US POLICIES ON TWO TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES, ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING AND CYBER-LAUNDERING, WILL NOT SECURE THE HOMELAND FROM TERRORIST THREATS

A Master Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

American Public University

by

First Name Last Name

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Arts

April 2012

American Public University

Charles Town, WV

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Introduction and Purpose Statement

The threats to America that are imposed from transnational crimes are constantly changing. The threats may originate from other nations throughout the world; but, the impacts throughout America is surreal. The US Government fight against transnational crimes are nothing less than intricate. US interests abroad are impacted by these threatening networks. Weapons trafficking, intellectual property theft, cybercrime, human smuggling, trafficking in persons, and illicit drug trafficking contribute to other crimes that evolves around these transnational crimes. The bottom line is that the threats created by these crimes are not isolated to one specific nation or a specific region in the world. The US Government policies that are designed to combat transnational crimes must address both present-day threats and potential future threats.

The purpose of this paper is to explore US Government policies targeting illicit drug trafficking and cyber-laundering while identifying vulnerabilities within the policies (if any) and their impact on threats from terrorist organizations. Transnational crime, narcotics, and terrorism financing are not geographical concerns. All three can be linked specifically by having potential effect across national borders. Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) has established a significant and increasing threat to national and international security, with dire implications for public safety, public health, democratic institutions, and economic stability across the globe (Finckenauer 2006, 124). The US Government have many Presidential Directives (PD) and policies that target these areas, but are they really having an impact? Without a shadow of a doubt, drug trafficking has resulted in funding that has supported terrorism and in some cases such as the Madrid bombing, drugs were being utilized as the currency. The same scenario can happen in any small or large city in America. US Government policies must be able to compliment or supplement other Nations policies in the fight against transnational crime.

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Because of varies religious beliefs and political views of western nations, the tasking will be equivalent to finding a cotton ball in the field of snow.

Cybercrime is such a lucrative criminal adventure because anyone can be anyone and anywhere in a digital environment. The utilization of electronic funding transactions domestically and or internationally can create difficult detective efforts for any government, not just the US. In a world where there appear to be an increase in ordinary criminals, extremist groups, and or terrorist organizations seeking to conduct their business through cyber means, US policies must be specific to be effective. Additionally, policies must not infringe upon civil liberties that may expose an area of opportunity for terrorist threats. Despite US initiatives to combat transnational crimes, the relationship between transnational crime, narcotics, and terrorism financing seemingly has continued to expand.

Research Question

The US Government have policies that address transnational crimes. By conducting a quick review of these policies without considering implications will most likely not reveal possible gaps or disconnects. This paper proposes the following research question: Are there vulnerabilities in current US Government policies targeting transnational crime on illicit drug trafficking and cyber-laundering that will increase homeland security threats from terrorist organizations?

In order for US policies targeting illicit drug trafficking and cyber-laundering to be effective, the requirement for international support must be paramount. The current policies may address the threats of the past and possibly some of the current threats. Unfortunately, terrorist organizations are forever changing. Terrorist organization leadership, support structure, and its members are constantly changing. This paper will analyze US Government policies that are

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specifically designed to target two transnational crimes, illicit drug trafficking and cyber-laundering. Possible vulnerabilities that may be identified throughout the research will result in improvement or mitigation recommendations.

Theoretical Framework and Review of Pertinent Literature

The growth of drug trafficking through Africa poses new challenges to international counter-narcotics efforts, as well as a variety of emergent threats to the US; additionally, US counter-narcotics policy responses to the rise in trans-Africa drug trafficking are in the formative stages (Wyler & Cook 2009). The incongruence between national counterterrorism cyber policy, law, and strategy degrades the abilities of federal counterterrorism professionals to interdict transnational terrorists from within cyberspace (Brennan 2012). Combating these challenges without vulnerabilities within US policies that empowers terrorist organizations will be the basis for this research paper. Without the support of the international community, US policies targeting illicit drug trafficking and cyber-laundering will have vulnerabilities that will increase homeland security threats from terrorist organizations.

Albanese's (2012) Deciphering the Linkages between Organized Crime and Transnational Crime helps explain the difference between organized crime and transnational crime. The literature provides detailed illustrations and examples that gives distinct characterization to both organized crime and transnational crime. A basic understanding between the two is a key part of this research.

Paraschiv's (2013) Conceptualizing Transnational Organized Crime provides an understanding in how the international community realizes that transnational organized crime is a common threat; however, highlights the division in international law and policies. This

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literature will assist in illustrating the political influence throughout the international community that makes US policies vulnerable.

Rollins' and Wyler's (2013) Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Foreign Policy Issues for Congress helps to highlight transnational security concerns that have a direct impact on US policies. Additionally, the literature exclusively discusses how the US perceive terrorist connections to transnational crime. The importance of this literature is that it exposes the concerns of the US Government relative to the two specific transnational crimes discussed within this research.

Snow's (2011) The Cybersecurity Threat is where the threat to US cybersecurity is highlighted. The literature helps to connect illicit drug trafficking and cyber-laundering activity to threats that are created by terrorist organizations. Also, the literature will assist in identifying US Government policies that target unique threats posed by cyber-laundering concerns.

Significance of the Study

This research paper will provide scholars that have interest in homeland security and Department of Homeland Security leadership the effects of US policies that empower terrorist organizations; subsequently, increasing homeland security threats from terrorist organizations. Approximately 15 years ago, in the year 2000, a treaty addressing transnational organized crime was adopted by the United Nations. In years to follow, the US conducted a thorough review in 2010. The review revealed the growth and influence of criminal networks that posed an enormous threat to the US and the international community.

Research Design

The mixed methods approach to this research establishes a frame of questions that is relative to the theory. Conducting an in-depth, comprehensive quantitative data analysis and bridging a

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literature-based research that clearly display the contributions of supporting pieces of analysis to the overall study is imperative. The means to accomplish a clear and concise research will include historical and comparative analysis. Analyzing historical US policies and the effects of those policies will establish facts that will support the conclusion of this research. Additionally, comparing past policies to current policies will parallel situations in the present to identify possible vulnerabilities in current US Government policies targeting transnational crime on illicit drug trafficking and cyber-laundering that will increase homeland security threats from terrorist organizations. The analogy is to identify and confirm the direct relationship of cause and effect related to US policies, illicit drug trafficking and cyber-laundering.

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