶⁴ Peters, Gretchen. *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin Is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda*. New York, NY: Thomas Dunne Books, 2009.

⁶⁵ Naim, Moises. "Mafia States: Organized Crime Takes Office." *Foreign Affairs* May/June 2012 (2012).

Three of the six indicted were released from Montenegrin custody within days of being detained. Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Dukanovic offered Saric expedited Montenegrin citizenship to escape Serbia's jurisdiction, giving credence to Serbian allegations of "Montenegrin state collusion with the Saric network."⁶⁶ In 2009, PriceWaterhouseCoopers audited Dukanovic's family-owned Prva Bank and found that Saric used the bank to launder significant portions of his nearly \$5 billion drug money (compared to Montenegro's GDP of 4.3 billion⁶⁷).⁶⁸ In March 2013, Dukanovic visited NATO Headquarters and Secretary General Rasmussen. Rasmussen called Dukanovic "an important partner for the Alliance and an important aspirant to NATO membership."⁶⁹

Albanian drug trafficking organizations extend through Europe and across the Atlantic in the United States. Albanian drug traffickers operate extensively in Austria, Hungary, and Switzerland, where they control 80% of the heroin market.⁷⁰ Like their Serbian counterparts, Albanian drug trafficking organizations expanded their smuggling scale and scope during the 1990's, funneling portions of their drug money to Bosnian Muslims and Kosovar Albanians fighting the Serbs.⁷¹ As such, they are considered "war heroes" and maintain government contacts to this day. Any drug traffickers affiliated with the

⁶⁶ Albertini, Matteo. "The Adriatic Connection: Mafia Links From Italy to the Western Balkans." *Balkananalysis.com*. 1 June 2011. Web.

⁶⁷ Global Finance, 2013

⁶⁸ MacKean, Liz 2012; Saric Continues Smuggling Cocaine from Montenegro." *Blic Online*. 21 Apr. 2010. Web. May 2012. <<http://english.blic.rs/Society/6320/Saric-continues-smuggling-cocaine-from-Montenegro>>.

⁶⁹ Anastasijevic 5

⁷⁰ "Nato's Role in Kosovo". 2013. NATO. <<http://www.aco.nato.int/kfor/about-us/natos-role-in-kosovo.aspx>>.

⁷¹ Anastasijevic 5

⁷¹ Bjelopera, Jerome P., and Kristin M. Finklea. United States. CRS Report for Congress. *Organized Crime: An Evolving Challenge for U.S. Law Enforcement*. Cong. Bill. Congressional Research Service, 6 Jan. 2012. Web. <<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41547.pdf>>. 8.

smuggling operations in the 1990's are punished symbolically if they are caught, then often quickly released to go straight back to drug trafficking.⁷²

Dick Marty, the Council of Europe's rapporteur, accused current Kosovar Prime Minister Hashim Thaci of involvement in organ and drug trafficking during the Kosovo conflict in 1999 in a scathing report to the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly.⁷³ Thaci was a commander of the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) fighting Serb forces for Kosovar independence. The report states that counter-drug agencies in "at least five countries have named Hashim Thaci...as having exerted violent control over the trade in heroin and other narcotics."⁷⁴ NATO intelligence analysis reports produced during the 1999 conflict referred to Thaci as "the most dangerous of the KLA's criminal bosses."⁷⁵ Serbia is still vulnerable to "the tugs and pulls of nationalism" articulated by a divided and corrupted national elite.⁷⁶ Albanian drug traffickers and residual KLA ties to drug trafficking in Kosovo's government will remain a challenge that NATO and partnering international institutions must address. While the EU has more extensive jurisdiction and sway over anti-corruption and police activities in an aspiring member, NATO must acknowledge the systemic problems caused by state collusion with drug traffickers and incorporate appropriate reforms into their accession decision-making process.

⁷² Stojarová, Věra. 'Political Parties and Representation of Interests in Contemporary European Democracies'. *Organized Crime in the Western Balkans*. Web. 94.

⁷³ Marty, Dick. Inhuman Treatment of People and Illicit Trafficking in Human Organs in Kosovo. Parliamentary Assembly, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights: Council of Europe, 2010.

⁷⁴ Marty 16

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Matic, 2003

NATO in Afghanistan

Framing the Problem

Afghanistan represents a massive failure in counter-narcotics policy for NATO.

Afghanistan produced 93% of the world's heroin under the noses of up to 140,000 ISAF coalition forces under NATO control at the height of international involvement.⁷⁷ ISAF was NATO's first mission outside the Euro-Atlantic region, and represents "the most complex mission" the Alliance has ever undertaken.⁷⁸ NATO officials face difficulty in extracting cohesive strategies from NATO members in crucial areas such as narcotics trafficking and corruption.⁷⁹ Political cracks and fissures developed within the Alliance from varying commitment levels. Lawmakers in Germany, Italy, and Spain refused to deploy their troops to Afghanistan's dangerous southern regions, leaving American, Canadian, British, Dutch, and Danish soldiers to do a bulk of the fighting.⁸⁰ Diplomatic infighting, varying NATO members' level of involvement, and the growing sentiment of 'mission fatigue' from a decade of deployment have prevented NATO from operationalizing a unified counter-narcotics policy between each member's Provisional Reconstruction team jurisdiction.⁸¹ Drug traffickers now collude with the insurgents and have corrupted all echelons of the Afghan government, posing a direct threat to both NATO troops and the success of NATO's decade-long mission in Afghanistan.

⁷⁷ BBC. "Q&A: Foreign Forces in Afghanistan." BBC News Asia 2013.

⁷⁸ Peters 213

⁷⁹ Peters 213

⁸⁰ Benitez, 2010; Peters 213

⁸¹ Gallis, Peter, Vincent Morelli. "Nato in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance." Ed. Service, Congressional Research. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2008. 1-34.

In the wake of the attacks perpetrated on U.S. soil on September 11th, 2001, NATO invoked Article V for the first time in its history. However, the U.S. initially went into Afghanistan independently of NATO. On December 21st, 2001, the United Nations passed Resolution 1386 deploying an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Afghanistan under American leadership.⁸² The U.S. military and intelligence apparatuses that entered Afghanistan in 2001 were not unfamiliar with the close links between narcotics, stability and insurgency. The U.S. had been combating drug trafficking through foreign aid and military assistance since President Richard Nixon first declared a “War on Drugs” in 1971.⁸³ The Central Intelligence Agency conducted extensive anti-communist covert operations with Laotian Hmong groups during the Vietnam War and the Gulbuddin Hekmatyar insurgents during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, both groups intimately tied to drug trafficking.⁸⁴ U.S. military intelligence, CIA, and DEA operatives became heavily involved in anti-drug operations in Colombia, including hunting and killing the infamous cocaine kingpin Pablo Escobar in 1993.⁸⁵

U.S. and ISAF forces entering Afghanistan in 2001 faced a wholly new phenomenon, a product of Afghanistan’s unique history with opium. Opium poppy plants, *Papaver somniferum L.*, are hardy and durable plants whose production seems to “thrive on war economies and poverty.”⁸⁶ It requires little watering, fetches a high price and doesn’t rot in storage, making it an ideal crop for Afghan farmers. Milky sap is extracted from the

⁸² UN Security Council. "Resolution 1386, Adopted by the Security Council at Its 4443rd Meeting, on 20 December 2001." United Nations Security Council. New York, NY 2001.

⁸³ "Thirty Years of America's Drug War: A Report". 2013. Public Broadcasting Service. <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/cron/>>.

⁸⁴ Chauvy 22

⁸⁵ Bowden, Mark. Killing Pablo: The Hunt for the World's Greatest Outlaw. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2001.

⁸⁶ Chauvy 23

poppy flowers, which organically become opium or can be chemically refined into heroin.⁸⁷ The price of this commodity rises exponentially the further from Afghanistan it is smuggled. A kilogram of opium can sell in Afghanistan for roughly \$200. If it is refined into 'Number 4' heroin (92% pure) can sell for \$7,000 in Turkey, \$12,000 in Austria, \$40,000 in the U.S. and over \$60,000 in Norway.⁸⁸

Afghanistan's opium production "is the direct outcome of Cold War rivalries and conflicts waged by proxies who helped develop a thriving narcotic economy in the country."⁸⁹ The country became a producer after Maoist China eradicated its thriving opium industry. Supply expanded south and east out of China, from the dense jungles of Laos to the rugged mountains of Central Asia to become the so-called "golden-crescent" of opium production. As states with strong central governments, such as Turkey and Iran, banned opium production, Afghanistan picked up the slack on production to become the number one producer and exporter of opium in the world. This all changed under the harsh rule of the Taliban, the first Afghan government strong enough to impose and actually implement a ban on poppy farming. The UN International Drug Control Program (UNDCP, and now the Office on Drugs and Crime, or UNODC) reported a 91% reduction in total poppy area in Afghanistan in 2001 compared to 2000 (a study conducted prior to the 9/11 attacks).⁹⁰ U.S. narcotics experts who visited Afghanistan prior to the 9/11 attacks concluded that the Taliban's ban "wiped out the world's largest

⁸⁷ "Thirty Years of America's Drug War: A Report"

⁸⁸ Anastasijevic, Dejan. *Organized Crime in the Western Balkans*. Humsec.eu, Nov. 2006. Web. <http://www.humsec.eu/cms/fileadmin/user_upload/humsec/Workin_Paper_Series/Working_Paper_Anastasijevic.pdf>.

⁸⁹ Chauvy 23

⁹⁰ Afghanistan: Annual Opium Poppy Survey 2001. Islamabad, Pakistan: United Nations International Drug Control Programme, 2001.

crop in less than a year,” but expected the Taliban to face “political problems” when poppy farmers faced bankruptcy and starvation as a result of the strict ban.⁹¹

2001 – 2003: A Reemergence and Rise in Poppy Cultivation

From 2001 to 2003, the U.S.-led ISAF military forces retained a “laissez faire” attitude towards opium poppy farming because the Taliban had nearly wiped the practice out. After the Taliban was ousted, farmers returned to producing their reliable and highly profitable opium poppies. Coalition forces initially turned a blind eye to the revamped poppy production. First, the pre-NATO ISAF was a “fragile political coalition” forged to tackle a ‘war on terror’; extending that war to drugs could upset the fragile political balance.⁹² Second, the coalition forces acknowledged that success “required good local allies,” which would be “unlikely to provide either support or intelligence to those who are destroying their business.”⁹³ U.S. military intelligence and CIA officers still “work closely” with a number of drug traffickers to gain intelligence on terrorist and Taliban groups.⁹⁴ Additionally, initial U.S. policies accelerated the expansion of opium poppy production. U.S. forces gave local Afghan warlords “several hundred million dollars” in an effort to “buy their support in the ‘war on terror.’”⁹⁵ This flooded the Afghan money market. Afghanistan’s currency against the dollar was halved in two months and a weak Afghan central bank had few foreign currency reserves to prop the currency up. This gave incentives for warlords and Afghan civilians alike to put their money in the only profitable investment in the Afghan economy: opium poppy farming. Excess cash was

⁹¹ Crossette

⁹² Goodhand, Jonathon. "Corrupting or Consolidating the Peace? The Drugs Economy and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Afghanistan." *International Peacekeeping* 15.3 (2008): 409

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ Peters 186

⁹⁵ Goodhand 2012

“recycled into loans to farmers to finance the next spring’s poppy crop.”⁹⁶ Early U.S. military efforts thus ironically ‘primed the pump’ for a rejuvenated opium poppy industry that later bankrolled Taliban operations against NATO coalition forces. By 2003 when NATO assumed control of ISAF, Afghanistan’s estimated opium income was \$4.8 billion, compared with \$2.8 billion in foreign aid dispersed in Afghanistan.⁹⁷

2003 – 2008: Trial and Error Policy Failures Foster a Thriving Poppy Industry

NATO assumed leadership of ISAF in 2003 when it established a permanent base of operations in Afghanistan. The Bonn Agreement in 2002 and the Afghan Compact of 2006 backing reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan forced counter-narcotics to the top of the policy agenda for the first time.⁹⁸ Policymakers realized after two years that “narcotics production and counter-narcotics policies in Afghanistan” were of critical importance, “not only for the control of drugs there, but also for the security, reconstruction, and rule of law efforts in Afghanistan.”⁹⁹ The North Atlantic Council gave NATO a mandate which included “the essential elements of the task of stabilizing and rebuilding the country: train the Afghan army, police, and judiciary; support the government in counter-narcotics efforts; develop a market infrastructure; and suppress the Taliban.”¹⁰⁰ ISAF under NATO consequently spearheads both military *and* civilian post-conflict reconstruction efforts (an important element in NATO’s New Strategic Concept). It is the only NATO mission to explicitly outline a role in counter-narcotics.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Peters 9

⁹⁸ Goodhand 2008, 409

⁹⁹ Felbab-Brown, Vanda. Testimony before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, on 21 October 2009. As quoted in “US Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan,” Brookings Institution website.

¹⁰⁰ Sandajaran 50-51

ISAF's principal mechanism to rebuild the country is the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) composed of military and civilian personnel, with individual NATO governments running separate PRTs divided by region. There are "significant differences in how individual NATO governments run their PRTs," which caused immense problems in NATO's ability to effectively combat the narcotics trade. This led to a phenomenon known as "the balloon effect" where if one PRT sector effectively countered opium poppy production or trade, it would increase in another PRT, as squeezing a balloon in one place makes it expand in another.¹⁰¹

NATO entered Afghanistan using a concept of "lead nations" for functional roles in Afghanistan's reconstruction. When United Kingdom's Prime Minister Tony Blair justified the intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, he "gave great prominence to the need to control the narcotics trade out of the country."¹⁰² The United Kingdom was thus tasked as the lead nation for international counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan under NATO's auspices.¹⁰³

The UK initially implemented a "compensated eradication" program in Afghanistan, sensitive to the potential political blowback of "eliminating the rural population's livelihood."¹⁰⁴ They promised farmers \$350 for each farm section eradicated and apportioned \$71.75 million to the program. It was a resounding failure, plagued by

¹⁰¹ Gallis 2; Debusmann, Bernd. "The Great Debate: Drug Wars and the Balloon Effect." Reuters 2009.

¹⁰² Wardak, John Braithwaite and Ali. "Crime and War in Afghanistan." Centre for Crime and Justice (14 December 2012): 192

¹⁰³ Felbab-Brown 190

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

corruption and moral hazard on the ground level.¹⁰⁵ The Taliban then began to fund their operations against NATO with money from the opium poppy trade, and NATO forces shifted to an aggressive interdiction strategy from 2004-2009. President Bush based this new counter-narcotics strategy for ISAF forces on five pillars: poppy eradication, drug interdiction, judicial reform measures, public awareness campaigns, and economic and agricultural development assistance.¹⁰⁶

Eradication was aimed at curbing drug production to eliminate a source of income for the Taliban and introduce Afghan farmers to alternative crops. It had the opposite result, both increasing opium poppy production and allowing the Taliban “to integrate itself back into the Afghan drug trade” after years of refuge across the border in Pakistan. Eradication also compounded the opium supply to only those drug traffickers powerful enough to prevent eradication in their region of control, making the trafficking networks much more organized, responsive to ISAF policies, and vertical. By 2008, the UNODC estimated that “about twelve people control the majority of the Afghan opium market.” In effect, the strategy allowed the criminals to consolidate power over supply chains and insurgents to team up with the criminals against the common ISAF enemy.¹⁰⁷

Emerging Drug Trafficking and Insurgency Alliances

ISAF forces could only implement eradication policies in the areas under its control. Any temporary supply reduction was countered by increased production in Taliban-controlled

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Feinstein, Dianne, Charles Grassley. U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan. Washington, DC: Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Peters, Gretchen. Seeds of Terror: How Heroin Is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda. New York, NY: Thomas Dunne Books, 2009: 3.

territories. In 2008, for example, 98% of poppy “was cultivated in insurgent-held areas.”¹⁰⁸ NATO-trained Afghan National Police and Army units (ANP and ANA respectively) carried out the eradications, alienating the rural populations and farmers from the central governments.¹⁰⁹ Local tribal elites, often involved in the drug trade themselves, agreed to cooperate in eradication efforts simply to eliminate competition in the drug trade and consolidate their control of the markets.¹¹⁰ Eradication efforts increased the flow of opium to farmers in Taliban-heavy districts “from some \$240 million in 2004 to \$580 million in 2010, or double in both absolute numbers and share of total opium production,” an amount more significant when considering the GDP per capita of Afghanistan is only \$1,000.¹¹¹ The CIA estimated that Afghanistan’s 2010 poppy crop could produce 650 tons of heroin, equivalent to \$32.5 billion in wholesale prices in the European markets.¹¹²

The Taliban have become inextricably linked to drug trafficking. By 2009, the U.S. DEA estimated that the Taliban received 70% of its funding from the drug trade.¹¹³

Policymakers should approach this statistic with caution, as the findings are notoriously difficult to measure or confirm and the Taliban’s drug trade profit traditionally came from taxing opium-producing farmers and drug traffickers rather than farming or trafficking themselves.¹¹⁴ From a counter-terrorism perspective, al Qaeda leaders did not “move large quantities of drugs themselves, and there was “scant evidence of an

¹⁰⁸ Peters 4

¹⁰⁹ Felbab-Brown, Vanda 2012

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ Veuger, Stan. "When the U.S. Cracks Down on Afghan Heroin, It Aids the Taliban." Forbes 2013.

¹¹² Anastasijevic

¹¹³ NPR. "Heroin, the Taliban and the 'Seeds of Terror'". National Public Radtion, 2009. <<http://m.npr.org/story/103957098>>.

¹¹⁴ Peters 15

organized network involving their leaders in the drug trade.”¹¹⁵ As long as the degree to which the Taliban involves itself directly in the drug trade is unclear, policymakers should not label the situation a ‘narco-insurgency’ and treat the Taliban and drug trafficking as one in the same.¹¹⁶ Major General Gurganus, commander of the U.S. Marine Expeditionary Force in Afghanistan, said in a speech to the Atlantic Council in 2013, “it is hard to differentiate between criminal activity and insurgent activity,” as interests often overlap, and cautioned the need to define the insurgency as a pure amalgamation of narcotics and insurgency.¹¹⁷ However, it is clear that the Taliban receives a significant portion of its funds from drug trafficking and closely colludes with drug traffickers. A CIA official told the U.S. Senate Drug Caucus that “drug trafficking organizations act as intelligence collection officers for the Taliban,” operating in areas without a Taliban presence and reporting on NATO/ISAF movements.¹¹⁸ Then-U.S. Central Commander General David Petraeus stated, “drug money has been the oxygen in the air that allows these [Taliban] groups to operate” in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2010.¹¹⁹ In 2009, the DEA dismantled 25 heroin-processing labs in Afghanistan, and all of them “had ties to the Taliban.”¹²⁰ One raid on a drug smuggler’s lair yielded the drug trafficker’s satellite telephones, which U.S. intelligence analysts discovered “had been used repeatedly to call suspected terrorist cells in western Europe, Turkey, and the Balkans.”¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Peters 17

¹¹⁶ Wardak 191

¹¹⁷ (Gurganus, 2013 #153) first

¹¹⁸ Feinstein 23

¹¹⁹ Petraeus, David. Testimony of Commander of U.S. Central Command, before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 16, 2010.

¹²⁰ Shoemaker, Sheldon. Section Chief, DEA Congressional Affairs, December 7, 2009. Senate Report 2.

¹²¹ Peters 3

President Obama's Shift in Policy

Upon entering office, President Obama conducted a strategic review of counter-narcotics policies in Afghanistan and decided to cease U.S.-led ISAF poppy eradication efforts.¹²² Drug trafficking grew to constitute 25% of Afghanistan's GDP under the eradication strategy, lending credence to the widely held sentiment in the White House that the policy failed.¹²³ Shifting from eradication broke with "30 years of counter-narcotics policies that focused on ineffective forced eradication of illicit crops," a strategy honed in the mountains of Colombia two decades earlier.¹²⁴ Richard Holbrooke, then the Special Ambassador to Afghanistan and Pakistan, called poppy eradication "a waste of money," and said it "might destroy some acreage, but it didn't reduce the amount of money the Taliban got by one dollar. It just helped the Taliban. So [ISAF] is going to phase out eradication."¹²⁵ Obama shifted ISAF's policy towards interdicting only Taliban-linked traffickers and eradicating only poppy farms linked to the Taliban, while simultaneously implementing "alternative livelihood efforts" for Afghan farmers.¹²⁶

Obama's new policies face substantial challenges. First, no alternative livelihood is as profitable and sustainable as poppy farming. Farmers can earn up to \$203 per kilogram of harvested opium, compared with \$1.25 cents for harvested rice.¹²⁷ Farmers see international subsidies as temporary with the highly publicized NATO drawdown from Afghanistan in 2014. Therefore, as the "international military development spending

¹²² Feinstein 20

¹²³ Nordland

¹²⁴ Felbab-Brown 2012 189

¹²⁵ "U.S. to shift approach to Afghanistan drug trade." Associated Press, June 28, 2009

¹²⁶ Felbab-Brown 189

¹²⁷ Nordland, Rod. "Production of Opium by Afghans Is up Again." The New York Times April 15, 2013 2013.

declines with the NATO withdrawal in 2014,” poppy farming will increase.¹²⁸ Poppy cultivation rose from 131,000 hectares to 154,000 hectares in 2012, an 18% increase.¹²⁹ Much of the increase is in Taliban-controlled areas because selective eradication efforts based on Taliban links simply pushed poppy production back into Taliban-controlled areas. The interdiction policy is pushing drug traffickers to solidify and maintain links with Afghan government officials, prone to corruption and powerful enough to prevent raids on their allies’ opium caches and poppy farms.¹³⁰

Anti-drug trafficking efforts are conducted on an ad hoc basis with no cogent ISAF-wide strategy or coordinated policies. Following the concept of lead nations, Britain was placed in charge of dealing with the drug trafficking problem, Italy was placed in charge of building up Afghanistan’s justice system, and Germany was given the responsibility of building up Afghanistan’s National Police (ANP). These nations had “no framework for coordination” among their specific functions.¹³¹ This was exacerbated by the fact that levels of commitment were highly skewed and law enforcement training functions were compartmentalized, clearly manifested in the case of the ANP. Germany “got off to a slow start” reforming the 62,000 strong national force, sending just 40 police officers who trained cadets to a Kabul police academy. At the same time and independently of Germany, the U.S. allocated over \$4 billion for police equipment alone for the 62,000-strong ANP. The U.S. also brought in government contractors and retired police officers to train the ANP, dwarfing the number of German trainers and failing to coordinate with

¹²⁸ *ibid.*

¹²⁹ Veuger

¹³⁰ Felbab-Brown 2012 194

¹³¹ Peters 187

the Italians on the judicial reform efforts or the British on drug enforcement laws.¹³²

When the DEA and State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) inspected newly graduated ANP officers, they found that most graduates "were incapable of carrying out even routine law enforcement work," and the police training programs are "chronically mismanaged."¹³³ Rather than coordinating among the NATO partners, INL and DEA officials simply began their own counter-narcotics program, training a specialized and closely-vetted Afghan Counter Narcotics Police force (CNP), which addressed the weaknesses of standard training programs by dividing the unit into investigative and interdiction sections.¹³⁴ While this is certainly a step in the right direction, no efforts were made to transfer the CNP's successes into the ANP or the larger Afghan judicial system as NATO has no coordination mechanisms across its members designated regions or functions in regards to the drug problem. This perpetuates the serious and heavily interrelated problem of corruption.

Corruption: An Existential Threat to Afghanistan's Future

The Taliban may not have enough power to overthrow the weakly established Afghan federal government after the 2014 drawdown of NATO forces in Afghanistan. NATO will leave a residual force of advisors to ensure the decade of reconstruction progress will not collapse under the weight of a fully independent Afghan government. However, NATO and U.S. policymakers are considering a scenario in which the Afghan government's systemic corruption undermines its legitimacy to the point that it becomes essentially defunct, if still technically in place.

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ Peters 207

¹³⁴ Feinstein 28

The drug trade, the largest and most stable ‘industry’ in Afghanistan, fuels corruption. From a government perspective, corrupt public officials’ “involvement in the Afghan drug trade undermines the legitimacy of the state” and “drives segments of the population to side with insurgents.”¹³⁵ From the perspective of Afghan citizens, polls suggest, “while there is genuine fear of attack by the Taliban,” the threat from “criminal gangs, warlords, drug traffickers...corrupt police, and intertribal violence is actually greater.”¹³⁶ If the Afghan government cannot curb these threats and worse, even become a part of these threats, then the Taliban “offers some attraction in restoring a form of law.”¹³⁷

Associated Press correspondent Gretchen Peters, whose influential book *Seeds of Terror* was the culmination of a decade-long study of the Afghanistan-Pakistan drug trade, called “the spectacular incapacity of western law enforcement to disrupt the flow of money that is keeping [terror] networks afloat” the “single greatest failure in the war on terror.”¹³⁸ The corruption problem is monumental by any standards. UNODC Director Antonio Maria Costa estimated that Afghans paid \$2.5 billion in bribes per year, by coincidence “a similar revenue accrued by the opium trade” estimated at \$2.8 billion. Together, “drugs and bribes are the two largest income generators in Afghanistan: together they amount to about half the country’s (licit) GDP.”¹³⁹ Afghanistan’s government under Hamid Karzai has exacerbated the drug and corruption problems.

¹³⁵ Feinstein 40

¹³⁶ Ellwood, Tobias. *Stabilizing Afghanistan: Proposals for Improving Security, Governance, and Aid/Economic Development*: Atlantic Council of the United States, 2013.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ Peters xiii

¹³⁹ “*Corruption in Afghanistan*” U.N. Office of Drug and Crime, January 2010

Karzai has made dramatic public promises to tackle corruption but has thus far not followed up on his promises, often contributing to the corruption himself through his internal entanglements, familial and tribal ties, and his political debts and dependencies. He thus “often seeks to reverse such anticorruption efforts as indictments of powerful corrupt officials” and the anticorruption institutions the international community is supporting.¹⁴⁰ In 2007, President Karzai appointed Izzatullah Wasifi to be his anticorruption tsar. Two decades prior to this, Wasifi was convicted “for trying to sell \$2 million worth of heroin to an undercover officer in Caesar’s Palace, Las Vegas.” He waved off his crime and retained Karzai’s support by calling the incident “a youthful indiscretion.”¹⁴¹ Three years prior to this, counter-narcotics agents found nine metric tons of opium in the office of the provisional Helmand province governor Sher Mohammed Akhundzada. Before they could pursue criminal charges, “Karzai swiftly appointed him as a member of parliament, and he never faced an investigation.”¹⁴² Karzai counterattacks allegations of corruption, arguing that “the bigger corruption is the corruption in contracts” the NATO governments issued to private security firms.¹⁴³

Tackling corruption will be a monumental challenge. Private security firms are an integral component of NATO-led reconstruction efforts, but are vulnerable to Karzai’s public denunciations. NATO policymakers will have to walk a fine line of attempting to root out corruption while also shoring up Karzai’s regime to retain a semblance of government legitimacy. NATO and U.S. officials consequently predict a “decades-long

¹⁴⁰ Felbab-Brown 2012 194

¹⁴¹ Peters 186

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ Knox, Olivier. "Karzai Blames Nato, U.S. For Violence, Corruption in Afghanistan." Yahoo News 2012.

battle” against corruption in Afghanistan, as it corruption has embedded itself into the fabric of Afghan culture.¹⁴⁴ In 2010, NATO established the Task Force 2010, a task force led by U.S. Rear Admiral Kathleen Dussault charged with eliminating corruption in contracting. Task Force 2010 includes “exports in forensic auditing, criminal investigation, intelligence as well as contracting.”¹⁴⁵ While certainly a step in the right direction, the task force only has 22 members and does not address anticorruption policies outside of contracting.

Africa: Growing Threats to Euro-Atlantic Security

Operation Unified Protector: NATO’s Commitment to African Security Manifest

NATO’s drawdown in the Balkans and eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 does not mark the end of NATO’s presence in unstable regions outside the Euro-Atlantic region. NATO will perhaps be most actively involved in North and West African conflict in the future, if the past two years are any indication of the future. Any productive international involvement in North and West Africa must take into account the growing and pervasive security threats stemming from drug trafficking. Of West Africa, UNODC Director Antonio Maria Costa stated a fear that many translate to Afghanistan: “these states are not collapsing. They risk becoming shell-states: sovereign in name, but hollowed out from the inside by criminals in collusion with corruption officials in the

¹⁴⁴ "Nato Predicts Decades-Long Battle against Corruption in Afghanistan." Voice of America 2010.

¹⁴⁵ "New Task Force Stands up to Combat Contract Corruption". NATO ISAF website 2013.
<<http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/news/new-task-force-stands-up-to-combat-contract-corruption.html>>.

government and the security services. This not only jeopardizes their survival, it poses a serious threat to regional security because of the transnational nature of the crimes.”¹⁴⁶

NATO first became explicitly involved in this region during Operation Unified Protector in Libyan civil war, sparked by the ‘Arab Spring’ revolutions that swept across the Middle East and North Africa and aimed at ousting Libyan dictator Muammar al-Qaddafi from power. In February and March 2011, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions, arms embargoes, and a no-fly zone on Libya in response to Qaddafi’s efforts to quell what had become a full-fledged rebellion against his regime. On March 27, NATO officially took over efforts to police the arms embargo, patrol the no-fly zone, and protect civilians in Libya in Operation Unified Protector.¹⁴⁷ Unlike the Balkans or Afghanistan, this mission primarily centered on air and missile strikes, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance – not the long-term, “on-the-ground” responsibilities that entailed state capacity building in post-conflict Kosovo or Afghanistan.

Operation Serval: France’s Engagement in West Africa

Second came the French-led military intervention in the conflict between the Malian government and the Islamist and Tuareg militants. NATO was not involved in the operation, but nine NATO members supported the so-called Operation Serval. Concerns over Islamic extremism in Mali amplified in the wake of a terrorist attack on an Algerian gas field that left 37 hostages dead in 2012.¹⁴⁸ Then in January 2013, Islamic and Tuareg insurgents seized control of northern Mali. The Malian rebel group, the *Movement*

¹⁴⁶ “Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa” UNODC, 2009.

¹⁴⁷ Daalder, Ivo H., James G. Stavridis. "Nato’s Victory in Libya: The Right Way to Run an Intervention." *Foreign Affairs* 91.2 (2013): 2-7.

¹⁴⁸ Sundajaran 130

national pour la libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) allegedly has ties to terrorist groups including Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), *Ansar Dine*, and the *Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest* (MUJAO). It is difficult to ascertain the direct links between the MNLA and terrorists because the Malian government instigated or overinflated claims to attract Americans and Europeans in their support against the Islamist tribesmen.¹⁴⁹ However, the northern Tuaregs, who had “legitimate political grievances began working with hardened and armed extremists” since the Tuaregs could find no other sources of political or financial support, heightening cross-fertilization and cross-pollination of Islamic extremism.¹⁵⁰ Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs Amanda J. Dory testified before Congress that France’s efforts to support Mali were explicitly aimed at “shrinking AQIM’s safe haven,” lending significant credence to the claims that the MNLA and AQIM were collaborating closely. Then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called the efforts in Mali against AQIM “a necessary struggle.”¹⁵¹

From the outset of the French intervention, the African Union’s chairman Thomas Boni Yayi called for NATO support in Mali in January 2013 after initial fighting broke out, citing the danger posed by AQIM.¹⁵² While NATO regards the African Union as a key strategic partner, Secretary General Rasmussen quickly ruled out official NATO intervention. The “political, psychological trauma of Afghanistan,” and reluctance to

¹⁴⁹ Entous, Adam, Julian E. Barnes, Drew Hinshaw. "Mali Exposes Flaws in West's Security Plans." *The Wall Street Journal* 2013.

¹⁵⁰ "Mali's Lessons Inform Future Partnership Efforts, Officials Say." Ed. Database, FDCH Regulatory Intelligence. Washington, DC: Federal Document Clearing House.

¹⁵¹ Entous

¹⁵² BBC. "Nato Forces Needed in Mali, Says Au's Thomas Boni Yayi." *BBC News* 9 January 2013 2013.

once again “go into a conflict without a clear exit strategy” shaped NATO’s decision to stay out of the conflict.¹⁵³ Despite this, France’s efforts “run parallel” to NATO members’ strategic counter-terrorism objectives to eliminate northern Mali as an AQIM safe haven. As such, NATO members Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, the UK, and the U.S. have all committed air and logistical support to the French, leveraging their integrated command structures and interoperability from NATO.¹⁵⁴

Operation Unified Protector demonstrated NATO’s vested interest in preventing conflict and securing stability in the African states across the Mediterranean from its southern members. Mali represented a key NATO member’s interest curbing the tide of radical Islamist influence in West Africa, supported logistically by nine NATO members. The most prominent lesson transatlantic policymakers drew from these two operations is that Europe is increasingly attempt to take the lead on NATO missions, despite its continued overreliance on American hardware and firepower.¹⁵⁵ The conversations about France and Britain’s reliance on American aerial refueling capabilities or missile strike capabilities are wholly separate from the issue of drug trafficking. However, in conversations about NATO’s vested interest in North and West African security and stability, NATO policymakers would be remiss to ignore the pervasive threat of drug trafficking.

The Pervasive Security Threat of Drug Trafficking in West Africa

¹⁵³ "Nato Rules out Mali Role but Backs French Intervention." RFI English 1 February 2013; Entous

¹⁵⁴ Benitez, Jorge. Canadian Pullout Could Threaten Afghan Mission, Nato Officer Says. Washington, DC: Atlantic Council of the United States, 2010.

¹⁵⁵ Daalder 4

In the past decade, West Africa from Mauritania and Mali to Guinea Bissau “has emerged as a major hub in the global drug economy” for cocaine and increasingly heroin and synthetic drugs.¹⁵⁶ West Africa is a way station between Latin American cocaine suppliers and lucrative European markets. South American drug smugglers use West Africa for “strategic warehousing” of their goods prior to shipment north, and West African crime syndicates are expanding their reach into South America to gain control over the drugs at the point of entry to their supply routes. Drugs are smuggled into West African states south of the Sahel such as Guinea-Bissau or Ghana, and then transited north through Mauritania, Mali, Morocco, Algeria, and Libya to European markets. As in the cases of both the Balkans and Afghanistan, the drug trade is causing severe destabilizing impacts on regional security and development. Some West African states have as little institutional capacity as Afghanistan did prior to international intervention. And as in the case of both the Balkans and Afghanistan, drug trafficking money sometimes “outstrips” the budgets and even GDP’s of the states trying to combat them. Drug traffickers thus become a physical threat to the states’ authority, but also an indirect threat by fostering rampant corruption and undermining government trust and legitimacy.¹⁵⁷

The problem at first seemed to grow exponentially – from 2001 to 2006 annual cocaine seizures in the region increased from 273 kilograms to 14,579 kilograms. Seizures of large cocaine stashes (100+ kilograms) have “declined drastically” since then, however this is likely a function of traffickers adapting to techniques better suited to evade law

¹⁵⁶ Williams 4

¹⁵⁷Ntaryike, Divine. "Drug Trafficking Rising in Central Africa, Warns Interpol." Voice of America 8 September 2012.

enforcement rather than a function of net decreased trafficking.¹⁵⁸ Drug traffickers have left their indelible mark on Libya, where 80% of crime is drug-related and drug profits are finding their way into the pockets of new Libyan government officials.¹⁵⁹ NATO's mandate did not include aspects of post-conflict reconstruction or state building, and its mission officially ended when the Libyan National Transition Council took power of the country on October 23, 2011. NATO members are investing heavily in state-capacity building and development in Libya outside of the NATO framework, and drug trafficking presents a significant challenge to these efforts.

In West Africa, the UNODC expressed a fear that “insurgents and extremists through the region would be in a position to facilitate trafficking, thus drawing resources to their cause and increasing the potential for violence.”¹⁶⁰ These fears were realized in Nigeria where members of the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram were “increasingly involved in cocaine trafficking to raise money for their activities or were being bankrolled by the traffickers for support.”¹⁶¹ In Mali, insurgents and extremists in the Sahel “gain[ed] income from the trafficking of cocaine across the regions they control” to fund their takeover of northern Mali, which was further fostered by the illicit flow of an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 firearms from Libya to Mali after the Libyan civil war.¹⁶² AQIM is “heavily involved in the smuggling of narcotics” to fund its support activities in Mali and destabilizing operations in the wider West African region, including kidnapping and

¹⁵⁸ “Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa” 11

¹⁵⁹ Dettmer, Jamie. “Drug Use, Smuggling Increasing in Libya.” Voice of America March 6, 2013 March 6, 2013; Dumas

¹⁶⁰ “Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa” 9

¹⁶¹ Ntaryike

¹⁶² “Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa” 10

execution of Western civilians and government officials, assassinations, guerrilla-style raids, and suicide bombings of military and civilian targets. Once relegated to Morocco and Algeria, AQIM has expanded the scale and geographic scope of its operations with the lucrative profits from the narcotics trade, leading U.S. AFRCOM Commander General Carter Ham to describe AQIM as Al Qaeda's "richest faction."¹⁶³

NATO's drawdown in the Balkans and eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 does not mark the end of NATO's presence in unstable regions outside the Euro-Atlantic region. NATO will perhaps be most actively involved in North and West African conflict in the future, if the past two years are any indication of the future. Any productive international involvement in North and West Africa must take into account the growing and pervasive security threats stemming from drug trafficking. Of West Africa, UNODC Director Antonio Maria Costa stated a fear that many translate to Afghanistan: "these states are not collapsing. They risk becoming shell-states: sovereign in name, but hollowed out from the inside by criminals in collusion with corruption officials in the government and the security services. This not only jeopardizes their survival, it poses a serious threat to regional security because of the transnational nature of the crimes."¹⁶⁴

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¹⁶³ Masters, Jonathon. *Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Aqim)*: Council on Foreign Relations, 2013.

¹⁶⁴ "Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment." Vienna: UNODC, 2013: 1

most prominent lesson transatlantic policymakers drew from these two operations is that Europe is increasingly attempt to take the lead on NATO missions, despite its continued overreliance on American hardware and firepower.¹⁶⁵ The conversations about France and Britain's reliance on American aerial refueling capabilities or missile strike capabilities are wholly separate from the issue of drug trafficking. However, in conversations about NATO's vested interest in North and West African security and stability, NATO policymakers would be remiss to ignore the pervasive threat of drug trafficking.

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¹⁶⁵ Daalder 4

¹⁶⁶ Williams 4

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¹⁶⁷ Ntaryike

¹⁶⁸ UNODC 2013

¹⁶⁹ Dettmer; Dumas

¹⁷⁰ UNODC 2013

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Drug Trafficking: A Multi-Dimensional Threat

The Crime-Terror Nexus

The conflicts in Mali and Afghanistan are emblematic of a potentially growing threat called the “crime-terror nexus,” where terrorist groups and criminal groups interact, collaborate, or adopt each others’ operations in some form to achieve their goals. For NATO to succeed in the realm of counter-terrorism, it must recognize the potential for terrorist and criminal operations to overlap. Strategically, government efforts to combat

¹⁷¹ Ntaryike

¹⁷² UNODC 2013

¹⁷³ Masters

criminal and terrorist organizations should be kept distinct based on their varying purposes. Drug trafficking organizations are inherently profit-driven, while terrorist organizations are inspired by “a complex amalgam of religious, ideological, and political considerations.”¹⁷⁴ Organized criminal groups are “loathe to attract unwanted attention” as opposed to terrorist groups, which see media attention and public reaction as a tool to garner political renown.¹⁷⁵ Terrorist organizations seek to overthrow the state as an end, using criminal proceeds as means, while drug traffickers seek to co-opt the state through corruption as a means to operate with impunity and earn money as an end. However counter-drug and counter-terrorism officials have found their efforts overlap with increasing frequency.¹⁷⁶

The UN Security Council’s Counterterrorism Committee has become concerned with “the close connection between terrorism and transnational organized crime, including trafficking of illicit drugs, money-laundering, illegal arms trafficking, and illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological, and other potential deadly materials.”¹⁷⁷ Of the 44 groups the Department of State designated terrorist organizations, 18 have now been linked to international drug trafficking.¹⁷⁸ Criminal organizations have given terrorist organizations “logistical support in weapons procurement, shared routes, training,” and using the same third party facilitators such as money launderers to move

¹⁷⁴ Kenney 197

¹⁷⁵ Sanderson, Thomas M. "Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines." *SAIS Review* 24.1 (2004): 52

¹⁷⁶ Keefe

¹⁷⁷ "Terrorists Linked to Organized Crime in Traffic of Nuclear, Biological Materials – UN." *UN News Centre*. United Nations, 28 Sept. 2011. Web. <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39867>>.

¹⁷⁸ Placido, Anthony. (DEA) Statement before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs

their funds around the world.¹⁷⁹ In the Balkans, ethnic-based criminal groups historically supported conflicts based on ethnic and national lines. The Kosovo Liberation Army received the bulk of its arms from Albanian organized criminal groups prior to Western intervention. After the low-intensity conflict with ethnic Albanians in 2001, the Macedonian government intercepted a shipment from an organized criminal group to a region of the country populated by Albanian minorities that included laser-guided anti-aircraft missiles, artillery pieces, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, sniper rifles, assault rifles, mortars, and thousands of bullets. The police suggested the organized criminal group had political motivations, which highlights “the difficulties often encountered in distinguishing the criminal and political in the [Balkans] region.”¹⁸⁰

The cases of terrorist groups affiliated with the Taliban in Afghanistan, AQIM, Boko Haram, and the Kurdish Worker’s Party (PKK) in Turkey show that terrorist groups even become directly involved in the drug trade themselves. Islamic terrorist groups, for example, rationalize their involvement in the drug trade both because they need money for a righteous cause and because they see drug abuse playing a role in undermining Western society.¹⁸¹ However, when terrorist groups engage in drug trafficking, individual members “grow more likely to shift their *raison d’être* from political to economic goals.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Picarelli, John T. "Osama Bin Corleone? Vito the Jackal? Framing Threat Convergence Through an Examination of Transnational Organized Crime and International Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24.2 (2002): 187.

¹⁸⁰ Costa 53

¹⁸¹ Interview: DEA Official May 2, 2012

¹⁸² Dishman, Chris. “Terrorism, Crime and Transformation,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 1 (2001): 43–58.

There is limited evidence of terrorist organizations using terrorist tactics to secure their drug trafficking funding, signifying that the drug smuggling could gradually become an end in itself to these groups. For example, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan operating in northern Afghanistan and Central Asia timed a series of attacks against Kyrgyz and Uzbek military targets for the sole purpose of “creating instability and confusion sufficient to smuggle recently processed Afghan heroin through strategic mountain passes in these countries.”¹⁸³ Conversely, criminal groups could perpetrate politically motivated crimes to maintain their power, as in the case of the Zemun gang assassinating Zoran Djindjic in Serbia in 2003.

The United States has already legally positioned itself to face this threat. United States Code Title 21 Section 960a, which “gives U.S. drug agents the authority to pursue narcotics and terrorism crimes committed anywhere in the world if they establish a link between drug offense and a terrorist act or group.”¹⁸⁴ U.S. prosecutors have used this law to convict a man attempting to trade narcotics for rockets in Afghanistan and three drug traffickers possession of 500 kilograms of cocaine who had close links to AQIM in Ghana.¹⁸⁵ A Senate report concluded, “narco-terrorism investigations have resulted in the arrest and conviction of high value Afghan narco-terrorists and have gleaned collateral intelligence which has been used to protect the American and coalition forces” and

¹⁸³ Rosenthal, Justine. “For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008): 481–498. (TRANSNAT OC AND INT’L TERROR PICARELLI)

¹⁸⁴ Feinstein 3

¹⁸⁵ Feinstein 15

recommended resources be provided to focus these efforts to trafficking activities of terrorist organizations in Africa.¹⁸⁶

A Trafficking Route is a Trafficking Route: Drug Smuggling and Nuclear Smuggling

Tangentially related to the crime-terror nexus is the threat of traffickers smuggling nuclear material to non-state actors. NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept emphasizes its commitment to nuclear nonproliferation through the lens of traditional nuclear weapons, but also acknowledges that terrorism "poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries...in particular if terrorists were nuclear, chemical, biological, or radiological capabilities."¹⁸⁷ The scope of nuclear smuggling is fortunately very small in scale, but the nature of the material means that even a small amount could cause widespread damage in terrorists' hands. The Database on Nuclear Smuggling, Theft, and Orphan Radiation Sources (DSTO) has recorded 2,230 cases of nuclear smuggling from 1993-2008, though the actual number is likely higher because many countries underreport missing nuclear material and some countries are not a part of the DSTO program.¹⁸⁸ Nuclear material is supplied through "existing trafficking routes for licit and illicit goods" to meet the demand of "non-state actors interested in acquiring or using such substances for terrorist purposes."¹⁸⁹ The primary smuggling conduits are disputed territories and separatist areas in the former Soviet Bloc with weak legal institutions and established

¹⁸⁶ Feinstein 6

¹⁸⁷ "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation."

¹⁸⁸ Zaitseva, Lyudmila. "Nuclear Trafficking in Ungoverned Spaces and Failed States." 193; "Terrorists Linked to Organized Crime in Traffic of Nuclear, Biological Materials – UN." *UN News Centre*. United Nations, 28 Sept. 2011. Web. <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39867>>.

¹⁸⁹ Zaitseva 193

trafficking infrastructures, namely Chechnya, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Nagorno-Karabakh (all in the Caucasus) and Transnistria (a separatist region of Moldova).¹⁹⁰

Alarming, drug trafficking routes have the potential to be used for nuclear trafficking. The Georgian government uncovered these links in 2006 when Georgian authorities apprehended one Russian and three Georgians in possession of 79.5 grams of 89% refined highly enriched uranium, 1% below weapons-grade threshold. The Russian, Oleg Khintsagov, was simultaneously charged with a drug related offense and the subsequent investigation found that two of Khintsagov's accomplices were experienced drug traffickers who translated their experience and trafficking route knowledge into smuggling nuclear material.¹⁹¹ In the words of Louise Shelley, an expert on organized crime, "a viable smuggling route remains a viable smuggling route," irrespective of what contraband is being smuggled.¹⁹²

Where NATO Fits In

Drug Trafficking: The Common Denominator in NATO's Operations

If the Balkans, Afghanistan, Africa are emblematic of NATO's past, present, and potential future operations, the Alliance must recognize that drug trafficking has been a common denominator threatening NATO troops and the overall success of NATO's mandates.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Bronner, Michael. "100 Grams (and counting): Notes from the Nuclear Underworld," Project on Managing the Atom, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, June 2008. and Daniil Kobayakov, Elina Kirichenko, and Alla Azkova, "Gray Zones of Proliferation in the South Caucasus," *Yadernyi Kontrol*, No. 4 (74) Vol. 10 (2004) translated for Ungoverned Spaces

¹⁹² Zaitseva 195

The Balkans is a region that is stable and moving towards EU and NATO accession through progress in democratic reforms, but as in Libya corruption fostered by drug traffickers threatens to undermine state legitimacy and stifle democratic reforms. During the wars, drug trafficking networks supplied Milosevic's regime and fomented conflict, while Djindjic's assassination demonstrated a drug trafficking organization's audacity and willingness to openly challenge democratic reform. In Afghanistan, the expansive opium trade has become inextricably linked to the insurgency threatening NATO forces in their day-to-day operations. Afghanistan produces 93% of the world's heroin supply today. This fact is a product of a decade of NATO's failure in trial-and-error policies to combat the drug trade. The windfall profits from drug trafficking have made their way into the pockets of Afghan officials in all echelons of the government, threatening to unwind all of NATO's past efforts to build a legitimate and trustworthy Afghan state government. Libya and Mali demonstrated NATO's ongoing interest in securing peace and stability in Africa, as well as NATO's counter-piracy operations off the Gulf of Aden. Nine NATO members became involved in the ongoing conflict in Mali, a manifestation of the dangerous links between drug trafficking and terrorist organizations. The drug trade bankrolled Al Qaeda in the Maghreb and other dangerous Islamic extremist groups, giving them the

Outside of NATO's geographic scope, drug trafficking also intertwines with two of NATO's crucial functional scopes: counter-terrorism and WMD non-proliferation. NATO is reorganizing to focus on four emerging security challenges – counter-terrorism,

WMD nonproliferation, cyber security, and energy security. In all of these functions, Alliance policymakers anticipate their efforts to be “interconnected but mutually reinforcing.”¹⁹³ That is to say, terrorists aim to acquire WMD material or cyber terrorists have the potential to attack energy infrastructure. Drug trafficking is a fifth threat NATO can tackle which fits into the mold of ‘mutually reinforcing’: it is an existential threat to state legitimacy and security in Afghanistan and a moderate threat in Balkans. Drug traffickers’ ability to fund terrorists in Africa and potential to foster WMD material proliferation in the Caucasus show that tackling this issue mutually reinforces security in other realms.

Individual cases do not signify a widespread trend of outright and constant collusion between drug traffickers and terrorist organizations or buyers of contraband nuclear material. However, the cases in which there were these connections point to a danger that NATO intelligence analysts and policymakers should acknowledge: these cases demonstrate that drug trafficking has the potential to foster terrorist operations or WMD materials proliferation.

It is axiomatic that drug trafficking is a threat to individual NATO members, as it is with many countries in the world. However, it will be difficult to acknowledge that NATO has a role to play in countering drug trafficking without identifying *what role it can play*.

Countering drug trafficking is divided between intelligence, interdiction, and incarceration.¹⁹⁴ NATO should by no means involve itself in day-to-day drug trafficking

¹⁹³ Zyga 2

¹⁹⁴ Williams 29

investigations or incarceration efforts in stable post-conflict environments such as the Balkans. Yet the Alliance has unique comparative advantages over other international institutions to support certain aspects of anti-drug trafficking efforts.

NATO Accession

The first advantage that NATO has (and shares with the European Union) is the draw of accession to non-NATO members. These members, from the Balkans to the Caucasus, see the Alliance as a military protector to enhance their country's security and accession as a symbolic achievement to enhance their political legitimacy in the West and the broader international community. The formal eligibility criteria for NATO membership were initially outlined in the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement*. The criteria are:

- “A functioning democratic political system and market economy
- Treatment of minority populations in accordance with OSCE guidelines
- Resolution of all outstanding disputes with neighbors and a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes generally.
- The ability and willingness to make] a military contribution to the alliance and achieve interoperability with other members' forces.
- Democratic-style civil-military relations.”¹⁹⁵

The criteria are inherently vague, and NATO has “ignored calls for exact statements” to allow for case-by-case adaptations and wide discretion in interpretation.¹⁹⁶ Most recently, Croatia and Albania joined NATO in 2009 after being members of NATO's Partnership for Peace and Membership Action Plan programs. The progress these countries have

¹⁹⁵ Boonstra, Jos, Merijn Hartog, David Greenwood and Peter Volten. *The Western Balkan Candidates for Nato Membership and Partnership*. The Netherlands: Centre of European Security Studies, 2005: 11

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

made in terms of democratic, military, and economic reforms since the 1990's is a testament to how influential aspirations for NATO and EU accession can be. NATO should leverage this influence in other countries aspiring for accession by emphasizing anti-corruption and anti-drug trafficking efforts in aspiring members as a condition for joining. It would be impossible for aspiring members to stamp out all corruption or all drug trafficking (as many current NATO members such as Albania still have extensive problems with both), difficult for NATO to measure the exact levels of drug trafficking or corruption, and thus counterproductive to emphasize this above other criteria.

However, the glue that holds NATO together is its legitimacy as a bloc of democratic countries with shared values. In March 2013, NATO Secretary General Rasmussen gave a joint press conference with Montenegro's Prime Minister Milo Dukanovic in which he reaffirmed Montenegro's path to eventual NATO membership.¹⁹⁷ Dukanovic's explicit involvement with the Saric gang demonstrated how pervasive drug-related corruption was in this small Balkan state. A year before this conference, organized crime expert and *Foreign Policy* editor Moises Naim labeled Montenegro a "mafia state" for this reason.¹⁹⁸ Allowing a state to join NATO without addressing drug trafficking or government corruption issues that go hand-in-hand would undoubtedly diminish NATO's political legitimacy.

Legitimacy and Influence

The EU's inability to tackle the drug trafficking threat stem from the EU's difficulty project power outside its own borders with its fledgling Common Foreign and Security

¹⁹⁷ "Prime Minister of Montenegro Meets with the Secretary General and Addresses the North Atlantic Council". NATO Newsroom, 2013. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_99300.htm>.

¹⁹⁸ Naim, Moises. "Mafia States: Organized Crime Takes Office." *Foreign Affairs* May/June 2012 (2012).

Policy (CFSP). NATO has substantially more control than the EU, UN, or other partnering institutions over reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, making it the only institution able to effectively implement counter-narcotics trafficking policies. Yet even in the Balkans, where the EU boasts significant political and economic influence, NATO has a role to play in influencing police and judicial reforms. NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) is the peacekeeping force aimed at "ensuring the overall security of Kosovo."¹⁹⁹ KFOR "plays a leading role in overseeing the training of the 2,500-strong Kosovo Security Force."²⁰⁰ NATO is in the process of transitioning security to the Kosovo government while simultaneously drawing down its presence in tandem with the EU's rule of law mission to Kosovo (EULEX) and the UN Mission to Kosovo, UNMIK. KFOR currently has 5,600 troops comprised of personnel for 23 NATO members and 7 NATO partner countries, down from nearly 10,000 troops in 2010.²⁰¹ The European Union's Rule of Law Mission to Kosovo, EULEX, has jurisdiction over all police, customs, criminal, and judicial issues.

The clear division of labor between EULEX and NATO prevents bureaucratic overlap or mission creep, but does not necessarily translate into positive results for the Kosovar people.²⁰² The EULEX mission started in Kosovo shortly after Kosovo's controversial decision to unilaterally secede from Serbia in February 2008.²⁰³ EULEX was immediately embroiled in its own controversy, as Serbia and Serb allies in the UN

¹⁹⁹ Woehrel, Steven. Kosovo: Current Issues and U.S. Policy. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010.

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*

²⁰¹ "Nato's Role in Kosovo". 2013. NATO. <<http://www.aco.nato.int/kfor/about-us/natos-role-in-kosovo.aspx>>.

²⁰² Capussela, Andrea. "Eulex in Kosovo: A Shining Symbol of Incompetence." The Guardian 9 April 2011. 2011.

²⁰³ DeWet 84

alleged that EULEX's mandate was irreconcilable with UN Security Council 1244 to work alongside UNMIK.²⁰⁴ Serb-controlled territories refused to recognize EULEX on one hand, and EULEX failed to "acknowledge the effective control of certain member states over KFOR's actions on the other hand."²⁰⁵ EULEX has not only been controversial but ineffective, opening very few investigations and failing to improve the local judiciary, causing Kosovo to be a "black hole" for drug trafficking.²⁰⁶ Compounding EULEX's problem is the fact that, unlike NATO and KFOR's mission, the EU inconsistently supports EULEX's mandate. In 2010, the EU Special Representative in Kosovo prepared a "Strategy for the North of Kosovo" as a proposal to resolve Kosovo's issues with its Serbian minorities in the North. Yet the European Union "quickly distanced itself from the strategy" because they included goals that "a divided EU cannot support," despite the fact that Feith's proposals "are similar to the EU's own initiatives."²⁰⁷

NATO's KFOR mission has more legitimacy in the eyes of both its participating members and Kosovar citizens, even considering the fact that many EULEX contributors are also NATO contributors. Riots broke out in the weeks following Kosovo's declaration of independence, when Serb minorities attacked UN, EU, and Kosovo government property in mobs. KFOR was tasked with quelling the unrest, which ultimately killed one UN policeman and injured 140 UN personnel and rioters.²⁰⁸ When ethnic Serbs set up a roadblock to stop a EULEX convoy from going into North Kosovo, KFOR personnel had to intervene to dismantle the roadblock and mediate talks between

²⁰⁴ DeWet 85

²⁰⁵ DeWet 94

²⁰⁶ Vukadinović, Milenko. "Kosovo "Black Hole" for Drug Trafficking." b92.com 2011.

²⁰⁷ Woehrel 3

²⁰⁸ Woehrel 4

the EULEX officials and Serbs.²⁰⁹ From that point on, KFOR took control of road crossings and customs duties on the Kosovar borders since EULEX proved incapable of doing so.²¹⁰

Intelligence Sharing and Analysis

The second way NATO can contribute to anti-drug trafficking efforts is through intelligence sharing and analysis, a crucial component to the fight against drug trafficking. NATO is already “beefing up [it’s] analytical capabilities,” including improved intelligence sharing.²¹¹ ISAF taught NATO members how crucial intelligence was in identifying and rolling up insurgent-led drug trafficking operations. ISAF has also “dramatically increased NATO’s capacity to share information” among its members, including arguably the most important type of intelligence in countering drug trafficking, human intelligence.²¹² While NATO improves these capabilities, intelligence sharing (especially in the realms of terrorism and drug trafficking), “are organized and implemented on an ad hoc basis,” as in the case of South American, European, and U.S. drug enforcement agencies coordinating to bring down the Saric Gang.²¹³

The EU clearly has more jurisdiction than NATO over inherently police and judicial coordination efforts, but intelligence is increasingly becoming an important component of anti-drug trafficking efforts prior to investigations, arrests, or incarcerations. Thus far, a

²⁰⁹ b92. “Serbs Block Eulex Convoy, Kfor Blocks Roads.” b92.com March 6, 2012 2012.

Barany, Zoltan. *The Future of Nato Expansion: Four Case Studies*. University of Cambridge, 2003.

²¹⁰ Aliu, Fatmir. “Kfor Takes Control of Unofficial Kosovo Crossing.” *Balkan Insight* 2012.

²¹¹ Ruhle 282

²¹² Interview with official from NATO Transformation Network Branch. May 1st, 2013

²¹³ Howard, Russell D., and Colleen M. Traugher. “The “New Silk Road” of Terrorism and Organized Crime: The Key to Countering the Terror-Crime Nexus.” *Armed Groups: Studies in National Security, Counterterrorism, and Counterinsurgency* (2008): 381.

pan-EU anti-drug trafficking regime “is essentially nonexistent.”²¹⁴ EU members also have different ways of reporting and tracking criminal operations, making coordination difficult especially in the area of intelligence sharing. Coordination agencies such as Europol or Eurojust are also severely underfunded, which compounds the already existing problem of lacking legitimacy in the eyes of national intelligence and police services.²¹⁵ NATO can still augment European intelligence sharing efforts in drug trafficking to compensate for the EU shortcomings even though it can never involve itself in the pure police matters of arrests or incarcerations. NATO is already posturing to play a role in a security realm traditionally relegated to law enforcement: counter-terrorism.²¹⁶ NATO’s limited but valuable activities in counter-terrorism can be applied to countering drug trafficking based on its existing institutional advantages.

NATO’s integrated command structure and planning mechanisms in military operations extend to military intelligence sharing. In cases such as Afghanistan with virtually no law enforcement capacity and a military-grade threat from traffickers bankrolling insurgents, intelligence sharing capacities should be extended to immediate security problems stemming from drug trafficking. Additionally, NATO’s revamped efforts to enhance intelligence-sharing capacity under the auspices of the New Strategic Concept emphasize long-range forecasting. The Alliance should “at the very minimum scan the strategic horizon” with the aim of anticipating crises, such as the growing threat of Islamic terrorists in West Africa. Efforts to “anticipate, prevent or counter these threats are

²¹⁴ Howard, Russell D., and Colleen M. Traughber. “The “New Silk Road” of Terrorism and Organized Crime: The Key to Countering the Terror-Crime Nexus.” *Armed Groups: Studies in National Security, Counterterrorism, and Counterinsurgency* (2008): 381

²¹⁵ Interview with DEA official.

²¹⁶ Zyga 4

intelligence-led.”²¹⁷ They also serve the purpose of shifting NATO’s culture toward becoming “a more forward-looking organization.”²¹⁸ For long-term intelligence forecasting to be useful, it must be able to recognize all forms of emerging security challenges, even if it steps outside the four NATO has already folded into its new mandate as in the case of drug trafficking.

The EU’s Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) is a successful model in intelligence sharing and analysis. Based in Portugal, MAOC-N is a structure comprised of law enforcement, coast guard, and intelligence officials from partnering EU members aimed at coordinating drug supply interceptions in the Atlantic Ocean. Since 2007, MAOC-N has “facilitated the seizure of more than 60 tons of cocaine...with a wholesale value of around 5 billion euro” for shipments coming from West Africa.²¹⁹ The secret of MAOC-N’s success is that it remains a “bureaucratically-light” and horizontal structure, “insists on complete transparency among its staff, and it brutally honest about what it has done right and where it has failed”, which has given it comparatively more legitimacy faster among national law enforcement agencies.²²⁰ It still faces challenges in active EU member participation and only focuses on maritime operations off the Iberian Peninsula where EU member coast guards and law enforcement have jurisdiction. NATO can emulate MAOC-N’s success in a bureaucratically-light and horizontal intelligence sharing structure comprised of military and civilian partners and

²¹⁷ Zyga 4

²¹⁸ Ruhle 282

²¹⁹ Gotz, Wolfgang. "Opening Address." Speech. GLOBAL FORUM ON COMBATING ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING AND RELATED THREATS. Belgium, Brussels. 25 Jan. 2012. *EMCDDA.europa.eu*. European Union, 25 Jan. 2012. Web. <<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2012/speeches/WCO>>.

²²⁰ "A Comprehensive Approach to Combating Illicit Trafficking." *High Level Workshop on Illicit Trafficking and Efforts to Combat It*. Geneva Centre for Security Policy and Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, June 2010. 115. Web. <<http://www.ifpa.org/pdf/IFPA-GCSPTraffickingReport.pdf>>.

aimed at providing intelligence in areas where drug trafficking and international security threats intersect, as in Central Asia or West Africa.

Dialogue and Training

NATO could also address drug trafficking threats through its well-established dialogue and training capabilities. NATO's capacity to facilitate a dialogue between members is outlined in Article IV of the North Atlantic Treaty: "The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened."²²¹ Turkey invoke Article IV for the first time after the Syrian military shot down a Turkish fighter in June 2012, precipitating NATO's deployment of Patriot missile systems on the Turkish-Syrian border in January 2013.²²² Drug trafficking does not represent the acute or existential threat to NATO members that a civil war in a neighboring country possessing chemical WMD's does as in the case of Turkey and Syria. However, this incident demonstrates NATO's value in consultation when a threat does not warrant an Article V invocation. Consultations, even below the formal Article IV level, "highlight the Alliance's function as a political community, can be important both for preventing and managing crises and need not await an imminent Article 5 threat."²²³ Additionally, NATO should be as dynamic as the threats it needs face. NATO recognizes this fact in the New Strategic Concept. Its list of the threats member states face is not exhaustive. The New Strategic Concept outlines how

²²¹ "The North Atlantic Treaty"

²²² Melissa Gray, Greg Botelho. "Nato: Patriot Missile Battery Operational on Syrian Border." CNN 28 January 2013 2013.

²²³ Group of Experts. NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagment: Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for Nato. Brussels, Belgium: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2010.

NATO must face “the full range of threats to the Alliance, taking into account changes to the evolving international security environment.”²²⁴ This requires a “sustained political dialogue about broader security developments.”²²⁵ The dialogue should reflect the threats members face first and NATO’s capabilities second rather than vice versa in order to maintain NATO’s responsiveness to new threats. Therefore, NATO members such as Turkey or Albania which face extensive drug trafficking related threats should push to include this in the Alliance’s dialogue on member threats and collective capabilities.

NATO has also taken a leading role in training troops in both member and partner nations. Secretary General Rasmussen expressed NATO’s desire to “set up a standing training capacity” to help partner countries’ security services to rely on themselves rather than leaning on NATO.²²⁶ NATO has extensive experience training officials from member states, Partnership for Peace, and Membership Action Plan states in everything from language lessons to standard operating procedure. This should extend to training relevant personnel based on emerging security challenges: intelligence analysis for counter-terrorism, chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) attack response for military and emergency services, and cyber security practices to hedge against the threat of cyber attacks. NATO should build up training capacity in counter drug trafficking. Afghanistan demonstrated that the most productive efforts against pervasive drug trade are “specialized, constantly-vetted, and closely-monitored law enforcement units,” which

²²⁴ “Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation” 5.

²²⁵ Ruhle 282

²²⁶ Sundarajan 17; Rasmussen: “The New Strategic Concept: Active Engagement, Modern Defence”

require extensive training and financial commitment.²²⁷ The U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and Drug Enforcement Agency have done this in Afghanistan, but only in areas of U.S. forces' jurisdiction and without coordinating among other ISAF allies and their jurisdictions in Afghanistan. NATO could provide a framework to train police in countering drug trafficking and military personnel in supporting those efforts based on its proven training experience.

Flexible Formats and Centres of Excellence

Secretary General Rasmussen established the conceptual framework for cooperation with partners when he stated, "There is considerable scope for developing clusters of willing and able Allies and partners ready to cooperate in specific areas...I see the clusters being flexible enough to accommodate different groups of partners, yet focused enough to deliver concrete results."²²⁸ The Alliance has begun a transition to so-called 'flexible formats' of NATO members and partners for political dialogue and practical cooperation based on functional security concerns. NATO partners with institutions such as the EU and OSCE and regional bodies such as the Mediterranean Dialogue in addition to individual partner countries. In an effort to combat drug trafficking, NATO could extend its partnership to a 'functional bodies' as forums for cooperation on specific security issues. NATO could develop a counter-narcotics or anti-corruption analogue to the 'Mediterranean Dialogue' with partners such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the UNODC, or non-governmental institutions such as Transparency International.

²²⁷ Felbab-Brown 2012, 204

²²⁸ Zyga, 7

NATO members have also developed a degree of ‘comparative advantages’ and specializations, where individual NATO members can focus their limited resources allocated for defense to one function. Belgium, for example, has invested heavily in naval minesweeping capabilities within NATO’s framework, Estonia has staked its claim on cyber security, and the Czech Republic specialized in chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defense capabilities, spearheading the creation of a CBRN Defense Battalion in 2003.²²⁹ NATO members that face security risks from drug traffickers, such as Turkey or Albania, can take the lead in counter drug trafficking initiatives within the NATO framework as Belgium has for minesweeping or Estonia has for cyber security.

The product of such an initiative would be very different from a traditional specialization and it would not fit into the traditional military-cooperative framework (NATO would have no need of or use for a ‘Counter Narcotics Defense Battalion’). The best fit would likely be or resemble a NATO ‘Centre of Excellence.’ Centres of Excellences (COEs) are NATO-accredited institutions that “train and educate leaders and specialists from NATO member and partner countries, assist in doctrine development, identify lessons learned, [and] improve interoperability” for the Alliance.²³⁰ Eighteen have been accredited since the concept started in 2003, and COEs have served as focal points in NATO’s ongoing structural transformation.²³¹ Poland developed the Military Police Centre of Excellence in 2009 and Italy is developing a Centre of Excellence on Stability Policing within two

²²⁹ GlobalSecurity.org; NATO 2003

²³⁰ "Centres of Excellence". NATO official website.
<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_68372.htm>.

²³¹ Interview with NATO Allied Command Transformation Staff member. May 1, 2013.

years, highlighting NATO members' growing recognition of law enforcement issues in post-conflict reconstruction and stability operations.²³²

COEs give NATO pooling capacities and the ability to retain experts on a particular security concern. A COE on drug trafficking could standardize anti-drug trafficking doctrines and training for NATO forces and civilian partners for operations where drug trafficking poses a threat to regional security and stability. It could also pool and retain experts to study best anti-drug trafficking practices for international reconstruction efforts in post-conflict countries. A key component of this will be to develop a coordinating framework between Alliance members to prevent the 'balloon effect' phenomenon in Afghanistan negating the success of individual NATO members' PRTs. Even if NATO does not lead the operations, NATO members would have a resource for consultation and expert advising, as in the case of France's operations in Mali. It could also serve as either the Alliance's intelligence sharing and analysis hub for drug-related intelligence or a watchdog to monitor the successful development of an intelligence hub within NATO based on pools of expertise and models for success such as MAOC-N. Institutionalizing the lessons learned from Afghanistan and the Balkans in terms of drug trafficking and combating illicit economies is essential for NATO's success in future operations, especially post-conflict reconstruction missions as in Afghanistan or Kosovo.

Facing the Drug Trafficking Threat: An Important Added Value for NATO Members and Partners

Finally, NATO's New Strategic Concept and the dialogue during NATO's 2012 Chicago Summit reflected NATO's concern about its members' underinvestment, both politically

²³² Interview with NATO Transformation Network Branch. 1 May, 2013.

and financially. After the 2014 drawdown in Afghanistan, NATO could be in a situation where it has no concrete adversary around which to focus its planning.²³³ NATO faces “the strategic problem of identifying other fields of mutual interest” outside the context of ISAF “to engage its partners and keep them interested in maintaining this engagement with the Alliance.”²³⁴ The Alliance must not only evolve to accommodate the changing nature of warfare, but it must evolve to accommodate the changing needs of its members and partners. If the Alliance demonstrates its value-added in countering drug trafficking, it stands to gain significant political capital from members such as Turkey and key strategic partners such as Russia.

Turkey is facing substantial threats from drug trafficking in the form of the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK), a Kurd terrorist organization that the Turkish government has been fighting since 1978. The PKK funds its operations through “drug trafficking, arms smuggling, human smuggling, extortion, money laundering,” and other activities commonly affiliated with criminal organizations.²³⁵ These tactics generated nearly \$90 million in revenue for the organization by the early 1990’s, allowing the PKK to revamp its fight against the Turkish government.²³⁶ Many PKK members have now embedded themselves in the thriving drug trafficking business, as Turkey is a conduit to Europe for Afghan heroin.²³⁷ Turkey’s membership to the EU has stalled, provoking outrage and indignation among Turkish policymakers and undermining the EU’s influence in

²³³ “The Chicago Summit and Nato’s New Challenges.” May 8, 2012. Carnegie Endowment for Democracy.

²³⁴ Zyga

²³⁵ Interview with DEA Official

²³⁶ Picarelli 189

²³⁷ Rosenthal, Justine. “For-Profit Terrorism: The Rise of Armed Entrepreneurs,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008): 481–498. (TRANSNAT OC AND INT’L TERROR PICARELLI)

Turkey.²³⁸ NATO has a window of opportunity to demonstrate its value to Turkey in partnering to combat both the PKK and drug trafficking, the PKK's primary source of funding.

NATO can also strengthen its relationship with Russia by assuming a role in countering drug trafficking. While the Soviet Union has drifted into the past and neither side regards each other as a threat, the NATO-Russia relationship is still defined by diplomatic intransigence and political obstinacy in many sectors. NATO may remain a 'four-letter word' to Russians well into the future for expanding east after the Cold War and intervening in Kosovo over Russian objections.²³⁹ A key point of contention in contemporary NATO-Russia relations is NATO's ballistic missile defense shield, which Moscow argued took away Russia's deterrence capabilities despite NATO assurances the shield was directed towards Iran. When the U.S. cancelled the final phase of NATO's missile defense system, Moscow was "unimpressed," highlighting its continued suspicion of all NATO-related policies.²⁴⁰ Many NATO members are hesitant to grant the Alliance power over the matters of energy security, NATO's fourth 'emerging security challenge,' because of tense NATO-Russian relations. German and French officials argue that such a step "would reinforce confrontational NATO-Russia relations," while NATO's eastern members want more engagement on the issue.²⁴¹ For the Alliance to have any lateral

²³⁸ Paoli, Letizia, and Cyrille Fijnaut. "Organized Crime and Its Control Policies." *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice* 14.3 (2006): 307-27.

²³⁹ Goldgeier, James M., and Michael McFaul. *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy toward Russia after the Cold War*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2003. Print.

²⁴⁰ Weir, Fred. "Us Drops Europe Missile Defense Plan – but Moscow Is Unimpressed." *The Christian Science Monitor* March 18, 2013 2013.

²⁴¹ Zyga 4

mobility on such contentious and highly politicized issues as missile defense and energy security, it must reach out to Russia in other areas.

Staking a claim in elements of the fight against drug trafficking provides the perfect opportunity to do so. The most successful areas of Russian-NATO cooperation are those of shared threats, as cooperation on counter-terrorism issues and Afghanistan demonstrated.²⁴² If NATO can extend this success to counter-narcotics, it will reinvigorate the NATO-Russia partnership and provide more political room for NATO to navigate the conflicting needs of its own members in the realm of energy security.

The Afghan heroin trade disproportionately affects Russia, as the majority of heroin that doesn't go to Europe goes to Russia through Tajikistan's porous borders. Roughly 1.65 million Russians use Afghan opium and processed heroin.²⁴³ Russia has "the fastest growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the world" because health experts "estimate that nearly 65% of newly detected HIV cases can be attributed to injecting drug use."²⁴⁴ President Putin and other Russian policymakers have repeatedly reminded NATO of the drug problem in their public remarks.²⁴⁵ The Russian Ambassador to NATO told NATO policymakers in a speech that "Russia is losing 30,000 lives a year to the Afghan drug trade... This is an undeclared war against our country."²⁴⁶ Russia's primary foreign policy strategy document, "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation," criticized

²⁴² Crossfield 1

²⁴³ Illicit Drug Trends in the Russian Federation, UN Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Office for Russia and Belarus and the Paris Pact Initiative, April 2008.

²⁴⁴ INCSR 2010

²⁴⁵ 2005 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR). The Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, March 2005.

²⁴⁶ Feinstein 11

NATO for “its failure to fight the Afghan narcotic proliferation,” and labeled drug trafficking as one of the three key threats to Russia’s national security.²⁴⁷

The NATO-Russia Council already developed a training program Counter Narcotics Training Program for officials in Central Asian states aimed at curbing the Afghan drug trade,²⁴⁸ but came at odds with the U.S. for shifting ISAF policy from indiscriminate crop destruction to targeted crop destruction under Obama despite the former policy’s clear failure.²⁴⁹ Russia has championed counter-narcotics efforts through other institutions, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).²⁵⁰ Yet none of these institutions have the political strength, institutional mechanisms, or operational capacity to productively coordinate anti-drug trafficking efforts. NATO must prove to Russia that it takes narcotics seriously despite refusing to conduct indiscriminate eradication to solidify its strategic bilateral partnership. If NATO demonstrates its value in combating drug trafficking through Centres of Excellence, training courses, intelligence-sharing and analysis, and flexible format partnerships, Russia will be more willing to invest political and diplomatic capital in the partnership.

Conclusion

²⁴⁷ Rwykin 233

²⁴⁸ Council, 2012

²⁴⁹ Felbab-Brown, 2013

²⁵⁰ INCSR 2010; “CIS Military Bloc’s Forces Should Fight Drug Trafficking – Russian President.” Interfax, 10 June 2009. And “Post-Soviet States Should Step Up Joint Fight Against Drugs – Russian Official.” ITAR-TASS, 13 January 2010.

A new security environment and defense budget cuts have shocked NATO out of a bureaucratic rut. As NATO's New Strategic Concept adopted in 2010 and the 2012 Chicago Summit showed, the Alliance recognizes its need to transform to remain a viable security alliance in the 21st century. Post-Cold War missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Libya highlighted how NATO's security is inextricably linked to the security of nations outside the Alliance's borders. After a decade in Afghanistan, NATO members will be reticent to commit to costly stability and reconstruction missions again for the foreseeable future. Yet many of the threats NATO's stability and reconstruction missions aimed to eliminate persist. NATO has centered its transformation process on functional threats to defend Alliance members in cost-effective ways, outlining NATO's contributions in the realms of counter-terrorism, WMD non-proliferation, energy security, and cyber security. If the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Africa are emblematic of NATO's past, present, and future engagements, then drug trafficking is a persistent and threatening common denominator. Drug trafficking can lengthen insurgent operations, posing an existential threat to weak governments as Afghanistan demonstrates. It can also bankroll terrorist organizations, giving them resources to expand in scale and scope, as the PKK and Al Qaeda in the Maghreb proved, or access to other contraband goods including nuclear material. It can also quietly corrupt governments and delay already lengthy international reconstruction efforts, from Montenegro to Libya to Afghanistan.

NATO does not have the capacity, jurisdiction, or ability to successfully combat drug trafficking by itself. However, it can contribute to the fight in substantial ways, leveraging its legitimacy and influence (especially with aspiring members), dialogue and

training, intelligence sharing and analysis, and its flexible formats and partnerships. NATO faces an internal challenge of convincing members it is an alliance worth investing in during an epoch of austerity, mission fatigue in Afghanistan, and waning European defense priorities. NATO must convince its 28 members and numerous partners that it has important value in addressing their unique national security priorities. For members such as Turkey and key strategic partners such as Russia and Afghanistan this means prioritizing drug trafficking as an international security threat. NATO must also convince members it has value outside operations such as Unified Protector in Libya, and can do so by addressing enduring and low-intensity threats such as terrorism and drug trafficking.

The Alliance has come face-to-face with the pervasive drug trafficking threat to state security in Afghanistan. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen admitted that “Afghanistan has taught [NATO] some very clear lessons, lessons we have learned at a very high price.”²⁵¹ An Afghanistan-scale operation is unlikely in NATO’s immediate future. The Alliance may be called upon to assume similar roles in countries facing drug trafficking threats in the medium- and long-term future, as France’s intervention in Mali foreshadowed. NATO must have the capacity to institutionalize lessons learned from ISAF and face drug trafficking threats in the future when the Afghan chapter of NATO’s history is complete and the pains of mission fatigue have subsided. As EU forefather Jean Monet famously said, “the lessons of history are doomed to be forgotten unless they are embedded in institutions.”²⁵²

²⁵¹ Rasmussen, Anders Fogh. “The New Strategic Concept: Active Engagement, Modern Defence”

²⁵² *ibid.*

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