

The Crime-Terror Panorama: Converging Threat Networks across the Global Illegal Economy/Criminalized Markets and their Impact on National Security.

Trans-Atlantic Dialogue on Combating Crime-Terror Pipelines

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Good morning, everyone. Under Secretary of State Maria Otero, Mr. Barton, and Mr. Wechsler have very effectively conveyed the seriousness with which their respective governments and agencies, and this entire community of interest, are prepared to combat crime-terror pipelines.

This first session, entitled “**The Crime-Terror Panorama: New Paradigms,**” will further build on the key themes that they brought forth this morning – and as noted in the program – to begin better understanding crime-terror pipelines across the global threat environment to identify interlocking nodes, critical threats, and vulnerable jurisdictions.

Today's global threat environment is a multi-dimensional matrix connecting an incredible array of illicit actors and networks at critical nodes in space and time. The pipelines linking these threat actors and networks slice through borders, drain licit markets into illicit cesspools of wealth, and undercut the interests and security of our partners across the international community.

It is not only the direct links among specific illicit actors that concern us in this room, although we cannot afford to ignore them. The greater threat is the growing illegal economy and criminalized markets that are providing not only safe haven but also illicit liquidity for corrupt officials, criminals, and terrorists to mingle, operate, and do business with each other or on their own.

It is becoming increasingly clear that today's global illegal economy is flush with cash deriving from a wide spectrum of illicit activities – from narcotics, kidnapping for ransom, arms, stolen goods, and counterfeits to bribery and money laundering. According to some reports, the size of the illegal economy is estimated from anywhere from 8 to 15 percent of world GDP.

Evidence-based research and enhanced intelligence collection and analysis will go a long way towards mapping the scale of these criminal markets, to help us understand their harms, consequences, and costs to our communities, and for shutting off the valves of crime-terror pipelines by exposing the convergence of illicit actors and threats.

No less important is the leveraging of joint capabilities to anticipate future threats and coordinate responses to mitigate the current threats posed by adaptive actors and emerging hybrid networks. Shutting down criminalized markets, attacking corrupt and illicit pathways, and following the money trails to disrupt and dismantle pipelines becomes more complex at the same time given how adept illicit actors and networks are at concealing their enterprises and moving and laundering their criminal proceeds through shadow facilitators and super-fixers.

Finally, when one throws into the mix of discussion the nesting of crime-terror groups with extra-regional states as Doug Farah, and others, have suggested – we start to see the brewing of a perfect storm– that if left unmitigated, will have grave geo-political spillover effects and consequences to our collective homeland security.

Over the next two days, our roster of distinguished panelists will not only illuminate the dark corners of the current threat panorama, but also provide insight into how the international community can mobilize to combat the convergence of crime and terrorism across the trans-Atlantic area of responsibility and beyond.

In this session, you will hear from:

- Dr. **James Forest**, Associate Professor at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell;
- Dr. **Xavier Raufer**, Director of the Department of Organized Crime and Terrorism at the Institute of Criminology of the University of Paris;
- Dr. **Vanessa Neumann**, a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute; and
- Dr. **Ryan Clarke**, the Asia-Pacific Head of Protective Intelligence at Deutsche Bank.

Each panelist will have 10 minutes to share their perspective. I will then pose a few questions to the panel for debate amongst themselves, and then open up the session for further discussion with their colleagues in the audience. This is the format that will be followed in subsequent sessions as well.

Dr. Forest will challenge our notion of threat convergence, and ask why—and where—some observers believe that we will see even greater crime-terror collaboration in the future.

Dr. Raufer will zero in on emerging hybrid networks, including recent developments in the Sahel and across Europe.

Dr. Neumann will discuss the influence of Iran across Latin America, and how Hezbollah in particular is ramping up its operations in the Americas and globally, often in cooperation with narcoterrorists and corrupt government officials.

Finally, Dr. Clarke will take the fight to Asia, sharpening our understanding of hybrid networks and tearing down artificial distinctions between organized crime syndicates and terrorist groups in that region.

And with that, I give the floor to Dr. Forest.