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THE FUTURE OF NARCOTERRORISM:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND
CONTEMPORARY TERRORISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON
NARCOTERRORISM

by

LUCY CLEMENT LA ROSA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in International and Global Studies
in the College of Sciences
and in The Burnet Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
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Thesis Chair: Dr. Houman Sadri

ABSTRACT

The nexus between terrorism and narcotics is historically well documented. However, its contemporary development is rarely brought to light. Rather, narcoterrorism is often considered to be an outdated phenomenon and characteristic of only Latin America. Nevertheless, narcoterrorism continues to be a global security concern. As terrorism has evolved over the recent decade, terrorist relations to the narcotic industry have also evolved. Understanding the unique characteristics of contemporary narcoterrorism is important to effectively combating both terrorism and narcotics globally.

The intent of this thesis is to comparatively analyze the differences between traditional and contemporary terrorist organizations, and how these differences will affect the international nexus between the narcotic industry and terrorist organizations. The presented research supports the argument of an increasingly strong connection between contemporary terrorist organizations and the contemporary narcotic industry. Case study examples will give testimony to the historically significant and negative effects of narcoterrorism and illustrate the future of narcoterrorism. The overall objective of this research project is to raise awareness of the role of contemporary narcoterrorism and to promote greater acknowledgement of its potential consequences.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Thesis

In this research study, I will analyze the potential of narcoterrorism in contemporary times, in comparison to the narcoterrorism of the past. I will contend that contemporary terrorist organizations have a greater financial need than traditional terrorist organizations, due to developmental changes within the organizational structure, terrorist's targets and methods of terror that have effected the overall operational cost of terrorist organizations. Additionally, I will argue that the narcotic industry offers specific advantages to terrorist organizations that other financing methods do not. Consequently, my overall argument is that contemporary terrorist organizations will benefit exponentially more from the narcotic industry than traditional organizations have benefited historically. The presented case studies and analysis will illustrate that narcoterrorism is a phenomenon that can be predicted to grow in contemporary times due to the financial need of contemporary terrorist organizations and the steady, global role of the narcotic industry.

Hypothesis

My research consists of two-correlated hypothesis. Firstly, I will be comparatively researching how terrorist organizations have evolved, specifically focused on three characteristics: *organizational structure*, *terrorist targets*, and *methods of terror*. I will then analyze how these characteristics influence the *operational cost* of terrorist organizations. Hence, my first hypothesis will argue that contemporary terrorist organizations have a higher operational cost than traditional terrorist organizations. With this difference in mind, my second hypothesis

will argue that the increased operational cost of contemporary terrorist organizations, in correlation with the advantages of a financial relationship with the expanding contemporary narcotic industry, increases the potential of contemporary narcoterrorism.

Variables

Since my research consists of two hypotheses, there are, consequently, two sets of variables. The independent variables, for my first hypothesis are the evolutionary factors of terrorist organizations: *organizational structure*, *terrorist targets*, and *methods of terror*.

The independent variable, *organizational structure*, can either emphasize vertical or horizontal organization, and is respectively traditional or contemporary. The independent variable, *terrorist targets*, is either specific or non-specific, and is respectively traditional or contemporary. The independent variable, *methods of terror*, is either simple or complex, and is respectively traditional or contemporary.

This research study argues that these aforementioned independent variables cumulatively influence the dependent variable of my first hypothesis, *operational cost*. *Organizational structure* directly influences the *financial fluidity* of *operational cost*. Vertical organizational structures are more financially restricted through chain of command, whereas horizontal organizational structures are less likely to be financially restricted due to less leadership oversight. Horizontal organizations are so spread out into small units or cells that must conduct their own financial enterprises; hence, horizontal organizations generally spend more money on operations because their finances are less regulated or monitored.

Terrorist targets directly influence the *cost of men* related to *operational cost*. Specific *terrorists targets* are defined as targets with clearly defined parameters, such as ethnicity,

political beliefs, religious beliefs, etc. On the other hand, non-specific or indiscriminate *terrorist targets* are targets that are not clearly defined, allowing the terrorist organization to persecute without legitimized reason. There is lower toll on manpower related to specific targets because specific targets suggest a clear (generally bi-lateral) opposition between two forces. Whereas indiscriminate targets can elicit a much higher toll on manpower due to the greater parameters of the “opposition.” In other words, the larger the scope of *terrorists’ targets*, the greater the need for and cost of manpower. Consequently, contemporary terrorist organizations have a higher *operational cost* due to their indiscriminate *terrorists’ targets* that elicit a higher cost of manpower.

Finally, *methods of terror* directly influence the *cost of intelligence* related to *operational cost*. Traditional *methods of terror* include: kidnappings, extortion, assassinations, hijackings, and suicide bombings. The commonality between all of these individual methods of terror is that they are all relatively short-term operations; hence, the *cost of intelligence* is lower.

Contemporary *methods of terror*, on the other hand, include: international operations and interest in acquiring advanced weapon technologies. These methods are long-term operations; hence, their *cost of intelligence* is comparatively higher.

The dependent variable, operational cost, is the level of a terrorist organization’s cost with regards to monetary cost, cost of manpower, and cost of time. In other words, *operational cost* is a formula composed of money, men and intelligence. *Operational cost* can either be lower or higher, and is respectively traditional or contemporary.

In my second hypothesis, operational cost is my independent variable, while the *appeal of narcoterrorism* as a method of financing is my dependent variable. The higher the *operational cost*, the most appealing narcoterrorism seems to terrorist organizations.

For the sake of full disclosure, it is important to note that these variables and their definitions are my own for the purpose of this research paper. However, they are composed of the information gathered from a multitude of sources that will be cited throughout the research paper.

Relationship

The characteristics of terrorist organizations- *organizational structure, terrorist targets, and methods of terror*- cumulatively influence their *operational cost*. I argue that 1) the evolution from vertical and horizontal organizational structures increases the monetary costs related to operational cost, 2) the evolution from specific and non-specific terrorist targets increase the cost of men related to operational cost, 3) the evolution within methods of terror increases the cost of intelligence related to operational cost.

Cumulatively, organizational structure, terrorist's targets, and methods of terror increase the overall operational cost of terrorist organizations. Hence, these relationships illustrate a strong positive correlation between the first set of independent and dependent variables.

Finally, the research study will illustrate how a higher cost of operations leads to a potential increase in contemporary narcoterrorism, due to the mutual benefits that the contemporary narcotic industry can offer contemporary terrorist organizations. This will also illustrate a positive correlation between the second set of variables.

Significance

Narcoterrorism has had a prosperous past, funding and advancing the objectives of several traditional organizations. However, the term and definition of narcoterrorism is not unilaterally agreed upon. Narcoterrorism has been used to label the use of terrorist tactics by drug lords, in order to advance their criminal activities, and has also been used to label terrorists' profiting financially from a relationship with the narcotic industry.¹ This research study applies both definitions and investigates how traditional and contemporary terrorist organizations have cooperated with the narcotic industry for financial and other benefits. Regardless, the relationship between the narcotic industry and terrorist organizations is mutually beneficial and for this reason is a serious concern for both counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism. The characteristics of contemporary terrorist organizations only encourage greater participation in narcoterrorism, and hence can be predicted to only further develop as a contemporary phenomenon.

Theoretical Importance

The narcotic industry has historically proved itself to be an accelerating factor of terrorism. Not only does the narcotic industry establish an ideal recruitment environment for terrorist organizations, but they enable terrorist objectives through financing.² Terrorist financing is a serious security threat because the greater a terrorist organizations' revenue, the greater their propensity for violence. Terrorist organization's activities are highly contingent on their level of financial support. Recruitment, training, equipment, transportation, are only a few of the expenses that terrorist organizations face in order to remain operational. Terrorist organizations have always relied on some level of funding; however, the necessary level of financial support is

only increasing. Whereas traditional terrorist organizations' expenditures were relatively low because of their unique characteristics of structure, targets, and methods; contemporary terrorist organizations' expenditures are comparatively high due to the same aforementioned characteristics.³

Policy Importance

The inextricable links between narcotics and terrorism are of significant policy importance. Today, counter-terrorism is given greater priority over counter-narcotics; however, this research study argues that in the context of narcoterrorism, these counter-strategies are synonymous and of equal priority. Due to the potential future of contemporary narcoterrorism, policy awareness and action on this nexus of narcotics and terrorism is imperative. Without due policy action, the consequences of narcoterrorism will, without a doubt, negatively affect the U.S. and global security.

Literature Review

The global, illegal economy is the lifeline of terrorist organizations; and one of the significant illegal commodities is the narcotic industry. With low investment and production costs in comparison to high demand and market value, narcotics quickly caught the eye of terrorist organizations.⁴ Although the concept of narcoterrorism traditionally had been considered to be a phenomenon unique to Latin America, the narco-terrorist relationship is a global network, with significant activity in Central and Southeast Asia. Additionally, the definition of narco-terrorism has developed across time. Originally narcoterrorism was used to describe the use of violent terrorist acts by drug traffickers and cartels. However, with the rise of

terrorism, emphasis developed on terrorists' use of the narcotic industry. The United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) dictated their definition of narcoterrorism as the involvement of terrorist organizations in the narcotic industry as a means of funding, or advancing, their terrorist objectives.⁵ The term narcoterrorism, within this study, applies the second, terrorist-focused definition. Ehrenfeld emphasizes that the narcotic industry not only provides funds to terrorist organizations, but also undermines the security and stability of countries and an environment for recruitment. She, also, argues that the narcotic-terrorism nexus is a global security concern that is not limited to a handful of terrorist organizations, but a majority of them. Ehrenfeld points to the destabilized countries of Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Afghanistan, Myanmar (all countries with a significant narcotic industry and political violence), as the poster children for the consequences of the narcoterrorist relationship.

Turning to the developments of terrorism over time, it becomes clear that terrorist organizations have evolved from traditional to modern definitions. The evolution includes differences in the structure, purpose, targets, and methods of terrorist organizations, just to name a few.⁶ The differences between traditional and contemporary terrorist organizations are directly correlated with the activities of the respective organizations, argues Neumann. Furthermore, he argues that it is imperative to understand how the evolution of terrorism will impact the role of terrorism in the world. The purpose of this research is to compare the relationships of the narcotic industry with traditional and contemporary terrorist organizations, respectively, in order to determine the developing role of contemporary narcoterrorism.

2002-2007

Abundant literature has been dedicated to the dealings between traditional terrorist organizations and the narcotic industry. A Library of Congress report in 2002 put together an extensive analysis of narcoterrorist relations, across countries of Latin America, Southern Europe, the Middle East, and Central and East Asia.⁷ The report, like others within the literature, focuses on the strategic objectives of respective terrorist organizations and the manner in which they are involved with the narcotic industry. Curtis attributes the fall of the Soviet Union and state-sponsored terrorism to the rise of narcoterrorism. He also highlights the various narcotic industries historically related to terrorist organizations, including the cocaine and opium industry. Additionally, he presents substantial evidence illustrating global narcoterrorist relations. Most importantly, Curtis specifically details how individual terrorist organizations are involved with narcotics, which vary from taxing to directly producing narcotic products.

Two major, recognized narco-terrorist relationships within related literature, which will be used as case study examples of traditional narcoterrorism, are in Colombia and Afghanistan, respectively. Cecilia Menjívar and Nestor Rodriguez provide detailed analysis on the narcoterrorist relationships within Colombia. They illustrate the dynamics of Colombia's narco-terrorist activities and the various objectives and roles of the country's narco-terrorist organizations.⁸ The terrorist connections to Afghanistan's opium trade are well explained by David MacDonald. He presents extensive information on the history of Afghanistan's opium industry and how terrorist organizations, such as the Taliban, grew to associate and benefit from the industry.⁹

2008-2016

In addition to significant literature on traditional narcoterrorism, there is an abundance of literature on the topic of terrorist financing. The financing of terrorist organizations is crucial to the operations of any organizations and is acquired through various methods. These methods include foreign support, charity donation, extortion, money laundering, smuggling, and trafficking, to name only a few.¹⁰ Drug trafficking is one of the terrorist sources of revenue that Clarke recognizes. In addition to identifying and explaining various methods of terrorist financing, he also relates funding to the operational competence of terrorist organizations.

Ridley, also, emphasizes operational competence by identifying the numerous capabilities that terrorist organizations require to function, including training, recruitment, intelligence, etc. Ridley argues that focusing on the sources of terrorist financing is imperative to limiting the power of terrorist organizations.¹¹ In agreement, Jimmy Gurulé provides extensive examples of terrorists reliance on funding, and what the money goes towards. He, like Ridley, proposes greater strategic, policy action against various areas of terrorist financing, including the narcotic industry.¹²

My Research Topic

Although the topic of narcoterrorism is well recognized within the discipline of terrorism studies, it is a relationship that is mentioned and then forgotten in today's world. Terrorism has overshadowed narcotics as a security threat; however, this topic will reemphasize the interconnectedness of both and the growing potential narcoterrorism holds in contemporary times.

The Literature Gap

Through this research I resolve to fill the literature gap on the topic of contemporary narcoterrorism that is lacking in present literature. The research will incorporate literature on the traditional background of narcoterrorism as a comparative foundation, analyzing the differences between traditional and contemporary terrorist organizations. After illustrating the strength of traditional narcoterrorism, the study will analyze how the differences of the contemporary terrorist would affect this narco-relationship. To solidify its role as contemporary literature, the research will emphasize the greater potential of contemporary narcoterrorism in comparison to traditional narcoterrorism. The research will serve as an academic caveat of the future of narcoterrorism and a call for present-day policy action.

My Research Design

To determine the role of contemporary narcoterrorism, I will present past, traditional narcoterrorist relations and compare the characteristics of traditional and contemporary terrorist organizations. In order to do so, I have chosen three related case studies, which I will identify subsequently. After identifying the differences within my chosen characteristics of terrorist organizations (*organizational structure, terrorist targets, methods of terror and operational cost*), I will analyze how the characteristics unique to contemporary terrorist organizations will influence the contemporary role of contemporary terrorism.

My first two case studies will present the traditional narcoterrorist relations within Colombia and Afghanistan. Each of these regions has historically held strong narcoterrorist activity. Both case studies will emphasize the traditional characteristics of the chosen terrorist organizations within the region. Additionally, the case studies will illustrate how the

characteristics of terrorism influence terrorists' cost of sustainability. My final case study will introduce the unique characteristics of contemporary terrorism, through the example of a relevant, and contemporary terrorist organization. Additionally, the final case study will present the current standing of the international narcotic industry, and the advantages of narcotic industry that would significantly benefit contemporary terrorists. The overall construct of research design will provide evidence and analysis that support my thesis, advocating the growing potential of narcoterrorism in modern times.

Traditional Narcoterrorism in Latin America

Since the 1980s, Colombia has typically held the role of the world's largest producer of cocaine, producing about 70-80% of the global cocaine market annually. Colombia's strong narcotic industry has been sustained by various terrorist organizations, ranging from guerrilla groups to paramilitaries. This case study focuses on the traditional terrorist organization, las Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), and its relations with Colombia's cocaine industry. An alleged 70% of the AUC's funding came from narcotics.¹³ The relationship between the AUC and Colombia's cocaine industry demonstrates a traditional narcoterrorist relationship.

Traditional Narcoterrorism in the Middle East

To reinforce the model of traditional narcoterrorism, the study turns to another case study example: The Taliban's connections to Afghanistan's thriving opium industry. Afghanistan produces over two thirds of the global opium industry. The expansive success of Afghanistan's opium industry can be attributed to the Taliban regime. Founded in 1996, the Taliban was an oppressive religious regime, which received about 70% of its funding from the opium industry.¹⁴

Like the AUC, the Taliban's narcoterrorism is a strong example of how successful relationships between terrorist organizations and the narcotic industry have been.

Contemporary Terrorism and the Future of Narcoterrorism

The final, comparative case study is an example of contemporary terrorism and its unique characteristics provide the foundation for the research thesis. I choose the Islamic State because of its relevance today, and because it illustrates the characteristics of contemporary terrorism. The Islamic State's characteristics differences are what classify them as a model of contemporary terrorism. These characteristics only increase the profitable potential between contemporary terrorists and the narcotic industry. Additionally, the narcotic industry is one of the most beneficial options available to terrorist organizations today, such as IS. Hence, my research thesis prudently predicts that narcoterrorism will significantly increase in the developing future of contemporary terrorism.

CHAPTER 2: TRADITIONAL NARCOTERRORISM IN LATIN AMERICA

For the first case study example of the traditional narco-terrorist relationship, this research study will focus on a country with a narco-economy that has directly influenced the United States. The unsurpassed, global leader of cocaine production and historically tormented by political violence, Latin America's Colombia offers prime examples of the traditional narco-terrorist relationship.

Although Colombia also produces and traffics marijuana, opium and heroin, cocaine is by far Colombia's drug of choice. The prevalence and influence of the cocaine industry on Colombia's political, economic and social structures will be detailed throughout this case study. In addition to a rampant narcotic economy, Colombia has also been home to various traditional terrorist organizations, including paramilitaries and guerilla groups. However, this case study will focus on one of Colombia's most infamous paramilitary organizations. Paramilitaries are armed militias (acting as an unofficial apparatus of a state actor) that typically carry out acts of terror under the state's political agenda. Colombia's paramilitaries are especially known for their involvement with the country's drug trade.¹⁵ The paramilitary history of Colombia will be discussed further in a following section.

This example of the nexus between drugs and terror in our own "backyard" of Latin America will support the overall goal of establishing the background of traditional narco-terrorism. The history of Colombia's violent paramilitaries, in league with the cocaine industry, will illustrate the influence of narco-terrorism on political, economic and social structures.

Specifically, this case study will focus on the relationship between the cocaine industry and Colombia's United Self-Defense Forces (Las Auto-Defensas Unidas de Colombia- AUC). The purpose of the case study is to present the multi-faceted aspects of traditional narco-terrorism, and thus contribute to predicting the potential of contemporary narcoterrorism.

Colombia's Narcotic Industry

The development of Colombia's prevalent cocaine industry has significantly influenced the country's social, economic and political structures. Moreover, Colombia's narco-economy has held significant consequences on the global cocaine market and on the presence of narcotic addiction and violence in the Western Hemisphere, especially in the United States. In a country with a population of about 44 million, about 2 million Colombians have left since 1985 due to the instability and violence augmented by the narco-economy.¹⁶ In March of 1984, the severity of the Colombian nexus between drugs and terror made national headlines when the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) executed a world record bust of 13.8 tons of cocaine (street value of 1.2 million) at a cocaine lab fortified by military-like equipment and structures.¹⁷ It became unequivocally clear to the international community that Colombia's narcotic industry was being fostered by organizations other than local street gangs.

Historically, the Andean region (including Colombia) has nurtured the cultivation and use of coca in everyday life for over four thousand years. Indigenous tribes especially cultivated coca leaves as a nutritional supplement to their basic diets, as well an appetite suppressant. The use of coca leaves was documented as early as the mid 16th century by the Spanish conquistador Pedro Cieza de Leon. Coca was such an established commodity by the colonial era that it was even used as a form of currency.¹⁸

The resilient coca plant thrives across the various altitudes and climates of Colombia, growing in mountainous areas and poor soil that otherwise could not be used for food crops. Additionally, the coca plant is uniquely less susceptible to common parasites and diseases. Coca cultivation is rather labor-intensive, in terms of time; however, its cultivation requires only basic equipment and elementary labor skills. Coca crops can yield anywhere from 2 to 6 harvests a year, making it a fruitful opportunity for rural farmers. Historically, coca crops have been an appealing “cash crop” and labor source in rural areas of Colombia, where unemployment levels are highest. Lastly, the manual labor skills required in the production of coca into coca paste or cocaine are also relatively minimal. After production, this high value, low-weight commodity is easy to transport and distribute.¹⁹

The “cocaine decade” of Colombia began to surge in the mid 1970s, following an increase in U.S. demand for cocaine products. About 80 percent of Colombia’s cocaine exports were run through cartels in Medellin and Cali whose revenue was around \$6 billion annually by the 1980s.²⁰ Colombian drug cartels were rarely involved with the cultivation or manufacture of coca; however, their role in improving the distribution of the illicit product was not insignificant. By 1987, Colombia produced 11% of the global cocaine products and the drug industry had boosted the national GDP by 7-10 %.²¹

The boom of the Colombian cocaine industry can be largely attributed to their competitive advantage geographically speaking. In comparison with Latin America’s other coca-producing countries, such as Peru and Bolivia, Colombia enjoys a proximate geographical location that allows both narcotic transit relationships with Mexico and the Caribbean area. The value of cocaine exponentially increases through these transit routes from Colombia to the U.S.

(majority consumer) and Europe. Coca cultivation acreage was estimated at about 51,000 hectares around the mid 1970s; however, in 2001 the United Nations Drug Control Program estimated that over 400,000 hectares were now used to cultivate coca.²² At the height of its success in the late 1990s, Colombia's narcotic industry provided 80% of the world's cocaine.²³

The economic role of the cocaine industry created a "narco-bourgeoisie" in Colombia that claimed about 40% of the total wealth of all Colombians. These drug lords significantly affected the country's social and political structures.²⁴ For example, the Medellin cartel used some of their narco-funds to promote public goods and services in Colombia, promoting strong justification for their socio-political involvement.²⁵ The words of former Peruvian president, Alan Garcia, echo the sentiments of many: "The only successful transnational enterprise originating in our countries is narcotics trafficking. The most successful effort to achieve Andean integration has been made by the drug traffickers".²⁶

The economic prowess of Colombia's "narcos" attracted investment (especially in agriculture), boosted the Colombian standard of living and lowered the national levels of unemployment. However, the narcotic industry of Colombia also exacerbated political corruption and violence that inherently undermined human rights. Colombians felt extremely divided on the role of drug trafficking, which brought them economic benefits but restricted their social and political rights.²⁷ For example, when Colombian President Belisario Betancur implemented a state of siege so that drug traffickers could be tried in military court without bail (due to a recent political assassination of Colombia's minister of Justice), the drug lords declared they would "close down 1800 businesses and arm a terrorist force of 18,000 against the government." The

political and economic power of the drug lords in Colombia made implementing legitimate government rule ineffective at best.²⁸

Overall, the cocaine industry has significantly infiltrated the economic, social and political structures of Colombia. However, Colombia's cocaine industry must be studied in tandem with its history of paramilitary organizations, which greatly coincides with the growth of Colombia's narcotic industry.

Colombia's Paramilitary History

One of the innovative forces behind the growth of Colombia's cocaine industry was the state's "unofficial" use of paramilitary forces. Colombia's United Self-Defense Forces (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia- AUC) is only one of the paramilitaries that thrived in Colombia; however, the AUC will be the primary focus of this case study.

To begin with, paramilitaries are military, political machines that are typically operating under the direction of state-authorized sanctions. Although they are "officially" separate from the state, they benefit off the resources and support of the state. The purpose of paramilitaries was to protect the state against any possible threat in a manner that the state cannot legitimately condone; hence they are more offensive in nature, than defensive.²⁹

The paramilitaries of Colombia grew from a 1965 law that legitimized the assembly of civilian militias. "All Colombians, men and women not involved in the call to compulsory military service, may be used by the Government in acts and works contributing to the reestablishment of normality".³⁰ These civil-defense militias were legalized with purpose of aiding the state in their counter-insurgency efforts against Colombia's leftist guerilla organizations, such as FARC and the ELN.³¹ The strategy of legalizing paramilitaries was part of

Plan Lazo, a joint military project by the U.S. and Colombian government, which targeted leftist guerillas and areas supportive of Communist ideologies.³² However, in the late 1980s these paramilitaries began to grow increasingly violent and associated with drug trafficking. In 1989, paramilitary groups were deemed illegal. Regardless of Colombia's new "official" ban on paramilitaries, paramilitaries continued to assemble and fight against the leftist guerillas. Landowners, cattle-ranchers, miners, agricultural business owners, and even drug-lords led the "second wave" of Colombian paramilitaries. The paramilitaries continued to provide the Colombian administration with intelligence and military-like support.³³ The distinction between paramilitary groups and the state's military was different in name only.

The unmistakable rise of Colombian paramilitary groups began in the late 1980-1990s, due to an increase in leftist guerilla violence across the country. Over one hundred right-wing, paramilitary groups assembled and joined the efforts of the state in eradicating left-wing, guerilla organizations. Colombia's paramilitaries were characterized by their strict, political objectives in targeting anyone who was thought to be associated or sympathetic to the guerilla cause. The paramilitaries were well trained and equipped and executed highly effective, military style attacks against their targets.³⁴

Through the paramilitary strategy, the state is able to conceal the level of their responsibility of certain events by delineating their political targets to paramilitaries.³⁵ The Colombian government was able to 'evade responsibility for crimes by entrusting much of the dirty work to armed civilian group,' hence, the political violence of the paramilitaries could not 'be attributed to persons on behalf of the state because they have been delegated, passed along or projected upon confused bodies of armed citizens'.³⁶ Additionally, the 2002 World Report by

Human Rights Watch, documented the relationship between Colombia's military and the AUC paramilitary. The AUC would exchange civilian corpses for weapons, and the army would then claim the bodies as guerrillas who had been killed in action. Other reports affirm the exchange of intelligence and supplies between the government and paramilitary organizations.³⁷

Unfortunately, however, this relationship only encouraged political violence and human rights violations.

Paramilitary groups' social targets fell under the general category of anyone who was associated or allegedly supportive of leftist and other anti-state ideologies. These targets included: women, youth, journalists, students, human rights activists, indigenous tribes, and trade unions. Not only were the Colombian paramilitary targets unnecessarily broad but also the paramilitaries were characterized by brutal methods of torture and slaughter. It is estimated that paramilitaries conducted over 1,000 massacres that left about 8,500 people dead from 1993-2006. Paramilitary cultivated a culture of fear through public mutilation, rape and other methods leading to extremely painful deaths. Furthermore, paramilitaries would also sometimes hide the bodies of their victims to avoid murder convictions and add to the culture of fear. This led to crematoriums where paramilitaries burned over 200 victims between 2001-2003. The brutality of the paramilitaries was responsible for 46% of all internal displacement in Colombia, compared to 12% by the guerilla groups.³⁸ Official studies estimate that about 1.4 million Colombians were internally displaced within the borders of Colombia by 1999.³⁹

Moreover, paramilitaries held a strong presence in Colombia's political structures. The "paramilitary elite" often financed the campaigns of pro-paramilitary candidates, harassed opposing candidates and pressured citizens to vote for pro-military candidates. Through these

tactics, the paramilitary were able to evade political oversight and run their illegal operations and financial enterprises smoothly. It is estimated that 77% of elected officials in Colombia's Congress from 2002-2006 were directly linked to paramilitaries.⁴⁰ In 2008, paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso was extradited to the U.S. on drug trafficking charges and in what was named the "Parapolitica scandal" testified to the names of about 100 politicians in Colombia with paramilitary ties.⁴¹

One of the more prominent paramilitary networks, was Colombia's United Self-Defense Forces, the AUC. The AUC was officially formed in 1997 under the leadership of Carlos Castaño, a significant figure of authority in Colombia's paramilitary history. Although the AUC was formally named in the late 1990s, it was a conglomerate of several precursor paramilitary organizations, which aligned their efforts against the leftist guerilla groups.⁴² Under Castaño's strict organizational structure, the AUC grew into the state's most powerful, armed political machine. The centrality of the organization and the enforced chain of command allowed the AUC to incorporate most, if not all, of Colombia's political paramilitaries under its umbrella.⁴³

By 2002, the AUC was estimated at 15,000 members and established a well-armed presence across over 40% of Colombian municipalities. The AUC considered themselves to be patriots saving their country from the corruption of leftist groups. An excerpt from a 2003 Colombian letter reads, "The historic military role assumed by the self-defense forces has been a necessary and determinant factor that has allowed Colombia to sustain its fragile and threatened democracy...in the context of the indecision and incongruence of the political system".⁴⁴

As a result of the aforementioned human rights violations, the U.S. Department of State placed the AUC on its official list of terrorist organizations in 2001.⁴⁵ In response to international

criticism of the AUC's brutal human rights violations, Carlos Castaño stated that the AUC would no longer commit massacres. However, research suggests that the AUC continued to kill non-combatants and suspected guerrillas in mass and then disperse or hide the bodies to avoid the public's attention.⁴⁶

The socio-economic role of the AUC was most obvious through its role in the illegal economy, more specifically the narcotic industry, of Colombia. This financial relationship is the focus of this case study and will be presented in depth in its own respective and following section. However, the socio-political role of the AUC was significant in its own respect. Because the AUC became the all-encompassing paramilitary of the state, the organization itself was a noteworthy political actor. The AUC controlled a large majority of regions across Colombia and had representatives supporting them at both local and state levels of political infrastructure. Although Colombia boasts of its democratic elections and relative lack of military coups, it clearly has had more than its fair share of political violence. Political conflict in Colombia has typically been resolved through armed engagement; consequently, paramilitaries were considered to be convenient and profitable for the state.⁴⁷

The AUC was officially demobilized under Colombian president, Alvaro Uribe, in 2002. The AUC declared a cease-fire with the Colombian government and from there began peace-talks. However, the political violence related with the AUC did not immediately dissipate, as the AUC did not declare a cease-fire with leftist organizations. Over the course of the next few years, the AUC was slowly disassembled. By 2006, the AUC was no longer the paramilitary umbrella of Colombia.⁴⁸

Overall, the AUC illustrates the characteristics of a traditional terrorist organization: vertical chain of command (under Castaño), “defined” political targets, and low-levels methods of terror (in terms of intelligence necessary). The capabilities of the AUC as a terrorist organization were significantly associated with and funded by Colombia’s cocaine industry, which significantly contributed to the longevity of the paramilitary’s power.

Colombia’s Narco-Terrorism

In Colombia, drug violence and political violence were essentially synonymous. The close relationship between the Colombian cocaine industry and Colombian paramilitary groups such as the AUC encouraged violence. The narcoterrorist is a terrorist unit that significantly exploits the financial profits of the narcotic industry as a means of funding their objectives, etc. The existence of the Colombian narcoterrorist is indisputably supported through evidence that will be subsequently presented, including the strength of the relationship, and the consequences of the relationship.

At the very beginning of the AUC, their leader Carlos Castaño attempted to insulate the paramilitary from the cocaine industry of Colombia. Castaño declared that any individual associated with the paramilitary would be severely punished for any involvement in the drug trade.⁴⁹ Castaño is quoted with saying, ‘With respect to narco-trafficking, our organization has been clear...those members who commit such crimes will have to respond to the Colombian or foreign courts and in no moment may their personal activity involve the organization, which does not participate in this type of business’.⁵⁰ It is thought that Castaño originally held these anti-narcotic sentiments due to his *campesino* Catholic upbringing. However, Castaño’s sentiments eventually changed as the AUC expanded and required increasing funding. He began

by permitting the taxation of cocaine exports, which collected about two to three hundred pesos a month. Guerilla groups, such as FARC, also used this method of coca taxation. By 1997, Castaño had begun overtly funding the AUC through coca taxation. That same year, Castaño met with the leading *cocaleros* (cocaine producers/distributors) in Colombia and offered them better protection against the guerillas in return for half of the taxes the guerillas were asking the *cocaleros* for. A major massacre soon after this offer, the Mapiripán massacre, bore witness to the results of the meeting.⁵¹ A five-day massacre, the AUC brutally murdered and tortured over 30 residents of a small town named Mapiripán, throwing them into the river. The incident illustrated the relationship between the AUC and the cocaine industry, but also its relationship with the state's military that feigned ignorance of the massacre.⁵²

In 2002, Castaño publically acknowledged the role of the cocaine industry in the AUC's financial sources. 'Our declarations that the AUC collects 'taxes' on the coca producers should not be interpreted as evidence of trafficking or exporting of drugs...the drugs on production are necessary to maintain the fight against the FARC, but are not evidence of personal enrichment'.⁵³ Castaño continued to insist, despite evidence otherwise, that the AUC's participation in the drug trade was strictly restricted to fees on the production of coca. In 2001, he reported that the AUC profited only about \$2 million a year in taxes through the coca industry. He continued to downplay the paramilitary's association with the illicit drug trade, but evidence was overwhelmingly against him. It became clear that the AUC was much more involved with the drug trade by providing security and resources for the manufacturing and transportation of coca.⁵⁴ In 1999, a police operation in Colombia uncovered a coca lab under paramilitary control that produced about 8 tons of cocaine a month. By 2002, Castaño admitted that the AUC's

funding was 70% related to Colombia's cocaine industry. Altogether the combination of drug-related activities, extorted and voluntary contributions amounted to an official estimate of \$200-\$300 million income per year towards the AUC's activities.⁵⁵

Later in 2002, the U.S. attempted to extradite Castaño and another AUC leader, Salvatore Mancuso, on drug-trafficking charges. Castaño, who considered himself a patriot and continued to deny direct involvement with the drug industry, was insulted by these charges. Earlier that year, he had conferred with the AUC and suggested withdrawing the paramilitary's support to the drug trade. The other leaders of the AUC refused to do so.⁵⁶ The lack of control that Castaño held over the AUC's relationship with the cocaine industry illustrates the severity of the nexus between drugs and terror. "It is a seemly inevitable fact that, when terrorist groups pass a certain state in their development and become successful in financial terms, their high political principles are compromised." The AUC is exemplary of this statement. The more funding the AUC was able to derive from the cocaine industry, the more dependent on the relationship they became.⁵⁷ In closing, the inextricably correlation between Colombia's cocaine industry and the power of the AUC as a paramilitary illustrates the substantial consequences of the narco-terrorist relationship.

Colombia and Cocaine Today

After investigating the history of the cocaine industry in Colombia, it is important to also recognize the role that Colombia's cocaine industry plays today. According to the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report on Colombia, cocaine production in 2014 rose by 30% and 60 metric tons (MT) over the 2013 production levels. This rise is due to a 39% increase in coca cultivation, which rose from 85,500 hectares (ha) in 2013 to 112,000 hectares in

2014. In 2014, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration also estimated that about 90 of the cocaine seized within the United States is of Colombian origin. The dramatic increases in 2014 are attributed to reports that insurgency groups, specifically FARC, encouraged coca farmers to plant more in anticipation of post peace-talks with the Colombian government that would potentially then target coca-growing areas. Additionally coca growers have implemented several counter-eradication techniques that have proven to be much more effective than eradication techniques. Although Colombia continues to fight the cocaine industry and often works hand in hand with the U.S. with drug-crime related extradition, Colombia's cocaine industry continues to feed the violence and corruption within the country.⁵⁸

Conclusions

This case study offered an informative background on traditional narcoterrorism in Latin America, and illustrated the severe consequences of a financial relationship between a traditional terrorist organization and the narcotic industry. The case study highlighted the characteristics of the AUC, a traditional terrorist organization: a vertical chain of command, short-term intelligence operations and specific and regional political targets. Then, the case study portrayed how the narcoterrorism in Colombia significantly shaped the historical development of the country. The unofficial partnership between the state and the terrorist paramilitaries, such as the AUC, corrupted economic and political structures and spread instability. This instability lead to a lack of trust in government and general unrest, which only perpetuated the presence of the narco-terrorist. The success of the cocaine industry provided substantially for Colombia's paramilitaries, expanding their budget, capabilities and political influence. Through political ties to the state and economic ties to narcotics, paramilitaries, such as the AUC, became a main actor

in Colombian politics. The evidence provided in the case study illustrates how easily the narco-terrorist gains men, money and momentum. The following case study will further support the historical background of traditional narcoterrorism.

CHAPTER 3: TRADITIONAL NARCOTERRORISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In comparison to Colombia's AUC, Afghanistan's Taliban regime illustrates another example of a traditional terrorist organization significantly associated and involved with the narcotics industry. In contrast, the Taliban is regionally and ideologically different from the AUC. However, as a traditional terrorist organization, the Taliban does share some common characteristics factors) including: organizational structure, terrorist targets, and methods of terror. This comparison portrays the diversity of traditional narcoterrorist relationships, while consolidating the consistent characteristics of a traditional narcoterrorist relationship. The aforementioned factors will be used to illustrate how the narcotic industry affected and benefited the terrorist organization. Additionally, in the following case study, these factors will lay a historical foundation for predicting the potential development of contemporary narco-terrorist relationships.

Over the last 25 years, Afghanistan has developed into the world's lead producer and exporter of opium and its derivatives. Similar to Colombia, the opium industry has significantly affected the economic, political and social development of Afghanistan. This development can be attributed to the innovative sponsorship of Afghanistan's Taliban regime during the late 1990s. An authoritarian insurgency, the Taliban was a traditional terrorist organization that manipulated and benefitted from the profitable financial market of opium.⁵⁹

Consistent with the previous case study, this case study will present background knowledge on both Afghanistan's narcotic industry and Taliban organization and how they

influenced political, economic and social structures. From there, the narcoterrorism relationship between the two will be detailed, especially focusing on how the relationship affected the Taliban's capabilities, such as weaponry, training, intelligence. The purpose of this case study is to reinforce the background of traditional narco-terrorism, in order to make an informed prediction on the likelihood and potential of contemporary narco-terrorism.

Afghanistan's Narcotic Industry

The development of Afghanistan's successful opium industry has held significant consequences on social, economic and political structures. Furthermore, Afghanistan's growth into a narco-economy has augmented the detrimental effects of the heroin market in Western countries, especially Europe, which is Afghanistan's largest opiate consumer. "The opium economy- including its nexus with insecurity, warlords, state weakness, and poor governance- constitutes a central development problem for the country".⁶⁰

Opium's presence in Afghanistan dates back to the time period of Alexander the Great, however, opium held only a limited role economically until the early 1990s. Around this time, Afghanistan's Musahiban government began to capitalize on legal opiate cultivation. This venture became a profitable source of financial security for the government.⁶¹ Additionally, legal opium production is important for countries' medical and scientific need for illicit substances, including morphine, heroin, codeine, and thebaine. The International Narcotics Control Board is the organization in charge of sanctioning the amount of acreage that can be used for a country's legal opium crops. Generally speaking, Turkey and India have been the world's producers of legal opiates, however, the disruption of WWII allowed Afghanistan a small foothold into the narcotic industry.⁶²

As the market demand and value for Afghan opiates increased, the Afghan government's control over opium cultivation decreased. Illegal opium crops began to appear with much more frequency. Around the mid-1990s, the U.S. –one of Afghanistan's main consumers of legal opiates- began to question the rise of illegal opiate production in Afghanistan. Due to external market pressures from the U.S. and a need for foreign aid, the Afghan government put forth a ban against both legal and illegal opium production. However, this ban was anything but effective.⁶³

Opium cultivation and exportation continued to increase. As a crop, opium is significantly profitable. It is a hardy, drought resistant plant, easy to maintain in Afghanistan's mountainous countryside. Additionally, opiates are relatively lightweight and easy to transport. Opium was an appealing financial option to rural agricultural areas with little other means of financial profit.⁶⁴ During Afghanistan's political turmoil in the 1970's (outbreak of civil war), Afghanistan slowly began to emerge as a principle contributor of the illicit opium industry. This step into the global narcotic industry has been attributed to Afghanistan's 'triple comparative advantage of favorable physical, political and economic conditions'.⁶⁵

Opium not only sustained Afghanistan's need for a valuable economic commodity, but also the country's need for wage labor. 'Drug profits are clearly financing local warlords and the political elite but also sustain the livelihoods of many quite poor people'.⁶⁶ In 2002, research done on the average value of heroin from cultivation/production to distribution corroborates the unequal distribution of financial profit. The value of one kilogram of heroin ranged from about \$550 at farm-gate value to \$175,000 at retail value in Europe.⁶⁷ A 2005 illegal opium crop in Afghanistan serves as another supporting example. The farm gate value of the crop was \$560

million, in comparison to the opium traffickers' revenue of \$2.14 billion and the export value of \$2.7 billion.⁶⁸

Although the rural farmer benefits the least financially (in comparison of monetary profits), the opium industry is not without significant advantages for the rural farmer. Opium is traditionally harvested by hand, hence, it is a rather labor intensive commodity. Furthermore, the opium poppy is an annual crop that must be sown each year. Poppy crops must be methodologically weeded, and the poppy head must be gathered within a small window of time. However, these characteristics are not necessarily negative, as they raise the opportunity for wage labor.⁶⁹

Furthermore, the necessary skills and tools required for opium cultivation are respectively, easily acquired and easily manufactured. Opium also serves as a form of insurance and investment for the rural farmer. *Salaam*, the system of advanced purchase on opium crops provides farmers with financial security and investment options. Furthermore, the farmer can use opium profits to provide insurance against market fluctuations in food crops, such as wheat and maize.⁷⁰ By 2003-2004, an estimated 34% of harvested acreage was opium, in comparison with 59% wheat and 7% vegetables/fruit.⁷¹

From 1994-2002, Afghanistan produced over 20,000 tons of opium, about 63% of the world's opium production. The closest in production rates is Myanmar, at only about 30% of global opium production. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghanistan's opium market profited about \$150 million a year between 1994-2000. This profit exponentially increased to about \$1200 million in 2002, though this settled down to around \$560 million in 2005. However, even with this decrease, it was about 52% of Afghanistan's GDP.⁷² The

economic role of the opium industry is enough to consider Afghanistan an established narco-economy.

Additionally, the opium industry has held devastating socio-cultural consequence on the region. One of the most significant social effects is the exponential increase of drug addiction. The regional drug problem of the Middle Eastern region has dramatically increased, specifically heroin addiction. Pakistan, a trade route area for the opium industry, had about 20,00 heroin addicts in 1980. In 2005, the numbers had multiplied about 25 times.⁷³ Iran, the other principle transit country for opium, is home to about 2 million addicts. In addition to a serious drug addiction culture, the spread of HIV considerably increased due to heroin needle sharing. These increasing addiction and health epidemics seriously hamper social development.⁷⁴

Lastly, the opium industry has a negative impact on the political structures of Afghanistan. The illegality of the prominent narcotic industry exacerbates the political instability of the country. The narcotic industry holds concrete ties with Afghan's violent insurgencies, hence irking the development of Afghanistan's government. However, governmental corruption, the economic importance and general acceptance of opium as a commodity undermine the regional efforts to reduce the narcotic presence.

In 2006, Afghan President Hamid Karzai called the opium trade, "the single greatest challenge to long-time security, development and effected governance of Afghanistan." It is common knowledge that the narcotic industry has corrupted many state authorities. Local farmers bribe government officials to turn a blind eye in return for a profit, etc. In fact, it has been estimated that Afghan government officials were involved in about 70% of narcotic trafficking. Because prosecuting these offenders can further undermine the outward appearance

of state, these officials often escape untouched. Additionally, because about half of Afghanistan's GDP is related to the narcotic industry, the initiative to eliminate its presence is rather weak. Moreover, there is a fear of isolating the rural farmer dependent on opium crops, which might drive them to support anti-government insurgencies.⁷⁵

Overall, the opium industry has significantly infiltrated the economic, social and political structures of Afghanistan. The presence of Afghanistan's drug culture has encouraged an environment of insecurity, ideal for extremist organizations such as the Taliban.

Afghanistan's Taliban Regime

An innovative force behind the success of Afghanistan's opium industry, the Taliban regime transformed into a military insurgency rooted in both traditional terrorism and the narcotic industry. The Taliban was originally a religious movement led by Mullah Mohammad Omar and composed of Islamic students. The name Taliban is derived from the word *talib*, meaning "one who seeks knowledge".⁷⁶

The Soviets had occupied Afghanistan since 1979 in an attempt to implement a Soviet Afghan regime. However, after substantial loss of life, Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, decided to withdraw his forces in 1989. Gorbachev's withdrawal of forces resulted in significant political destabilization as Afghanistan's warlords, the mujahedeen, struggled to gain power among themselves.⁷⁷

The Taliban burst into Afghanistan's political instability rather unexpectedly. The origins of the organization are said to stem from an intervention of Omar and 30 "talibs" in 1994, on behalf of two young girls who had been abducted and abused by a military commander. The

original group of thirty eventually developed into 30,000-35,000 followers.⁷⁸ The Taliban grew to control about 90% of Afghanistan from 1996-2001.⁷⁹

Omar founded the Taliban on the principle of subduing the violent instability characteristic of the post-Soviet time period. The Taliban's principle objectives were to 'restore peace, disarm the population, enforce Sharia law, and defend the integrity and Islamic character of Afghanistan'.⁸⁰ The Afghan, tired of the civil war within their borders, welcomed the Taliban and their promises of peace.⁸¹

Additionally, Omar implemented a variety of trade routes for financial reasons that encouraged economic growth. The Taliban gained substantial popular support, specifically due to their positive economic influence. Osama bin Laden, the Saudi Arabian terrorist leader, even sponsored the Taliban. By 1996, the Taliban had gained control over the majority of Afghanistan. Fundamentalist Islamists attributed the Talibs with restoring Afghanistan to stability after the post-Soviet chaos.⁸²

However, under the Taliban regime, strict legal codes were enforced, promoting a "pure" Islamic state of Afghanistan. The Talib's fundamentalist rule included restricted women's rights in education, work, and personal freedoms. Television, non-religious publications, homosexuality, adultery, were among the severely punishable offenses. The Taliban established the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice (PVSV), a religious police that executed extreme punishments ranging from public execution, to amputations, to public beatings.⁸³

The manner in which the Taliban enforced their fundamental Islamic rule was drastically different from Afghan social norms, especially in the rural areas of Afghanistan where the

Taliban was less familiar. The Taliban forcefully implemented ideals of how rural locals should conduct themselves. Although the Taliban was a strong military regime, they lacked ideological connections to the majority of Afghanistan.⁸⁴ The Afghans were left stuck between the Taliban's harsh rule of law and economic innovation.

The structural organization of the Taliban was extremely centralized into a vertical chain of command. Omar was the Supreme Leader (and remained so throughout the existence of the Taliban), and he and a small group of elders (mullahs) dictated official decisions. The PVSV and other units of the Talib executed Omar's decisions indiscriminately. Because of the Taliban's violent extremist policies and actions, only three countries gave political recognition to the Taliban government: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.⁸⁵

During the Taliban regime, Omar enjoyed a sponsorship and relationship with Al-Qaeda's extremist leader, Osama Bin Laden. This relationship brought the Taliban regime under severe international criticism, as Afghanistan became a haven for Islamic extremists to gather safely. However, the Taliban and Al Qaeda remained two distinct organizations, due to their very different ideologies.⁸⁶

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 against the United States, the Taliban experienced the full force of international criticism for their relations with Bin Laden. Although the Taliban denied any contribution to the 9/11 attacks, the damage was done. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates ended their diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime, and Pakistan encouraged the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden to the international community. In 2001, the U.S. and Great Britain began air strikes against the Taliban and Al Qaeda within Afghanistan. The Northern Alliance of Afghanistan, Taliban opposition, joined the military campaign against

the Taliban. By the end of 2001, the Taliban regime collapsed and Taliban opponent, Hamid Karzai, took governmental control over Afghanistan.⁸⁷

However, the Taliban's fall from power did not spell the end of the Taliban. Rather, Taliban leaders regrouped (still under the leadership of Omar) and formed a terrorist-like insurgency rather than a religious regime. The Taliban insurgency devoted their efforts against the Afghan government, U.S. military forces within Afghanistan, and certain areas of Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Consequently, the borders of Afghanistan relatively define their terrorist targets. By 2005, the Taliban, once again, gained international attention for their methods of terror, including suicide bombs, roadside bombs, political assassinations and kidnappings.⁸⁸ These methods of terror require relatively short-term intelligence operations in order to carry out attacks successfully.

Although the argument can be made that the Taliban regime did not constitute a terrorist organization, the Taliban insurgency that arose after 2001 is, in fact, a terrorist organization. The Taliban insurgency demonstrates the characteristics of a traditional terrorist organization: vertical chain of command, specific "defined" targets, and lower-level methods of terror (in terms of intelligence necessary). Lastly, not only is the Taliban insurgency a terrorist organization, but they are also an organization deeply entrenched in Afghanistan's opium industry.

Afghanistan's Narco-Terrorism

The Taliban began affiliating with Afghanistan's opium industry from the inception of the regime and their involvement continued into their transformation into an insurgency. An estimated 70% of the Taliban's funding has been related to involvement in the narcotic industry.

Despite the fact that the Taliban's religious principles did not condone the use of narcotics, the organization held no stipulations against profiting off of the drug usage of "infidels".⁸⁹

The Taliban regime appeared around the same time as Afghanistan's opium industry began to significantly grow, and the regime only aided this growth. By significantly reducing checkpoints and ending Afghanistan's civil war, the Taliban greatly facilitated the expansion of the opium industry. In 1999, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) estimated that 91,000 hectares were being used for opium cultivation, a staggering difference to the reported 18,500 hectares estimated in 1987.⁹⁰

One theory surmises that the Taliban maximized the opium industry in order to capitalize on the industry. In 2001, the Taliban reduced opium production by 90% with a strictly enforced ban on the cultivation and production of opium products. It is stipulated that this ban was actually a financial strategy, as the Taliban cultivated the drastic rise in demand in comparison to the drop in supply. The value of poppies and opiates multiplied by almost 10 times, and the Taliban only strictly enforced the ban for about a year's span. After then, the Taliban's narcotic sponsorship grew more and more consistent. Eventually, the Taliban publically portrayed their involvement in the opium trade as an attempt to protect the livelihood of the common Afghan. They denounced counter-narcotic strategies as attempts to destabilize the Afghan economy.⁹¹

Another theory stipulates that the Taliban regime's 2001 ban on opium was related to their desire for international recognition and foreign financial aid. During the Taliban's regime, only three countries recognized the regime as a legitimate government, and the majority of the international community condemned the Taliban's conduct against social groups, especially

women. This lack of political recognition led the Taliban to impose the 2001 ban on opium, in order to illustrate its legitimacy to the international community.⁹²

Regardless of why the Taliban manipulated their association with the narcotic industry, the capabilities of the Taliban (especially as an insurgency) were markedly developed by the stability of their financing, of which narcotics was a major contributor. Although narcotics were by no means the Taliban's only source of funding, their annual narcotics related income ranged from \$70-500 million.⁹³ This was hardly an insignificant amount. In 2007, approximately 80% of opium cultivation occurred in areas controlled by a permanent Taliban insurgency presence. The Taliban organization assisted 'smugglers and farmers protect their laboratories, trade opium up to the border and fight back against anti-drug campaigns'.⁹⁴ The Taliban's profits off of the opium industry are generally related to production and transportation taxes.⁹⁵ Considering the high market value of opiates and the role of Afghanistan as the global leader in illegal opiates, the Taliban insurgency capitalized on the narcotic industry.

Stable income especially sustained the insurgency in three significant areas: weapons, training, and intelligence. As an insurgency, the Taliban operated much like a guerrilla group, using sniping, ambushing, and terrorizing techniques. However, they were extremely well armed. Their extensive weaponry included, but was not limited to: assault rifles, rocket propelled grenades, and improvised explosive devices. With regards to training, the Taliban militants were well prepared. According to U.S. Marine's Corps After Action Reports, Taliban units were well trained in various strategic tactics such as "fire control, combined arms, anti-armor tactics, cover and concealment, and defense in depth".⁹⁶

Additionally, the Taliban insurgency enjoyed sanctuary in Pakistan, where they built several impressive training camps. Lastly, the Taliban developed strong intelligence support, along with collaborations with Pakistani intelligence organizations. Their strong intelligence force allowed the Taliban to infiltrate large areas of Afghanistan. Each of these capabilities requires essential funding, and due to the solid development of each, it is clear that the Taliban was not lacking in funding.⁹⁷ Drawing a correlation between the high level of narcotic revenue, and well-developed capabilities, the Taliban's narcoterrorist relationship was highly effective.

Afghanistan & Opium Today

After investigating the history of the opium industry in Afghanistan, it is important to also recognize the role of Afghanistan's opium industry today. According to the 2016 Afghanistan Opium Survey conducted by the UNODC, opium poppy cultivation has increased. The area of cultivation is estimated at 201,000 hectares, a 10% increase from the last year's estimates. Most of these increases are accounted for in Afghanistan's northern regions where insecurity severely diminished eradication attempts. Overall, eradication efforts have decreased by 91%. The increase in cultivation logistically led to an increase in opiate production. The potential production of opium is up by 43%, from 3,300 tons in 2015 to 4,800 tons in 2016.⁹⁸ Clearly, the opium industry continues to hold a significant role in Afghanistan, contributing to both their GDP and instability.

Conclusions

The previous case studies respectively on Colombia's AUC and Afghanistan's Taliban regime, present an all-encompassing view of the traditional narco-terrorist relationship. With

state-sponsored narcoterrorism (AUC) on one side and insurgent narcoterrorism (Taliban) on the other, one can conclude the general characteristics of traditional terrorist organizations. Both organizations were markedly well armed, trained and informed in comparison their regional opposition forces. Both organizations are characterized by a vertical chain of command, and short-term intelligence operations against their specific and regional political targets. From there, one can investigate the financial relationships that these traditional terrorist organizations enjoyed with the narcotic industry. In both cases, the AUC and the Taliban insurgency profited significantly from their narcotic involvement. The advantages of narcoterrorism are some of the factors that perpetuated the constancy of terrorism in both Colombia and Afghanistan.

Today, however, the contemporary terrorist organization is markedly different. Certain characteristics, which will be investigated in the following case study, set apart the traditional and the contemporary terrorist. On the other hand, the narcotic industry is far from diminished and continues to threaten global security. With this in mind, is the nexus of terrorism and narcotics still a significant threat or simply a vestige of the past? Obviously the two will always have some overlap, but will the contemporary terrorist capitalize on the narcotic industry as the traditional terrorist did before him? And would a contemporary narco-terrorist relationship be more or less profitable than the narco-terrorism of the past? The following and final case study will offer an answer to these questions through investigation of both a contemporary terrorist organization and the role of the global narcotic industry today.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEMPORARY NARCOTERRORISM AND ITS FUTURE

The previous case studies in Colombia and Afghanistan offered a comprehensive background on the traditional narcoterrorist relationship, however, the global nexus between illicit drugs and terrorist organization is still a security concern today (Meierrieks and Scheneider 2016, 1).⁹⁹ The global drug industry continues to enable the movements and objectives of terrorist organizations. However, today the term narco-terrorism is more commonly misused as a “political slogan” rather than significant security threat. Barry McCaffrey, former Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, made the following comment: “It is possible that the U.S.’s previous unwillingness to accept the concept of narco-terrorism may be based on a belief that such acknowledgement would mean a much steeper escalation in the drug war.”¹⁰⁰ Regardless of the cause behind the lack of attention to contemporary narcoterrorism, it remains a relevant security threat today and, as this research study argues, a security threat that will only increase.

In this case study, I will present the components of contemporary narcoterrorism, which include the global status of the modern drug trade and the relatively new characteristics of contemporary “new” terrorism. Development within these two components has altered the strength of the relationship between terrorists and the narcotic industry. The sustained profitability and expansion of the global drug market in correlation with the characteristics of contemporary terrorism have significantly augmented the potential strength of the relationship. I will highlight several variables and how they can be predicted to affect the contemporary narco-terrorist relationship. Additionally, I will present a case study example of a contemporary

terrorist organization and how its characteristics have and will influence its relationship to the narcotic industry. The evidence emphasized in this chapter will introduce the importance of counter-narcotic initiatives in counter-terrorism strategies that will be discussed in the research study's conclusion.

The Contemporary Drug Trade

The global narcotic industry has always been a successful enterprise and continues to leave a significant imprint on today's world. About 5% of the world's adult population has used an illicit drug at least once and about .6% are drug addicts.¹⁰¹

A brief analysis of the current global situation related to the international drug trade reveals the following alarming information. East Africa is rising in its role as a transit region for Middle Eastern drug organizations. West Africa is a significant source of illicit stimulants destined for Asia. Central America and the Caribbean continue to be the prominent supplier to North America and Europe, and these regions have significantly suffered due to the instability and insecurity of the illicit drug trade. Eastern and South-Eastern Europe hold five times the average rates of drug abuse by injection. Western and Central Europe's number of new, distributed psychoactive substances are growing. South Asia has risen as a major contributor to illicit manufacturing and trafficking of pharmaceutical narcotics.¹⁰² Additionally, U.S. drug related fatalities have increase significantly since 2008, surpassing both fatalities by vehicles and firearms.¹⁰³

Illicit drugs include heroine, cocaine, opium, cannabis, amphetamine-type stimulates including ecstasy, and more. The illicit drug trade also profits off the illegal distribution of typical medical prescriptions such as morphine and hydrocodone.¹⁰⁴ The two greatest concerns

related to narcotics currently are an increase in synthetic drugs and a drug prevalence shift from developed to undeveloped countries.¹⁰⁵

Synthetics are generally experimental psychoactive substances. The significant role of social media in today's world introduces and markets these new drugs, quickly promoting production levels. Because the chemical formulas for these synthetic substances change frequently, distributors profit significantly before any specific counter-narcotic policies are created. Synthetics are especially a concern among the youth population.¹⁰⁶ These synthetics are created to mimic the effects of reported and controlled drugs. However, these synthetics typically have higher levels of potency and risks. For example, "Krokodil" a synthetic used as a morphine substitute has about 10 times the potency of morphine and high levels of chemicals that directly damages the nervous and muscular systems of the user.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, demographic trends are predicting an increase of the total number of drug users in developing countries. The increase is correlated to the countries' higher rates of population growth, urbanization and youth. This shift is especially concerning as developing countries are relatively less prepared to counter the narcotic industry.¹⁰⁸ While the narcotic industry has historically operated in developing countries, their consumer markets have generally been in developed countries, such as the U.S. Now, however, the narcotic industry is opening a new consumer market in developing countries as well. Socioeconomic factors of these less developed areas, such as poverty, economic inequality, low employment and education rates, directly exacerbate the damaging effect of the drug use. Furthermore, approximately three quarters of the world's population has little to no access to controlled medications that could be

used for drug rehabilitation. The combination of these factors has a notably negative effect on the global health situation.¹⁰⁹

In addition to negative health trends, the international drug trade promotes political instability and human rights violations by funding and enabling the activities of a variety of contemporary illegal organizations, including insurgencies, drug cartels, and terrorists. The role and characteristics of contemporary terrorist organizations will be underlined in the following section.

Contemporary Terrorism

The global narcotic industry evolved with contemporary times, expanding its reach and its potency. Contemporary terrorism has done much the same. Although the definition of terrorism has remained relatively constant, the characteristics of terrorism have changed. The definition of terrorism used for this research study is the current U.S. Department of Defense definition: “The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political.”¹¹⁰ The evolved characteristics of terrorism that this research study focuses on are 1) organizational structure 2) terrorist targets 3) methods of terror, and 4) operational cost. Every terrorist organization is unique; however, contemporary terrorist organizations can be defined by these aforementioned characteristics.

First of all, organizational structure is one of the most noticeable differences between traditional and “new” contemporary terrorism. Traditional terrorist groups are characterized by an emphasis on a vertical, hierarchal chain of command, with clear lines of command and rank. This conventional network of authority resembles military-type structure and organization.

Contemporary terrorists, on the other hand, tend to utilize horizontal structures of organization. This horizontal structure, also called a cell-based network, is composed of a variety of different teams (“cells”) that operate under the umbrella of a terrorist organization. However, only the team (“cell”) leader has direct access to the greater network of the organization. In this way, when terrorist operatives are caught, it is more likely for the related “cell” to be compromised rather than a large part of the terrorist organization. By implementing horizontal structures, the organization is less susceptible to infiltration and personal relationships have replaced formal chains of command within the operative level. While contemporary terrorist organizations by no means implement horizontal structures exclusively, they certainly utilize horizontal organizational structures significantly more than traditional terrorist organizations. In the words of analysts, John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, horizontally structured organizations emphasize “no single central leader or commander; the network as a whole...has little to no hierarchy,’ simultaneously being ‘both acephalous (headless) and polycephalous (hydra-headed).”¹¹¹ An example of this horizontal cell network is al-Qaeda, post the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, which leveled out into cells that operated semi-autonomously under the general mandates of Osama bin Laden and his affiliates. These horizontal cells can be assembled quickly and dissolved after even a single operation, such as the terrorist cell that carried out the London 2005 bombings.¹¹²

Furthermore, contemporary terrorist organizations have generally expanded the scope of their targets. Rather self-explanatory, a terrorist’s target is its intended victim. Targets can range from specific classifications (such as the group’s specific political opponent), to non-specific, all-

inclusive generalizations (race, gender, religion). Specific targets are generally characteristic of traditional terrorism, while non-specific, general terrorist targets are unique to today's terrorism.

“While old terrorists went to great lengths to justify and legitimate attacks against people who were not members of the security apparatus or in some other way associated with the enemy government....new terrorist clearly have no hesitation in making whole populations legitimate targets based on their ethnicity, religious affiliation, or the policies carried out by their governments.”¹¹³

In fact, contemporary terrorist targets are generally motivated by a need to generate media attention. Hence, their targets are less characterized by military or political utility, but rather by the symbolic value of the target itself. Contemporary terrorist organizations seek to direct violence against targets, such as civilians, that will guarantee them a large media audience.¹¹⁴ In this way, contemporary terrorist targets are much less specific and more much indiscriminate.

On that note, contemporary terrorist organizations have grown increasingly more brutal in their methods of terror. Terrorist organizations' methodology is the manner in which they persecute their victims. Traditional terrorist methodologies are characterized by a few, principle tactics; including assassination, bombing, kidnapping and hijacking. “Terrorists blow up things, kill people, or seize hostages. Every terrorist incident is merely a variation on these three activities,” said Brian Jenkins, Director of the National Transportation Security Center. However, contemporary terrorist methodology is characterized by a rise in international operations, mass-casualties, and interest in acquiring weapons of mass destruction.¹¹⁵ “Terrorism has become bloodier, in terms of what acts are committed and how many victims are involved”,

summarizes Jenkins. Jenkins emphasizes that traditional terrorists were less concerned with the body count, and more concerned with who was watching. This traditional mentality was promoted through moral and practical constraints. Traditional terrorists had a principled sense of self-image, and they generally avoided provoking international backlash. With the development of contemporary terrorism, these constraints have lessened in importance and indiscriminate, international violence has become the norm.¹¹⁶

Lastly, the operational cost of contemporary terrorism has grown significantly in comparison to traditional terrorism. The increase in operational cost can be related to each of the previously mentioned characteristics: organizational structure, terrorist targets, and methods of terror. For the purpose of this research investigation, this study proposes the following definition of operational cost: the financial cost of planning and carrying out terrorist operations and objectives, in terms of funding flexibility, men, and strategic intelligence.

Firstly, the horizontal, cell network organization of contemporary terrorist organizations requires funding fluidity. Since the contemporary terrorist is often cell-based, they require financing that is easily transferable, easily available, and highly profitable, regardless of his location. The contemporary terrorist organization needs financing venues that are both flexible and profitable enough to fund operations globally. The higher the financial flexibility needed, the more globally profitable the financial source must be. Hence, organizational structure influences the kind of financial flexibility needed.

Secondly, the varied and indiscriminate targets of the contemporary terrorist organization require high numbers of men (or women) willing to contribute to the organization's methods of terror. Since the contemporary terrorist organization has global targets, they have increasingly

recruited men and women globally to act as foreign “cells” or affiliates. Furthermore, terrorist organizations often use financial incentive to recruit members, and then require financing to train and supply these recruits. The contemporary terrorist needs significant financing in order to maintain the level of recruitment necessary to accomplish their global objectives, as well as in order to pay and supply their members. The wider the parameters of the terrorist organization’s targets, the more men needed to accomplish the terrorist organizations objectives. Hence, terrorist targets influence the financial cost of men.

Lastly, the methods of terror used by contemporary terrorist organizations require extensive tactical intelligence. Since the contemporary terrorist methodology is characterized by mass-casualties, garnering international attention and acquiring advanced weapon technologies, the contemporary terrorist is significantly dependent on their intelligence capabilities. Tactical intelligence, as defined by the Department of Defense, is: “intelligence required for the planning and conduct of tactical operations”. Complex methods of terrors, such as successfully carrying out an international act of terror, require significant tactical intelligence. The intelligence necessary for tactical intelligence can be defined as “the product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations...or areas of actual or potential operations.”¹¹⁷ This necessary intelligence collection, analysis, etc. generally requires significant financing. Hence, a terrorist organization’s methods of terror influence the financial cost of intelligence.

According to this research study, the financial fluidity, cost of men and cost of intelligence of a terrorist organization influences their operational cost. With the increased operational cost of contemporary terrorist organizations in mind, the research study concludes

that the contemporary terrorist organization must financially savvy and stable in order to attain their objectives of terror. While there are numerous financing sources available to the contemporary terrorist, this research study proposes that the narcotic industry will reappear as a significant financial source to contemporary terrorism. The following section will emphasize the reasoning behind the study's prognosis of contemporary narcoterrorism.

The Future of Narcoterrorism

The theory of prospective contemporary narcoterrorism proposed by this research study is jointly founded on the conclusions that 1) contemporary terrorism has a higher operational cost and that 2) the narcotic industry offers several unique advantages to terrorist organizations.

First of all, the amorphous, horizontal organization of contemporary terrorist organizations is similar to the organization of drug cartels and organized crime groups. The similarity of their structures is highly conducive to cooperation and collaboration.¹¹⁸ The horizontal nature of the narcotic industry is also conducive to the financial flexibility that contemporary terrorist organizations seek. The narcotic industry offers terrorists diverse areas of financing: drug production, drug transportation, drug distribution, etc. This diversity allows terrorist organizations to diffuse their financial risk across the multiple facets of narco-financing. Additionally, terrorist organizations benefit from the narcotic industry's "off the book" approach, since counter-terrorism and law enforcement efforts are less likely to detect concrete financial footprints.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, the narcotic industry holds a wealth of opportunity for contemporary terrorist organizations because of the resources possible through mutual cooperation. The revenue of the narcotic industry is appealing to terrorists, whereas a terrorist group's protective

services or weaponry can seriously benefit an illegal narcotic operation. Both groups have strong interests in the illegal arms and drug market; hence increased operations between the two groups can facilitate their access to such illegal goods. In addition to the palpable resources possible through cooperation, there are significant intangible benefits to mutual networking. Narcotic organizations have extensive knowledge and expertise in illegal transportation. Drug routes are capable of transporting other illegal goods and even people. This can be immeasurably useful to terrorists, as they position or supply operatives internationally. On the other hand, narcotic organizations can benefit from terrorists knowledge of foreign military strategies and weaponry. For example, Pablo Escobar, a world-renowned drug lord, hired the National Liberation Army, a Colombian terrorist organization, to build car bombs because the Escobar cartel did not know how. Furthermore, both organizations significantly rely on personal connections, safe houses and infiltration into various infrastructures. Collaboration between the organizations allows them to increase their number of available resources.¹²⁰

Last but not least, as the narcotic industry opens the door to new territories for terrorist organizations. As previously mentioned, the contemporary narcotic industry is expanding their consumer business into developing countries and opening new markets. A strong relationship between contemporary terrorist organizations and the narcotic industry would offer terrorist organizations new safe areas and easy developed strongholds. Terrorist organizations are able to grow and avoid detect and/or competition much more easily in less developed areas that typically suffer from political and socio-economic instability.

Some critics have argued that the narcotic industry is less appealing to terrorist organizations than other forms of crime because it is a competitive industry.¹²¹ However, this

research study disagrees with this for several reasons. First of all, the narcotic industry is expanding its consumer market to less developed countries, which offers a lower level of competition than developed countries. Secondly, the narcotic industry offers terrorist organizations financial flexibility, “off the books” discretion, transportation and intelligence that other criminal activities do not (i.e. white collar crime, burglary etc.)

Other critics have said that because drug lords (narcos) and drug cartels are not politically motivated, they will have little interest in enabling terrorists. They argue that “narcos” are essentially capitalists who have little to no interest in overthrowing the status quo of capitalist society.¹²² However, if narcos are motivated solely by money, then they are even more likely to be interested in a cooperative relationship with contemporary terrorist organizations. The narcotic industry would benefit significantly from mutual cooperation, in terms of intelligence, training, protection, and supplies that would only improve their markets.

Overall, the future of narcoterrorism looks bright for contemporary terrorist organizations and the narcotic industry, but dim for the audience and victims of both. The advantages that each organization can offer one another in today’s world is not something to be overlooked. To put into context the increasing prospect of contemporary narcoterrorism, the research study will outline the background, characteristics and finances of a contemporary terrorist organization. This specific terrorist organization has been at the forefront of contemporary terrorism and a growing international security threat.

The Islamic State

The Islamic State loosely grew from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s Al-Qa’ida Organization for Holy War in Iraq (AQI) around 2004. However, the desire to spread out transnationally and

the brutal methodology of the IS broke the group's tie to Al-Qa'ida.¹²³ Upon separation, the group named themselves the "Islamic State of Iraq" (ISI). In 2013, when ISI began to gain international recognition for their strongholds in the northern territories of Iraq, they renamed themselves the "Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) -another variation of this name is the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL). For the sake of brevity, the terms "IS" and "Islamic State" will be used throughout this case study. The Islamic State's fanatical interpretation of Islamic faith, its brutal methods of terror and its global objectives and targets quickly caught international attention.¹²⁴ The U.S. Department of State officially designated IS as a foreign terrorist organization in 2004.¹²⁵

Characteristics

The organizational structure, targets and methods of IS set it apart from other terrorist organizations as the ideal poster child of contemporary terrorism. While IS central maintains some traditional, hierarchal authority structures, the many affiliates and operative cells of IS execute their communication and collaboration horizontally. The Islamic State's greater emphasis on horizontal structures, in comparison with traditional organizations that were strictly vertical, allows IS to combine the advantages of vertical authority figures with the flexibility of horizontally organized operatives.¹²⁶

Secondly, IS targets are non-specific and indiscriminate. Their political targets include, the Turkish government and the Iranian government, and their religious targets include secular Muslims, Shiites, and any Islamists opposed to the Islamic State ideology.¹²⁷ Their regional targets include Christians, Shia Shabaks, Shia Turkmen, and Yazidis.¹²⁸ However, IS targets are not strictly regional. IS has expanded its operations transnationally and established operating

units in Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Indonesia.¹²⁹ IS has especially targeted “Westerners” and western culture, by both persecuting those who support western ideologies regionally and infiltrating the Western societies abroad.¹³⁰ IS also encourages international recruitment, asking “volunteers” to wage jihad in their own respective home countries.¹³¹

Lastly, IS has been characterized by brutal methods of asymmetrical warfare. Their common regional methodologies include public beheadings, massacres, crucifixions, and mutilations.¹³² The Islamic State’s tactics have been categorized as more military than insurgent due to their complex level of training and techniques. U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said of IS: “They’re beyond just a terrorist group. They marry ideology, a sophistication of strategic and tactical military prowess.”¹³³ Additionally, the Islamic State is highly armed with advanced weaponry, unlike traditional terrorists. Through its warfare, IS has commandeered tanks, drones, anti-aircraft, rocket launchers, helicopters, cargo planes, etc. Of most concern, is the Islamic State’s attempt to build and acquire biological weapons. Biological weapons are relatively inexpensive, with extreme psychological and physical consequences on its victims. The United Nations is especially concerned with IS efforts to obtain undeclared chemical weapons in Syria from Syria’s chemical weapon stockpile.¹³⁴

Internationally, IS has taken responsibility for a number of high-casualty attacks, including “on 26 June in Sousse, on 10 October in Ankara, on 31 October over the Sinai Peninsula, on 12 November in Beirut and on 13 November in Paris,” to name just a few.¹³⁵

Finances

The contemporary Islamic State is supported through extremely successful and pragmatic financing. In 2015, it was determined that the Islamic State’s daily revenue was at about \$1

million per day, making it the richest terrorist group globally. However, contrary to popular assumption, there has been no confirmed evidence that the Islamic State's primary funds come from foreign, wealthy donors. In fact, IS financial records have shown that the terrorist group is extremely self-sustaining. The organization emphasizes financial sources from the illegal economy such as extortion, burglary, and war plunder.¹³⁶ The Financial Action Task Force, an international agency focusing on countering terrorist financing, has released detailed reports on IS finances. "IS is essentially living off the capital illicitly generated by the territory it occupies, primarily by looting banks, exploiting oilfields and robbing economic assets."¹³⁷ In decreasing order of financial contribution, IS funding is composed of 1) illegal capital from occupation, such as oil, 2) kidnapping for ransom, 3) donations, 4) supplies from other terrorist organizations, 5) international fundraising through media networks.¹³⁸

While IS has been a highly successful fund-raiser, the organization also has notably high expenses. In addition to weaponry and other military supplies, the organization pays salaries to its members, based on family size, and continues to do so even if the active member is killed. Additionally, it covers medical expenses and maintains active safe houses internationally. The Islamic State is a cash-based organization, hence, it falls prey to internal corruption as well.¹³⁹ Other financial factors to consider are the cost of recruitment, training, transportation, intelligence, etc.

However, recently the Islamic State has come under financial pressure. Due to coalition airstrikes, low economy in both Iraq and Syria, and low oil prices, the terrorist organization's finances have been much tighter than usual. Airstrikes have been conducted against both IS oil fields and banks. Airstrikes have reduced the Islamic State's oil revenue by an estimated 30%

and destroyed at minimum tens of millions of IS's treasury. These recent financial shortcomings could lead IS to seek other financing sources, such as the narcotic industry. Hanif Atmar, the Afghan national Security advisor, stated that the Islamic State is interested in narcotic operations in Afghanistan and opening their access to the drug trade.¹⁴⁰

When such a financially successful terrorist empire such as the Islamic State begins to show signs of financial stress, it is only prudent to analyze where the organization might turn to financially. Joint analysis of the advantages of a mutual cooperation between the narcotic industry and terrorist organizations and the contemporary characteristics of the Islamic State support the argument of a prospective rise in contemporary narcoterrorism.

Conclusions

This case study offered a comparative analysis of the contemporary narcotic industry, the characteristics of contemporary terrorism and the mutually beneficial advantages of narcoterrorism. The case study underlined the characteristics of the Islamic State, one of the most relevant contemporary terrorist organizations today: horizontal organizational structures, international and indiscriminant targets, high tactical intelligence methods and a high operational cost. Then, the case study emphasized the financial restrictions that have recently constricted the Islamic State. The purpose of this case study was to illustrate the potential expansion of IS into new sources of revenue and to present the argument that the narcotic industry could be easily be the Islamic State's new financial partner.

The final conclusion of this research study will recapitulate the comparison between traditional narco-terrorist relationships and a potential, contemporary narco-terrorist relationship.

Additionally, the conclusion will emphasize why this research is important and further areas of research related to this topic.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Narcoterrorism is no longer a term that marks headlines and leads U.S. national security agendas. Rather, it is a neglected area of security studies and the issues of narcotics and terrorism are considered to be separate issues. President George Bush's "War on Drugs" campaign was the last notable U.S. counter-narcoterrorism agenda. Bush's Presidential Address on National Drug Policy broadcasted on C-Span in 1989 illustrates a level of counter-narcotics and counter-narcoterrorism that no longer characterizes U.S. security policies.¹⁴¹

First of all, the "War on Drugs" within the U.S. seems to be a failed war. Several states have legalized marijuana for medical use, others have legalized marijuana in the same parameters of alcohol, and numerous states have relaxed their drug sentencing laws. "With Congress rolling back punitive drug policies...it is doubtful another president will hold a special address to talk about escalating the war on drugs. If anything it's probably only a matter of time before a president uses an address to make the case for...ending the war on drugs," said Ethan Nadelmann, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance.¹⁴² Another indicator of the failed drug war in the U.S. is the high level of clemency that President Obama has granted to drug offenders throughout his presidential terms.¹⁴³

With the evolution of contemporary terrorism and the relevance of terrorism in today's security policies, it is time again to reconsider the potential financing role of the drug trade. With the increased complexity of contemporary terrorist organizations, in terms of *organizational structure, terrorist targets, and methods of terror*, the *operational cost* of contemporary terrorism has concomitantly increased.

Consequently, there is an immediate and strategic counter-terrorism need to reevaluate possible sources of contemporary terrorist financing. The research predicts that development within the aforementioned characteristics of terrorist organizations will cause a significant shift in contemporary financial sources. Although there are numerous sources that contribute to terrorist organizations financially and politically, this research study has focused on the narcotic industry due to its steady and growing presence globally.

Perhaps one of the most resilient and constant global markets, the international narcotic industry has a wealth of benefits to offer contemporary terrorist organizations. These benefits include a stable source of income, strong knowledge of international transportation/smuggling routes, a mutually advantageous relationship in terms of supplies and intelligence. The incentive of these benefits is a serious cause for concern in terms of global security.

Contemporary terrorist organizations have developed beyond the traditional violent, political groups into sophisticated movements enduring longer than any one organization. The characteristics of terrorism have significantly evolved. Contemporary terrorists now operate globally, opening their access to new economic and political resources or opportunities. This “globalization” of terrorist organizations has enhanced the multi-dimensional qualities of the organizations, as contemporary terrorists increasingly operate in collaboration. It can be argued that the new face of terrorism is not one single terrorist organization, but numerous affiliates cooperating and coordinating as a movement.

The aforementioned case studies presented multi-dimensional research. Firstly, they established historic examples of roles that the narcotic industry has played (and will continue to play) in financing terrorism. They have illustrated the differences between traditional and

contemporary organizations, specifically within the factors of *organizational structure*, *terrorist targets*, and *methods of terror*. The analysis of these factors suggests that contemporary terrorist organizations have grown increasingly more complex. This increased complexity also increases the operational cost of- and consequently the level of financing needed to support- contemporary terrorist organizations.

The mass casualty attacks within the 1990-2000s-1993 World Trade Center, 1995 Tokyo subway, 1995 Oklahoma City, 2001 World Trade Center, 2002 Bali- signaled to the world a “new” and brutal terrorism. However, the development of contemporary terrorism is not only within its characteristics of organization, targets and methodology, but also in its financing. Traditional terrorism was mostly state sponsored, however, the general corruption and state failures of developing areas (where terrorism most commonly originates) encouraged terrorist organizations to seek their own funding. This led to the financial diversification of the contemporary terrorist organization: the contemporary terrorist pursued a financial model of both “licit and illicit enterprises.” Additionally, the financial liberty of contemporary terrorism, in comparison to traditional state sponsored or popular support terrorism that operated within the political limits of their sponsor, explains how “ ‘new terrorist’ organizations such as al Qaeda and a wide variety of other self-sufficient groups find themselves increasingly able to operate free from such constraints.”¹⁴⁴

Contemporary terrorist organizations have developed even further than the terrorist organizations at the turn of the century. The increase of contemporary terrorist movements, such as the Islamic State, illustrates a sort of “political” consolidation between contemporary terrorist organizations. This research study believes that this shift towards political consolidation will also

develop a shift towards financial consolidation. While the financial diversification of contemporary terrorism was well suited for the extremist terrorist organizations breaking away from their state sponsors in the 1990s, the operational costs of contemporary terrorist organizations/movements will eventually encourage a more consolidated financial model.

Since contemporary terrorist organizations need a higher level of financing, it seems prudent to conclude that they will seek out the most profitable and advantageous financial sources to consolidate. Due to the illicit nature of terrorism, contemporary terrorist organizations would be best served by a likewise illegal enterprise that can offer the following: stable financial revenue, international market connections/transportation routes/intelligence capabilities, a covert financial market, a flexible market and a market easily introduced/expanded into the terrorist organizations regional strongholds.

The research focuses on the financial and strategic resources of the narcotic industry, which satisfies all of the advantages previously listed. Consequently, this study argues that in comparison to the narcoterrorism of traditional terrorists, contemporary terrorists hold the potential to significantly capitalize on the multitude of resources that the narcotic industry offers.

Conclusion Table

To visually summarize the comparison of differences between traditional and contemporary terrorist organizations as portrayed through the three case studies, the following table, *Table 5.1: Case Study Comparison*, presents the *organizational structure, terrorist targets, methods of terror* and *operational cost* of the terrorist organizations outlined in the previous chapters. The characteristics will then be recapitulated in detail with a quick summary of each respective case study.

Table 1: Case Study Comparison of Terrorist Organizations' Characteristics

Characteristics Case Studies	Organizational Structure <i>(Influences financial fluidity)</i>	Terrorist Targets <i>(Influences cost of men)</i>	Methods of Terror <i>(Influences cost of intelligence)</i>	Operational Cost <i>(Financial fluidity, cost of men, cost of intelligence)</i>
Characteristics' Level of Complexity Basic -----> Complex				
Las Auto Defensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) <i>-Traditional-</i>	Vertical chain of command	Specific, "legitimate"	Kidnappings, extortion, political assassinations	Lower financial fluidity, lower cost of men, lower cost of intelligence
The Taliban <i>-Traditional-</i>	Vertical chain of command	Specific, "legitimate"	Hijackings, suicide bombings	Lower financial fluidity, lower cost of men, lower cost of intelligence
The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) <i>-Contemporary-</i>	Horizontal relationships, vertical chain of command playing smaller role	Non-specific, varied, "indiscriminate"	International operations, interest in advanced weapon technologies	Higher financial fluidity, higher cost of men, higher cost of intelligence

The AUC: The Latin American's Traditional Narcoterrorist

The first case study on Colombia's Auto Defensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) illustrates the characteristics of a traditional organization significantly involved with the narcotic industry.

The AUC was directed and organized under the leadership of Carlos Castaño. His direction transformed the AUC from various, uncoordinated paramilitary units into a formal, vertically structured organization. This style of leadership is representative of traditional terrorist organizations, which often mimicked the hierarchal structures of conventional military groups. As the ultimate authority of the organization, he directed their operations and financial activities, including the AUC's high involvement in Colombia's cocaine industry.¹⁴⁵

Secondly, the AUC illustrates the traditional definition of targets. Traditional targets are specifically delineated as direct political competition, and are generally within the geographical boundaries of the respective organization. Additionally, the targets can be considered "legitimate", meaning that those targets hold a legitimate threat to the organization. The AUC's targets were specific to Colombia's left-wing guerrilla groups and their alleged sympathizers that challenged the right-wing authority of the state. The AUC was able to legitimize their targets as a threat to the stability of their political infrastructures.¹⁴⁶

Next, the methods that traditional terrorist organizations employ also have their distinct differences. Traditional terrorist organizations employ methods that are simpler, meaning they require a low amount of manpower, munitions, and intelligence. The AUC used traditional methods, such as torture, kidnappings, extortions, and assassinations, which require low manpower, munitions and intelligence.¹⁴⁷

The consolidation of these characteristics made the AUC's operational cost relatively lower in terms of financial cost, cost of men and cost of intelligence. Furthermore, the AUC, which was significantly associated with and funded by Colombia's highly successful cocaine industry, used narco-terrorism to sustain the longevity of the paramilitary's presence and political power in Colombia.

The Taliban: Afghanistan's Traditional Narcoterrorist

The second case study on Afghanistan's Taliban regime and insurgency reinforces the characteristic definitions of traditional terrorist organizations and illustrates a strong similarity to the AUC's narcoterrorist relationship model.

The Taliban regime fell under the vertical authority of Mullah Mohammad Omar. Omar strictly centralized the organization of the Taliban through vertical structures. As Supreme Leader, Omar and an elite group of elders directed the objectives and activities of Taliban regime and the post-regime Taliban insurgency. Like Castaño, Omar was directly in charge of the Taliban's finances, and he too encouraged the group's involvement in Afghanistan's opium market.¹⁴⁸

The Taliban's targets were also specific to direct threats against their political/religious principles. Their targets lay inside Afghanistan's borders, as they attempted to gain and maintain control of Afghanistan. Additionally, the methods of the Taliban were relatively uncomplicated. Their methods of choice, including suicide bombing and hijacking, can be considered less complex because these methods require lower levels of manpower, munitions, or intelligence than other, more complex methods.¹⁴⁹

Finally, the operational costs of a traditional terrorist organization, such as the Taliban, are lower in terms of financial cost, cost of men, and cost of intelligence. The Taliban's association with Afghanistan's opium industry significantly bolstered and sustained the organizations power as both a regime and an insurgency.

ISIL: The Islamic State

On the other hand, the final case study on the Islamic State illustrates the unique qualities of contemporary terrorist organizations. Although IS maintains some vertical organizational structures, the organization has emphasized and encouraged the growth of "cells" and their horizontal organization. This contemporary shift towards the emphasis of horizontal structures has allowed the Islamic State to acquire numerous affiliates and infiltrate international borders. This horizontal structures require extensive collaboration between cells and the distribution of financial resources becomes much more complex. Hence, "cells" must be able to garner their financing through direct, personal relationships rather than rely on the funding that central ISIL leaders are able to send their way.¹⁵⁰

Contrastingly to traditional targets, contemporary IS targets are non-specific and indiscriminate, condemning numerous religious, ethnic, and political classifications that do not conform to their principles. Additionally, their targets are not strictly regional. Instead, they have expanded their targets internationally and encouraged recruitment to establish global affiliates that enforce the Islamic State's objectives in their own respective regions.¹⁵¹

IS methods of operation, on the other hand, are much more complex as they conduct operations abroad, seek high casualties, and have a vested interest in acquiring advanced

weaponry. The complex methods of contemporary organizations require significant manpower, supplies and intelligence collaboration to plan and execute operations.¹⁵²

Contrastingly to the first two case studies, the Islamic State's operational cost is significantly higher, due to a higher financial cost, higher cost of men, and a higher cost of intelligence associated with accomplishing their objectives. The following section will reemphasize how terrorist organization's characteristics influence their operational cost, as well as underline the mutual advantages of narco-terrorist relationship.

Main Findings

Based on the analysis of the case studies, the most prudent conclusion to answering our research questions is that contemporary terrorist organizations are significantly more complex in comparison to other traditional terrorist organizations and thus require a higher level of financing. Furthermore, due to the success of narcoterrorism by traditional terrorist organizations, it seems prudent to conclude that contemporary terrorist organizations with higher operational costs have a potentially stronger relationship with the narcotic industry. In order to summarize the analysis that supports the previous conclusion, the following section will offer a brief capitulation of how characteristics –*organizational structure, terrorist targets, methods of terror-* influence *operational cost* and why the narcotic industry is an ideal choice for terrorist organizations.

First of all, horizontally structured terrorist organizations require significantly more funding fluidity than traditional vertically structured organizations. This research study's definition of funding fluidity is a financial market that is easily transferable, easily available, and highly profitable, regardless of location. Horizontal terrorist organizations or "cells" are spread

out strategically and require financial fluidity that coincides with their organizational structure. The higher the need for financial fluidity, the higher need for a profitable financial source that can accommodate their operational costs. Hence, due to the horizontal organization of contemporary organizations, which require high levels of financial fluidity, their operational costs are higher in comparison to traditional terrorist organizations.

Secondly, the indiscriminate targets of contemporary terrorist organizations require a higher number of men (and women) willing to contribute to the cause, which in turn requires an extensive focus on recruitment globally. The wider the parameters of a terrorist organization's targets, the more individuals needed to accomplish the terrorist organization's objectives. The financing needed to motivate, employ, train and supply recruits internationally is significant. Hence, contemporary terrorist organizations have a higher cost of men, which contributes to their overall higher cost of operations.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the methods of terror used by contemporary terrorists require extensively more tactical intelligence than traditional methods of terror. Contemporary terrorist methodology is characterized by causing mass-causalities, catching international attention, and acquiring advanced weapon technologies, all of which is significantly dependent on the intelligence capability of the terrorist organization. The intelligence necessary to accomplish contemporary goals is extensive and expensive. Hence, methodology influences the cost of intelligence and contributes to a contemporary terrorist organization's high overall operational cost.

Overall, the combination of high financial fluidity, high cost of men and high cost of intelligence, respectively related to *organizational structure*, *terrorist targets* and *methods of*

terror, result in a high operational cost for contemporary organizations. Out of several financial options in the contemporary world, the narcotic industry offers several unique advantages to contemporary organizations. First of all, the horizontal organization of the narcotic industry is conducive to cooperation between the industry and terrorist organizations. Also, the narcotic industry offers diverse areas of financing related to narcotics including: production, transportation, distribution, etc. The “off the book” tactics, horizontal structures, and diverse markets of the narcotic industry significantly contribute to a high level of financial fluidity appealing to contemporary terrorists. Additionally, mutual cooperation can offer transportation routes, intelligence and international connections that are extremely useful for their global operations.

In conclusion, the research study proposes that the relationship between terrorist organizations and the narcotic industry is far from over, and may be in fact only just beginning. The research study prudently concludes from the supporting evidence that the development within terrorism—from traditional to contemporary—has amplified the prospective contemporary relationship between the terrorist organizations and the global narcotic industry.

Future Research

At the beginning of this study, the posed research questions were, “How have terrorist organizations evolved? And how will the differences in their characteristics affect the strength of their relationship with the narcotic industry?” Now that this study has answered these research questions, there are other related questions to investigate that would further contribute to the literature of this research study.

The overall purpose of this research study was to raise awareness of the ever-present narcotic industry and its growing potential in the context of contemporary terrorism. In a world where the threat of terrorism has globalized, the financing sources of terrorist organizations are not to be underestimated or disregarded. On that note, the development of this research study would benefit from adding two variables to the comparative analysis of the case studies: sources of revenue and political scope. First of all, sources of revenue would be useful in illustrating the financial resources of terrorist organizations and their preferred methods of financing. Sources of revenue to especially look into include: terrorist taxing, and human trafficking. Secondly, political scope would be another useful variable in defining the difference between traditional and terrorist organizations, meaning the level of political power/legitimacy that the terrorist organization seeks. Traditional terrorist organizations tend to have a smaller, more geographically defined political scope, whereas contemporary terrorist organizations have gone global in their search for political legitimacy. Based off this “global” characteristic of contemporary terrorism, the argument could also be added that another benefit of collaborating with the contemporary narcotic industry would be greater access to land, both regionally and internationally. The contemporary narcotic industry is significantly tied to their physical, geographical location, hence, any relationship with a contemporary terrorist organization would give the terrorist organization greater access and personal connections to acquiring territories. Contemporary terrorist organizations are especially interested in international territories to support their search for “global” legitimacy. Throughout the future development of this research study, both of these variables, sources of revenue and political scope, will most likely be added

to incorporate an important, functional dimension to the research. However, at this time, due to current resources and time constraints, the research study was unable to include these variables.

Additionally, this study advocates that further research and analysis be made into today's narco-terrorist relations in order to preemptively discuss counter-narcotic strategies and the consequences of a stronger relationship between contemporary terrorist organizations and the narcotic industry. One suggested area for future research would be to compare the global counter-narcotic policies that are currently in place in areas of high drug trafficking. This comparative analysis would allow for investigation into the successes and weaknesses of these policies, specifically in the context of narco-terrorism. This analysis could be tailored to specific regions and/or to specific narcotic substances. Another alternate area of future research would be to compare drug trafficking routes to the communication and transportation routes of terrorist organizations. Analysis into the overlap between terrorist and narcotic "traffic" would give a better visual of which terrorist organizations and which narcotic substances are more likely to contribute to a narcoterrorist relationship.

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