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TO WHAT EXTENT DO GLOBAL TERRORISM AND ORGANISED CRIMINALITY CONVERGE?: GENERAL PARAMETERS AND CRITICAL SCENARIOS

To what extent do global terrorism and organised criminality converge?: general parameters and critical scenarios Despite their differences in terms of motivations and methods, historical examples indicate that terrorism and organized criminality can converge in several ways. Indeed, some analysts think that both threats can no longer be studied in isolation. This report explores the hypothesis of a crime-terror nexus for the special case of global (jihadi) terrorism. Three types of convergence are examined: involvement in criminal activities by terrorists, transformation of terrorists groups into hybrid or purely criminal organizations and cooperation between organized criminal organizations and terrorist groups. Finally, the study ends with a section dedicated to the cases of Af-Pak, Iraq and Western Sahel, presented as examples of privileged scenarios for interaction between global terrorism and organized crime.

global terrorism, organized crime, convergence, terrorism-organized crime nexus, drug traffic, kidnappings, criminality, failed states.

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1. Introduction

Two lines converge when their courses interchange or they meet at one point. This may also occur with the paths that terror and other criminal activities plot out. Without establishing a wholly new subject, the study of the actual – or potential- convergence between terrorist activity and organised crime has been gaining interest in recent times. As Walter Laqueur¹ has stated –a renowned historian to whom we owe some of the first and the most significant academic studies on political violence: while up to fifteen years ago, all concepts postulated a sharp division between terrorism and organised crime², with the passing of time the border that separates them has become increasingly blurred. In recent years, the change in perspective has gone so far that some experts suggest the necessity of doing away with this distinction, at least for certain cases of a clear symbiosis between one phenomenon and the other. Some of the information and focuses provided by the mass media tend to reinforce this new approach, whether by means of news reports that assure us the involvement of terrorist groups and organisations in typical activities of common or organised crime, or by attributing characteristics of an unquestionably Mafioso nature to others.

In short, the opinion has started to spread that the convergence between terrorism and organised crime could come to be a growing trend within the geo-political framework inaugurated at the end of the XX century³. There are various factors for change that would push us toward that direction. On the one hand, the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of anti-terrorist laws have drastically reduced the willingness of States to sponsor terrorist groups or organisations, inducing them to use other means of financing (including those relating to conducting illegal activities).

1 LAQUEUR, Walter. *The New Terrorism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

2 Hereinafter the terms “organised crime”, “organised criminality” and “organised delinquency” will be taken to be synonymous expressions.

3 MAKARENKO, Tamara. “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism”, *Global Crime*, vol. 6, n° 1, 2004, 129-145.

In a complementary sense, the transition towards a globalised economy and world and the consequent emergence of a transnational form of organised criminality has considerably increased the possibilities for terrorists to become involved in illegal businesses⁴. These arguments explain that the connection between international terrorism and transnational organised crime is a threat that is contemplated in most of the recent strategic documents.

Basing ourselves on data, evidence and research that has been available to date, this paper initially examines to what extent the convergence with organised crime is rather more than a hypothesis for the case of global terrorism, and with which expressions and modalities that phenomenon can be demonstrated.

2. Some preliminary conceptual clarifications

Conventionally speaking, the terms “terrorism” and “organised criminality” are the name given to activities that are partly similar and partly different. Leaving the absolutely exceptional examples of individual terrorism to one side, amongst the features that are common to organised crime and terrorism we can highlight their relationship with illegal and “organised” activities, those that result from a concerted, coordinated and recidivist form of action carried out by a set of individuals or a human group with a minimal degree of structure. Very often, furthermore, factors appear that are associated with one essential component of the terrorism, such as practising violence. Such similarities go to show why some penal codes define terrorism as a sub-type of organised criminality, which would be distinguished from the general type of it in two essential aspects: a more direct and systematic relationship with the continuous practice of violent activities or armed actions (used to make population, or one sector of the population fearful) and the association of such practices with a political purpose. Given the significant differences that these two attributes usually impose on the functioning of terrorist organisations, one alternative focus prefers to take its exclusive reference point for the concept of “organised criminality” to be those criminal phenomena that, in addition to being attributed to collective or organised individuals, have the unique or main objective of obtaining and accumulating economic or material benefits⁵. Starting from this second focal point, which we will make use of from now on, organised criminality carries on two types of complementary illegal activities. The first ones are those that seek economic gains for the particular criminal organisations and that take up most of their time. This includes a wide range of criminal options:

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4 SANDERSON, Thomas M. “Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines”, SAIS Review vol. 24, n° 1, 2004, pp. 49–61.

5 For further qualifications regarding the definition of organised criminality, see DE LA CORTE, Luis and GIMÉNEZ-SALINAS, Andrea. *Crimen.org. Evolución y claves de la delincuencia organizada* “Crime Inc. Evolution and key factors in organised criminality”, Barcelona, Ariel, 2011.

illegal trade of all types, extortionate practices, robberies, attacks and (paid) killings, labour and sexual exploitation, frauds and swindles, unlawful financial services, etc. Secondly, such lucrative activities are usually complemented by some acts that are not always remunerated, which perform significant facilitating or protective functions: essentially corruption, violence and money laundering⁶.

In turn, the term “terrorism” tends to designate a particular type of violent activity: although, by extension, it is frequently used to refer to those individuals, groups and organisations that systematically practice it. Above all, what distinguishes acts of terrorism from other types of violent action is their capacity to provoke an intense social or psychological impact (anxiety or fear) that is disproportionate with respect to the physical damage caused to the people or objects chosen as targets of the aggression⁷. As has already been indicated, most of the groups and organisations that resort to terrorism do so being encouraged by the argument of conditioning the attitudes and the form of behaviour of governments or of political communities. For this reason, and in accordance with numerous institutional and academic definitions, all of our references to terrorist activities and entities will correspond to cases that include an exclusively political motivation or that ties together politics and religion⁸.

During recent decades, organised criminality has undergone an intense process of trans-nationalisation, which is the result of three trends that have been developed: a substantial increase in cooperation between criminal groups and organisations with a different location; the emergence of various unlawful global markets, with some business stages distributed in different regions of the world (the best example is provided by the worldwide trade in drugs); and the appearance of criminal organisations with an active presence or implementation on an international scale⁹.

Albeit with less generality than that corresponding to the transnational development of organised criminality, the evolution of terrorism in the XX century has also created its particular patterns of trans-nationalisation. The accumulated evidence indicates that these patterns have thrown up quite a few connections with the world of organised crime. Nevertheless, this analysis will only be concerned with the criminal

6 DE LA CORTE and GIMÉNEZ-SALINAS, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-340.

7 This definition is inspired by the parameters set out by diverse studies such as: REINARES, Fernando, *Terrorismo y antiterrorismo* [Terrorism and anti-terrorism], Barcelona, Paidós, 1998; DE LA CORTE, Luis, *La lógica del terrorismo* [“The logic of terrorism”], Madrid, Alianza, 2006; *Transnational Terrorism, Security, and the Rule of Law, Defining Terrorism*, Brussels, 2008. Available at: <http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP3%20Del%204.pdf>

8 A similar option when it comes to deal with the subject of this research can be found at BOVENKERK, Frank y CHAKRA, Bashir Abou, “Terrorism and organized crime”, UNODC Forum on Crime and Society, 2004, vol. 4, nº 1 and 2, pp. 3-16; WILLKINSON, Paul, *Political Terrorism*, Nueva York, Willey, 1974.

9 UNODC. *A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODOC, Vienna, 2010.

nexus that entail the latest and the most extreme modality of transnational terrorism: that which some experts have agreed to call “global terrorism”. In general terms, this concept can be applied to any form of terrorism which, taking advantage of the conditions of economic, political, informative and cultural interconnection that characterise the globalised world of the XXI century, has the determination and the capacity necessary to produce repercussions (psychological, social, informative and political) of a worldwide extent. In empirical terms, the emergence of this class of terrorism appears to be closely linked to the formation of the Al Qaida organisation and of the diffusion and complex mesh of organisations, groups and individuals that have acted under its influence: whether as a consequence of the direct communication and cooperation with its top leaders or due to mere ideological following¹⁰.

3. Modalities of convergence and examples associated with global terrorism

Various interpretations have been put on the consideration of the convergence between terrorism and organised crime, or between organised crime and terrorism. For a long period of time, most of the studies of terrorism that deal with the subject, in largely abstract terms, made use of one of the two opposing hypotheses. In the first one, the convergence between terrorism and organised criminality would be little less than a “*contra natura*” option. According to the second one, on the other hand, this deals with a spontaneous, quasi-natural tendency. Those in favour of the first position usually seek to justify their theoretical justification by detailing the benefits that may derive from the convergence between one activity and the other, and the similarities between both of them. In contrast, the critics of the convergence hypothesis underline the prejudices that this trend may represent for those involved in it, as well as the differences (in objectives and means) that distinguish the terrorists from organised criminals. Nevertheless, the accumulated evidence over several decades of research into terrorist phenomena go beyond the specific type that concern us (global terrorism), showing two main conclusions.

Firstly, the convergence between terrorism and organised criminality is neither natural nor against nature. The hypothesis that considers this has found empirical confirmation in more than a few cases. Hence, convergence is an unquestionable possibility and a comparable pattern¹¹. However, the opposing examples are more numerous and

10 REINARES, Fernando. *Terrorismo global [Global terrorism]*, Madrid: Taurus, 2003.; DE LA CORTE, Luis. “El terrorismo (yihadista) internacional a principios del Siglo XXI: dimensiones y evolución de la amenaza”, “International (jihadist) terrorism at the start of the XXI century: dimensions and evolution of the threat” in E. Conde and S. Iglesias (eds.), *Terrorismo y legalidad internacional [Terrorism and international legality]*, Madrid: Dykinson, 2012, pp. 27-34.

11 In this respect see: ROLLINS, John, WYLER, Liana Sun and ROSEN, Seth. “International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress”, Congressional Research Service, Washington, 5/10/2010. Available at: www.csr.gov.

significant, making it hard to maintain the idea of a generalised trend towards converging¹². On the other hand, and in the form of a second conclusion, the positive cases of convergence do not all follow the same pattern, but rather they make it possible to identify various alternative modalities.¹³

The variability of the terrorist-criminal convergence cases can be summarised by means of a taxonomic composition made up of three differentiated categories¹⁴.

3.1 Confluence: involvement in other criminal activities

This could also be called “convergence by appropriation of methods” and it deals with the most basic form of this. It occurs when terrorist groups or organisations are involved in activities that are typical to organised criminality. We are essentially referring to criminal actions of a different nature, chosen so as to meet logistical or financing needs. We set out an incomplete list below, illustrated with a specific example that involves groups or organisations that form part of the global terrorist (jihadist) sphere:

1. Drug-trafficking. This has been developed in two ways: on a large scale, as is proven by the significant involvement in the trafficking of poppies by the Taliban and other jihadist groups with a presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan (the Haqqani network is highlighted) or Central Asia (with the preponderance of the UIM, Uzbekistan Islamic Movement)¹⁵; on a small scale, as happens in the case of the small amounts of hashish trafficked by Jamal Ahmidan, one of the

12 Arguments and evidence contrary to the argument of a generalised convergence between terrorism and organised crime can be seen in: GUPTA, Dipak K. *Understanding Terrorism and Political Violence*, Nueva York, Routledge, 2008, pp. 146-160; Préfontaine, Daniel and Dandurand, Yvon. *Terrorism and Organized Crime: Reflections on an Illusive Link and its Implication for Criminal Law Reform*, International Society for Criminal Law Reform, Montreal, 2004.

Schmid, Alex. “The Links Between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorist Crimes,” *Transnational Organized Crime*, 1996, 2, pp. 40–82.

13 See Dandurand, Yvon, and CHIN, “Links between terrorism and other forms of crime”, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy, Vancouver, 2004.

14 The taxonomy is basically taken from DE LA CORTE AND GIMÉNEZ SALINAS, op. cit., pp. 319-340. Also see: HANSEN, Wibke. “The Crime-Terrorism Nexus”, ISN, Center for Security Studies, Zurich, 2012. Available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/>

15 DE LA CORTE, Luis and HRISTOVA, Hristina. “Papel de los tráficoos ilícitos en el escenario Af-Pak” [Role of illegal trade in the Af-Pak scenario], Master document of the SISS, 3/2012. Available at: <http://www.ieee.es>; HRISTOVA, Hristina and DE LA CORTE, Luis. “Narcotráfico y Criminalidad Organizada en Af-Pak: Vínculos con la Insurgencia y Consecuencias para la Seguridad”, [“Drug trafficking and Organised Criminality in Af-Pak: Links with Insurgence and Consequences for Security”] in Miguel Requena (Ed.) *La Seguridad y la Defensa en el Actual Marco Socio-Económico: Nuevas Estrategias frente a Nuevas Amenazas* [Security and Defence in the Current Socio-Economic Context: New Strategies for New Threats], Gutiérrez Mellado IUGM University Institute, 2011, pp. 211-23.

perpetrators of the attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004.¹⁶ In all of the cases, these forms of participation in the drug business similarly require a complementary form of convergence: assistance from professional drug traffickers. We will look at this issue later on.

2. Other illegal trade. According to some information, at the start of the last decade Al Qaeda may have made use of the black market in gold and precious stones so as to obtain funds, conceal part of its money, launder profits from illegal sources and convert its funds in cash into objects that keep their value and were easily transportable. Although the II-S Commission report refuted that evidence had been found in this respect, some experts still give credibility to the accusation that alleges that Al Qaida was involved in operations of buying and selling diamonds¹⁷. Another significant product that is trafficked with the help of jihadist groups is tobacco. The involvement of AQIM is smuggling cigarettes is relatively well-known (we will come back to this in another section). Nonetheless, Afghan and Pakistani jihadists also seem to have been making profits from this illegal activity¹⁸. The trade in human beings has involved, amongst others, the Algerian GIA, as well as Yemaa Islamiyya, the most powerful terrorist structure in south-east Asia that has maintained links with Al Qaida, whose main base is in Indonesia¹⁹.
3. Theft. Once more, Yemaa Islamiyya is a notable example, amongst many others. In fact, this organisation used robberies from several Banks as a means of obtaining the money necessary to fund its most deadly terrorist attack, a multiple attack perpetrated on the island of Bali on October 12, 2002. The final count was over two hundred victims killed²⁰. The Pakistani Taliban have also taken part in several robberies from bank offices. In turn, the jihadist networks established in Spain from the end of the 90's made use of the theft of credit card as one of their means of financing²¹. This particular criminal pattern, along

16 National Court, Criminal Division, Second Section, Ruling no. 65/2007. Second Section Summary proceeding number 20/04 of the Central Magistrates Court no. 6, Division Roll no. 5/05.

17 PICARELLI, John and SHELLEY, Louise. "Organized Crime and Terrorism", in J. Giraldo and Harold Trinkunas (eds.) *Terrorist Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 44; ESCOBAR STEMMAN, Juan José. "Cómo luchar contra Al Qaeda" ["How to fight Al Queda"], *Política exterior* [Foreign policy], vol. 18, nº 99, 2004, pp. 15-22.

18 DOWARD, Jamie. "How cigarette smuggling fuels Africa's islamist violence", *The Guardian*, 27/1/2013. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/27/cigarette-smuggling-mokhtar-belmokhtar-terrorism>.

19 WANNENBURG, Gail. "Links Between Organised Crime and al-Qaeda", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 2003, vol. 10, nº 2, pp. 77-90.

20 International Crisis Group. "Jemaah Islamiyah In South East Asia: Damaged But Still Dangerous," *International Crisis Group Asia Report*. 63, 26/8/2003. Available at: <http://www.seasite.niu.edu>

21 DE LA CORTE, Luis and JORDÁN, Javier. *La yihad terrorista* [The terrorist jihad], Madrid:

with the theft (and subsequent sale) of other small items (mobile phones, GPS devices, watches) has been identified in the jihadist cells established in other European countries, including Switzerland, Italy and France²².

4. Forging of documents. Given that this activity covers one of the chief logistical needs of terrorist groups and organisations, it is not surprising that they work together with individuals from the criminal world who have previous experience as forgers. This is what happened with Ahmed Ressam, an individual associated with the Algerian SGPC, who was arrested in Washington in 1999 when he was trying to bring explosives into the United States so as to carry out an attack at Los Angeles international airport. This individual whose intentions fell within the scope of an ambitious terrorist plan developed by Al Qaida (the Millennium Plot) entered the United States from Canada using false documentation that he had obtained himself. In reality, Ressam had spent some years in Canada, obtaining money from theft and forging documents²³. This is the same profile as a certain number of jihadists arrested in Spain during the decade of the 2000's.²⁴ A significant operation carried out in the United Kingdom showed that three members of a terrorist cell were planning to carry out attacks in the United States, Europe and the Middle East, and that they used various stolen credit cards so as to buy different articles that they wanted to send to jihadists in Iraq (some of these articles were GPS devices, night vision glasses, telephones or knives)²⁵.
5. Kidnappings. Leaving aside the examples of the illegal capture and holding of people with the exclusive aim of forcing political concessions and obtaining publicity, kidnappings for extortion constitute a recurring mode of financing in the general history of terrorism, and also in that of some of the regional or local individuals associated with global terrorism²⁶. The AQIM joining in with the

Síntesis, 2007.

22 DEL CID GÓMEZ, Juan Miguel. "A Financial Profile of the Terrorism of Al Qaeda and its Affiliates", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol.4, nº 4, 2010.

23 SAGEMAN, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, p. 100.

24 JORDÁN, Javier. "Un estudio preliminar sobre las tendencias del terrorismo yihadista en Europa" ["A preliminary study on the trends of jihadist terrorism in Europe], *Essays from the CESEDEN*, 122, Ministry of Defence, Madrid, 2008, pp. 205-235; DE LA CORTE, Luis and GIMÉNEZ-SALINAS, Andrea. "Yihadismo en la Europa comunitaria: evolución y perspectivas de futuro" [Jihadism in the European community: evolution and future prospects], in *Athena Assessment*, 4, 2008.

25 KREBS, Brian. "Three Worked the Web to Help Terrorists", *The Washington Post*, 6/7/2007. Available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/05/AR2007070501945.html>

26 U.S. Department of the Treasury. Remarks of Under Secretary David Cohen at Chatham house on

'Kidnapping for Ransom: The Growing Terrorist Financing Challenge, October, 2012.

kidnapping business at the end of the last decade (an issue that we shall return to later on) is the experience that is most well-known and perhaps the most worrying one: but by no means is it unique. Going back further than that, but in no way less interesting, is the case of Abu Sayaff, a Philippine organisation close to Al Qaida, that became involved in recent years in the undertaking of kidnappings and the subsequent ransom demands (in combination with some drug-trafficking operations)²⁷. Other groups that have used kidnapping to obtain ransoms are the jihadist insurgents of Pakistan and Iraq.

6. Extortion for protection. The use of intimidation and threats, as a means of collecting specific or regular sums of money, is an old criminal method. For example, aggression and threats for the purposes of extorting money from traders and professionals of different levels has become a generalised practice amongst the terrorist groups established in different provinces and regions of Pakistan: from the tribal regions, Afghanistan, to the more developed provinces of the Punjab and Sindh. The usual victims of these acts of extortion are traders and professionals of different types. This practice is sometimes based upon the kidnapping of the particular individuals subject to extortion or their family members. The terrorist groups involved include Jihadist elements such as the TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or the Pakistani Taliban) and the Haqqani Network²⁸. Specifically, some information indicates that radical Pakistani groups have obtained funds in Spain by carrying out extortion on compatriots who were living in our country. In some cases, these forms of extortion were in the form of express kidnappings²⁹.
7. Creation of front or screen companies. The concealment of money from illegal activities and mixing this in with legal money, are basic requirements for the accumulation of profits by criminal organisations. The creation of companies orientated towards this purpose is a traditional resource of organised criminality, though it has also been used to hide the movement of funds used to pay for terrorist actions. A detailed sample was obtained from the operation targeted against the first cell established by Al Qaida members in Spanish territory and that led to it being partially dismantled (Operation Date, in November 2001). As that investigation showed, the financing head of that cell between 1996 and 2001 was Ghaleb Kalaje Zouaydi, and he used diverse legal companies (including a real estate agency set up in Spain), to divert a minimum of 670,000 Euros, with the aim of financing terrorist activities (this particular cell also

27 O'BRIEN, McKenzie. "Fluctuations Between Crime and Terror: The Case of Abu Sayyaf's Kidnapping Activities," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 24, n° 2, 2012, pp. 320-336

28 AGHA, Ambreen. "An epidemic of extortion", *South Asia Intelligence Review*, vol. 11, n° 18, 2012.

29 DEL CID GÓMEZ, Juan Miguel, *op.cit.*

obtained money from forging documents and credit cards)³⁰.

8. Others. Together with the crimes described, there is evidence that proves participation in some cyber-crime operations. For example, while the same jihadists arrested in the United Kingdom in 2007 were carrying on the operation mentioned above, they made use of betting web sites to launder party of the money that had been extracted from stolen credit cards. These same individuals used those particular cards, and several sets of numbers stolen from bank accounts, in order to buy internet services and to create virtual networks that could be used by jihadists all over the world as a means of exchanging information, recruiting militants and planning attacks³¹.

3.2 Hybrid blending or transformation: from terrorism to organised crime

When their involvement in illegal businesses and operations becomes something that recurs or is systematic, and numerous lines of revenue are produced, the possibility arises that the terrorists can raise the value attributed to these illegal practices, to the point of taking on the economic motivation that is characteristic of organised criminality. This change can be substantiated on two levels: the first one entails the group or organisation evolving towards a hybrid structure, halfway between terrorism and organised criminality. The second one, on the other hand, entails the transforming of a terrorist network into a mere criminal organisation, preferably one that is geared towards the accumulation of economic profits. The pattern followed in this second option usually involves the original ideological facade being maintained, which makes it hard to distinguish these cases from the previous ones.

Amongst those people involved who have maintained some link with the worldwide jihadist movement, there are few that have followed this path; and yet we are not short of some illustrative examples, whose names have already appeared in these pages. There is no doubt that Abu Sayyaf is one of these. In spite of having come from the most radical wing of a separatist Muslim movement, following the death of its first leader Abdurajak Janjalani, in 1998, this Philippine organisation initiated a new phase that was focused on kidnapping and collecting ransoms, as well as becoming involved in some drug trafficking and money forging operations.³² This change would lead to most of the analysts making reference to the transformation of Abu Sayyaf into a

30 PASSAS, Nikos and GIMÉNEZ-SALINAS, Andrea. “La financiación del terrorismo de Al Qaida: Mitos y Realidades” [The financing of Al Qaida terrorism: Myths and Realities], *Revista de Derecho Penal y Criminología* [Magazine of Criminal Law and Criminology], nº 19, 2007, pp. 493-521.

31 KREBS, Brian, *op. cit.*

32 SCHLOSS, Glen. “Cutting terrorist’s cashflow”, *South China Morning Post*, 28/11/2001. Disponible en: <http://www.scmp.com/article/358875/cutting-terrors-cashflow>; WANNENBURG, Gail, *op. cit.*

simple criminal gang³³. A similar judgment was applied to the UIM (Uzbekistan Islamic Movement). This is an organisation that came to control 70% of the routes that Afghan opium and heroin passed through during the 2000's, and this was later sent on to different Central Asian countries³⁴. Nevertheless, inasmuch as none of these groups has publicly renounced neither violence, its thinking, its political goals or religious ones, it seems prudent to consider that are both still examples of hybrid blending between terrorism and organised crime. This is not necessarily incompatible with economic motivations predominating amongst the militia, to the detriment of policies.

3.3 Cooperation with criminal gangs and organisations

There are two forms and different levels in the way that terrorist groups and gangs and organised crime work together. One takes place when a criminal gang or organisation decides to provide support to a terrorist structure, due to reasons of ideological or religious affinity. This is an option that is rather less than abstract, with just a few empirical illustrations. As regards this subject, the closest possible case is perhaps that of the D-Company, an Indian criminal organisation of Muslim militants whose leader, Dawood Ibrahim, was the top criminal boss of Bombay for many years. He was highly involved in the trafficking of drugs, weapons and human beings, and in activities of extortion and money laundering. A wave of street attacks against the Islamic population, unleashed in India between 1992 and 1993, fostered the radicalisation of Ibrahim and his followers, until it brought about close cooperation between various jihadist groups in the region and the Pakistani terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, a natural ally of Al Qaida. This cooperation took the form of joint participation in various campaigns of attacks on Indian soil that led to hundreds of deaths³⁵.

The second form of collaboration stems from purely practical interests and this entails a material or economic transaction exchange. Buying weapons, explosives or false documentation from criminal gangs is a resource that terrorists can make use of when they are short of the capacities or opportunities necessary to obtain these products by their own means. Thus, different reports substantiate that various militants of Al Qaida itself maintained contacts with Russian and Eastern European criminal organisations, with the aim of buying nuclear, chemical and biological material, although it would seem that the gangsters ended up cheating the terrorists in the transactions they carried out³⁶. Here it is also worth mentioning the jihadist networks responsible

33 PALACIÁN, Blanca. "Abu Sayyaf: la pequeña gran amenaza terrorista en Filipinas", Documento de Análisis del Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 34/2012. Available at: <http://www.ieee.es>

34 CORNELL, Svante E. "The Narcotics Threat in Greater Central Asia: From Crime-Terror Nexus to State Infiltration", *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 4, n. 1, 2006, pp.37-67.

35 SARKAR, Sumita and TIWARI, Arvind. "Combating Organised Crime: A Case Study of Mumbai City," *Faultlines*, vol. 12, n.º 5, 2002; KING, Gilbert. *The Most Dangerous Man in the World: Dawood Ibrahim*, Nueva York: Camberlain Bros., 2004.

36 WANNENBURG, Gail, *op. cit.*

for the attacks perpetrated in Madrid on March 11, 2004. In that case, the terrorists used explosives that they had obtained in exchange for a certain quantity of hashish. A different example is the role played by the cells that Al Qaida managed to set up in the Balkan region in the nineties, as a result of the logistics support provided by Albanian criminal organisations which, in turn, were collaborating with the Kosovo Liberation Army³⁷.

Leaving aside some scenarios that are especially favourable to contact between terrorists and criminal organisations, which we will deal with later on, collaboration for pragmatic reasons is not particularly frequent either. In most of the cases that are known, these exchanges are limited, sporadic or particular to that instance, and these are determined by a need that has to be resolved urgently or due to taking advantage of a transaction opportunity that is particularly attractive. All in all, there are times in which the initial collaboration may give rise to the creation of associations that last longer and are more wide-ranging.

4. Critical scenarios for convergence: the cases of *Af-Pak*, Iraq AND sahel

In the same way as with any other criminal practice, terrorism and organised criminality are dependent activities in their context. Not all settings and circumstances make them possible or foster them to the same extent. Moreover, each setting and time may modulate their development, generating specific and varied patterns and expressions. The same can be asserted about the convergence between both threats. Probabilities in this regard also change, depending on the circumstances. Not all circumstances are equally favourable towards terrorism and organised crime, while some especially facilitate it.

One type of facilitating scenario relates to environments that are typically crime producing such as jails, deprived neighbourhoods and areas of large cities and towns or enclaves that touch upon several borders. There are others, however, that span across wide geographical areas: from large portions include within one country to entire nations or multinational regions. It has been precisely in this second type of spaces where the affinities between global terrorism and organised criminality have progressed to the highest level. This connection is demonstrated, *Af-Pak*, Iraq and the Western Sahara, three convergence scenarios whose examples we shall examine below.

4.1 Main features of the three scenarios

In spite of being located in different and distant geographical settings, marked by

37 LEVITT, Matthew. "The political economy of Middle East Terrorism", Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 15/1/2003.

their own particular features, it is clear that the scenarios selected share some characteristics and problems, and it does not seem to be accidental that these are repeated. As a minimum, it is worth listing the following ones:

1. Multi-frontier and porous border.
2. State fragility or weakness.
3. Ethnical and tribal heterogeneity.
4. Lack of institutional legitimacy.
5. A lot of corruption
6. Armed conflicts.
7. Underdevelopment or critical economic situations.

These characteristics simultaneously contribute towards fostering the two types of threats that concern us here, terrorism and organised crime. In doing so they extend the motivations that inspire them, both the capacities and opportunities that make them possible. The problems of legitimacy attributed to the established political order, ethnic and tribal tensions and the catalyst for armed conflicts (especially those that stem from foreign military intervention or involve the presence of foreign troops, supporting some of the bands that are at loggerheads), extending the reasons for practising terrorism. The problems of food and provisioning deriving from underdevelopment, from poor government and from the armed conflicts, along with the economic crises and limitations in the same way, engender the appearance of illegal markets that are exposed to the risk of falling under the control of criminal gangs and organisations. In turn, the options for developing these illegal markets are multiplied thanks to corruption, to the existence of porous or badly monitored borders and the relationships of trust based upon ethnic or tribal sentiments and commitments of solidarity. Lastly, the fragility or institutional weakness increases the opportunities from crime and terrorism, by limiting or drastically cutting back the repressive capacities of the State. The most extreme examples in this respect can be seen in those scenarios where the inability of the institutions to operate extends so far that the State loses its capacity to perform its basic functions. In this way, it enables terrorists and criminals to act and interact with complete impunity (which we have elsewhere referred to as the “gas in sovereignty”).

Each and every one of these ways of facilitating terrorism and organise crime, taken in context, have been observed in *Af-Pak*, Iraq and the Sahara, with the twofold consequence of multiplying the possibilities of convergence between one phenomenon and the other. At the same time, this reduces some of the main costs that, as a general rule, are inherent to such a form of interaction.

4.2 Predominant criminal activities

4.2.1 Drug trafficking

Another element shared by the three convergence scenarios that are examined here is the involvement of the terrorist individuals in several of the typical activities of organised crime included in the general list that we set out in an earlier section.

Following the same order used here, the first category of notable criminal activities is drug trafficking. The merchandise that is most commonly trafficked in Af-Pak is opiates. This is not coincidental, given that for some decades Afghanistan has figured as the leading opium-producing country, with a great advantage over any other one (about 90%). We cannot say that it is a coincidence either that for years most of the opium from Afghanistan has been grown in the south-western province of Helmand, the strategic centre for the Taliban and other jihadist groups of the Pashtu ethnic group. In more general terms, the cultivation of opium in a minimum of 34 Afghan provinces and the exporting of this to the rest of the world, would have been impossible if they had not had the backing from and participation of the insurgent and terrorist organisations and gangs of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia that we have already referred to before. Over the course of the decade of the 2000s, this amalgam of local insurgent activists, associated with global jihadism, have taken part in nearly all of the operations that fall within the drug business cycle. They generally act as facilitators and protectors: from the growing of the opium, moving on through the processing of it as it is transformed into heroin, the storage and transporting of it, or its ultimate exportation and sale. By way of example and starting from the basis of the estimates made for the period 2005-2008, the support of the Afghan Taliban for these activities could have brought them a minimum income of greater than 125 million dollars per year³⁸.

In recent years, the news has emerged that relates the AQIM to the cocaine that comes from the American continent that is moved into Europe, first having passed through the Western Sahara. In spite of the data obtained from an operation conducted by the leading United States anti-drug agency (the DEA) in that region, the existence of ties of cooperation between AQIM and the Colombian FARC has emerged, it has not been possible to date to demonstrate with certainty that there is indeed a relationship of this type. All in all, most experts assume that the jihadists of the Sahara have for some time been applying charges to the cocaine traffickers who cross the territories that are under their control, in return for allowing the drug to be moved and protecting the convoys in which they transport it³⁹. This particular measure seems to

38 UNODC. *Addiction, Crime and Insurgency. The transnational threat of Afghan opium*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, Vienna, 2009.

39 LACHER, Wolfram. "Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region". Carnegie

be applied to the cargos of hashish that come from north Africa⁴⁰.

4.2.2 Kidnappings

The other criminal measure with significant jihadist involvement in the scenarios examined was to commit kidnappings for extortion, especially in the Sahara and in Iraq. This topic is relevant, both due to the frequency with which it is practised and because of the income it provides. Although there had been precedents, which occurred in the Sahara desert in the final years of the last century, the SGPC terrorists started up this activity in February 2003, kidnapping 32 tourists in a southerly part of Algeria. 17 of those tourists were released at no cost, while the other 15 were moved to Mali, and they were let go 6 months later. In 2008, and after having taken the name of AQIM, the organisation of Algerian origin set underway an intense and prolonged campaign of kidnappings. To April 2012, these actions took the form of the kidnapping of 42 foreigners captured in different countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Niger and Mali), who were subsequently moved to the north of the latter country. In recent years, 24 hostages were released and a further five were killed, some at the time they were captured and others during their captivity. There were still seven hostages in the hands of AQIM at the start of 2013. On January 16, 2013, a spin-off from AQIM led by Belmokhtar conducted a hostage-taking operation at a gas plant located in the east of Algeria, close to the border with Libya, holding 40 foreign workers and 150 Algerians. The crisis was resolved several days later, thanks to an intervention by the Algerian army, which resulted in the dramatic count of 23 hostages and 32 terrorists dead. Whilst in the same way as in other earlier operations, the kidnappers presented the operation as an act of political pressure; it is very likely that their true intention was to escape with the hostages so they could then be released in exchange or a sizeable ransom. In practice, it seems that none of the foreign hostages captured by AQIM in recent years have been released without substantial payments having been made. The fact that some States refused to pay the kidnappers, and due to some frustrated rescue operations, several hostages died. While it is hard to ascertain the income that has actually been obtained from the kidnappings carried out in the Sahara, some estimates indicate that the cost of each hostage must have reached estimated figures of between a

Endowment for International Peace, September 2012. Availability at: http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sahel_sahara.pdf

Hocine, Boukara; Messaoud, Fenouche; Lotfi, Touatit; and Karima, Benhadj. "El terrorismo y sus enlaces con el tráfico de droga en África subsahariana" ["Terrorism and its connections with drug-trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa"]. In SPANISH INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES (SISS) and MILITARY INSTITUTE OF DOCUMENTATION, EVALUATION AND PROSPECTS OF ALGERIA (MIDEP), "Terrorismo y tráfico de drogas en África subsahariana" ["Terrorism and drugs in sub-Saharan Africa"]. Work document of the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies, 13/3/2013. Available at: <http://www.ieee.es>

40 LEWIS, David and DIARRA, Adama. "Special Report: In the land of 'gangster-jihadists' ", Reuters 25/10/2012. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/25/us-mali-crisis-crime-idUSBRE89Oo7Y20121025>

million and a half and four million dollars. It has also been calculated that, since 2008, the jihadists and their collaborators have made the kidnappings profitable, with income that would range between 40 and 65 million dollars. Similarly, various payments received from kidnappings in the Sahara have been accompanied by the release of criminals and militants who had been held in prisons in Mali or Mauritania. The people released have included AQIM militants and those from one of their jihadist allies in the region such as the MOJWA (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa).

The data available about kidnappings in Iraq are no less significant. Facilitated by a tradition of kidnappings related to tribal disputes, business conflicts and forced marriages, after the fall of Saddam Hussein, this activity quickly became a kind of epidemic in which old and new criminal networks profusely participated, along with the insurgent factions. Very soon, the kidnappings came to represent 70% of registered crimes, with an average of two kidnappings per day. In 2004 alone, that proportion grew from two to a total of ten incidents per day. It has been estimated that in the time of greatest activity, there was an average of 6,000 kidnappings per year. Unlike what has happened in the Sahara, foreigners in Iraq only constituted one of many other targets for the kidnappers, and it has been the figure of Iraqis kidnapped that has overwhelmingly predominated. The national victims have included government officials, businessmen, bankers, university lecturers and scientists, women, teenagers and children. The average price of each ransom has been calculated at around 25,000 dollars per hostage. The coalition governments that succeeded Saddam Hussein in power have recognised, in their internal documents, that they have paid several million dollars with the aim of ransoming numerous of their citizens who had been kidnapped⁴¹. One of the most reliable reports on the issue indicates that this business could have contributed between 100 and 150 million dollars per year, without counting the money obtained from foreign kidnappings. According to the same study, it also says that this figure may well have exceeded one hundred million dollars. Even when the kidnappings have been much less common, the ransom prices have been very much higher. On the other hand, the researchers state that it is not possible for them to specify what is the proportion in which the income from kidnappings has been distributed amongst the insurgent criminals. The charismatic and much-feared leader of AQI (Al Qaida in Iraq), Abu Musab al Zarqawi, launched a campaign involving the recorded decapitations of western foreigners that were subsequently distributed through the media. In this way kidnapping became a weapon of intimidation and political pressure. The first example of this became known on May 11, 2004. This was the day on which a video appeared on Internet that showed the decapitation of the American citizen Nicholas Berg, who his kidnappers accused of being involved with

41 Looney, Robert E. "The Business of Insurgency." *National Interest*, No. 81 (Fall 2005), pp. 67–72; KAPLAN, David. "Paying for Terror", *US News and World Report*, 5 December 2005, pp. 40–53; Oehme III, Chester G. "Terrorist, Insurgents, and criminal-growing nexus?", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 31, n. 1, 2008, pp. 80–93.

the notorious Abu Graib prison. While other captured victims ended up in the same way, the jihadists gradually came round to the idea of kidnapping as a business, charging money to release hostages. However, it has not been possible to specify the gains obtained by this means to date.

4.2.3 Other significant criminal activities: extortion, further illegal trafficking, theft and swindles.

The jihadist factions established in Af-Pak, Iraq and the Western Sahara have limited themselves to other characteristics of organised criminality in addition to illegal trafficking and kidnappings. In the previous sections we have already mentioned the extortion practice carried out in Pakistan and Afghanistan by jihadist groups close to Al Qaida, imposed on various segments of the population and of the local businesses. Nonetheless, extortion has equally been used in Iraq and in northern Mali⁴². The reinforcing of this, from 2004, allowed for the Sunni insurgency to defeat the Coalition forces in the control of the motorways, which then translated into the imposing of transit costs. The victims of these ransom collections would include the foreign and national contractors that had to carry out the reconstruction of the particular motorways as well as the drivers who transported all kinds of merchandise, whether legal (especially food, fuel and engineering material) or illegal (such as products stolen for smuggling). In these latter cases the extortion could be complemented by part of the confiscation of part of the material transported. Thus, in the time in which the air and railway services were not operating in most of the country, any lorry loaded with fuel that was travelling by motorway would be required to make an average payment of some 500 dollars. In turn, quite a lot of contractors and businessmen would get used to inflating their estimates so that these include the sums of money necessary in order to avoid attacks, kidnappings and other acts of sabotage by criminal and insurgent groups. Another significant target for extortion by the jihadist and lay insurgents were the Shia and Christian minorities that were established in regions under Sunni control. This was a practice that incidentally was reproduced by Shia militants in their areas of influence. Extortion in Iraq was particularly intense during the four years that followed the 2003 invasion. Thirdly, it has also been possible to contrast the fact that the establishing of a jihadist settlement in northern Mali in 2012 came in association with the application of extortionate practices on the local population. In addition to this there is the forced collection of taxes imposed on the staff of non-governmental organisations, and in these cases tolls of up to 50,000 francs were imposed on every vehicle that went into the area with the intention of giving out humanitarian aid⁴³.

42 WILLIAMS, Phil . “Criminal, militias, and insurgents: organized crime in Iraq”, Strategic Studies Institute, Washington, 2009. Available at: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub930.pdf>

43 Reinares, Fernando. “Un condominio yihadista en el norte de Mali: ¿cómo ha surgido?, ¿se consolidará?” [“A jihadist establishment in northern Mali: how has it come about? will it become con-

Another criminal activity of significance carried out by the jihadists involved in the scenarios that we have been analysing relates to various forms of illegal trade. Both the Afghan Taliban and the rest of the Af-Pak jihadists have complemented their income related to drug trafficking by means of their participation in operations of trafficking in chemical precursors for preparing drugs, cannabis, weapons, precious stones, tobacco and wood. These illegal forms of trade have also performed a significant role amongst the activities that have concerned the katibas or branches of AQIM that have put down roots in the western strip of the Sahara, here smuggling patterns form an entire cultural pattern. As we mentioned some pages before, tobacco smuggling has constituted one of the sources of financing of the AQIM even before it abandoned its earlier name (SGPC or Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat). In particular this was done by the katiba that as led until a short time ago by Mokhtar Belmokhtar who, not coincidentally, received the nickname of “Mr. Marlboro”⁴⁴. Tobacco smuggling is probably the most lucrative form of trade of the many kinds that are practised in the region, above the smuggling of fuel, the arms trade and even drug trafficking⁴⁵. Consequently, the gains extracted by AQIM by charging money to the tobacco smugglers that cross the Sahara desert should not be underestimated.

Lastly, the Iraqi scenario provides the best example concerning the involvement of jihadist elements in a variety of crimes geared towards fostering the fraudulent sale of fuel. According to data included in the Iraq Study Group Report, prepared during 2006 and presented to the United States Congress at the end of that particular year, between 15,000 and 200,000 barrels of oil, or perhaps many more, were stolen in that country every day during the first years of the conflict that began following the 2003 invasion⁴⁶. The origin of that problem should be sought in the significant increase that the price of fuel underwent during those years due to budgetary restrictions and limitations on supply caused by the situation of conflict. The main consequence was the creation of a lucrative black market. All of the insurgents who were present in the country contributed towards this, without overlooking AQI or other jihadist militants. Besides controlling several of the distribution and exportation routes of oil and fuel, which made it possible to impose charges on the smugglers and sell protection to them, there are reports that demonstrate that some insurgent cells collaborated with certain companies created using illegal funds, whose bosses ended up being tried for having sold fuel that had been stolen from the Iraqi state at values that were higher than the market price⁴⁷. In the same way, some of the attacks carried out by insurgents

solidated?]]” Elcano Royal Institute, ARI 52/2012, 17/07/2012.

44 BILLINGSLEA, William. “Illicit Cigarette Trafficking and the Funding of Terrorism,” *The Police Chief*, vol. 71, nº 2, 2004; Financial Action Task Force (FATF). *Illicit Tobacco Trade*, June 2012.

45 DOWARD, Jamie, *op. cit.*

46 BAKER III, James A. and HAMILTON, Lee H. “The Iraq Study Group Report”, United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C., 2006.

47 Oehme III, Chester G., *op. cit.*; WILLIAMS, Phil, *op. cit.*

against Iraqi oil distribution infrastructures could have been done with the aim of the corresponding cuts in the supply benefitting the particular black market in fuel⁴⁸.

4.3 Forms of collaboration

Almost all of the criminal activities that we have just highlighted as being perpetrated by jihadists have been undertaken against a backdrop of some degree of cooperation with the local criminal networks and organisations. In fact, the overall examination of the scenarios selected here shows an entire catalogue of alternative options of collaboration between terrorists and organised criminals. Whilst almost all of these have been pointed out to some extent in our previous comments, it seems timely to briefly explain the most significant options.

Incorporation into the production chains related to illegal markets. As we have already seen, the jihadist involvement in the drug business and in other unlawful trade has been made possible by their position of dominating the territories where these crops are grown or pass through. Nevertheless, this form of control can only be profitable if it translates into the setting up of a form of ongoing economic partnership with one or several of other groups involved in the same business. So for example, in order to make the most of the drugs business, the partners or former allies of Al Qaida in Afghanistan and Pakistan have had a kind of commercial relationship with the growers, professional traffickers, men of war and corrupt government officials. In the same way, in both Iraq and the Western Sahara, the jihadists have collaborated with smuggling networks.

Tactical alliances. Another form of collaboration that has more or less stayed the course consists of the formation of alliances or collaboration agreements with groups of professional criminals. Possibly the purest form of this way of working has taken place in the Sahara. In fact, and as several reports have borne witness to, the particular MOJWA jihadist organisation was created in 2011 as the result of a coalition that was formed at its outset by a combination of militants who had split away from AQIM and local criminal elements. This was possibly strengthened by the money that was contributed to it by Cherif Ould Taher and Mohamed Ould Ahmed, two powerful criminal bosses of the region, with long experience in drug trafficking and kidnappings.

Sub-contracting of criminal services. Imitating an increasing pattern of use within the general sphere of organised criminality, the jihadists that operate in several scenarios that are observed here have sub-contracted the services of criminal gangs and other people with illegal expertise in certain criminal activities, so as to economise on efforts or to avoid any other risk. Thus, in some occasions, the Iraq jihadists have

48 OEHME III, *op. cit.*

commissioned purely criminal groups to kidnap some hostages for them. In turn, AQIM has paid some of the people associated with organised crime for them to act as intermediaries in releasing hostages. Going back to Iraq, besides bribing border officials, the jihadists in that country have hired local criminal gangs to obtain forged documents, together with the criminal networks established in neighbouring countries, who specialise in money laundering operations using fraudulent foundations.

Opportunist transactions. Finally, the terrorists have the possibility of taking advantage of specific opportunities for collaboration related to offers made by criminal gangs or to any unexpected change or event. To illustrate the former it is worth looking at the example of the hostages captured by several Iraqi criminal networks and who were then sold to the jihadists, without any request from the latter for them beforehand. As regards the second aspect, it is worth recalling the opportunities for buying weapons that unexpectedly become available because of the civil war that broke out in Libya in 2011 and the consequent ransacking of various arsenals of that country, whose deposits were partly used to halt the insurgents and terrorists of the Sahel.

4.4 Consequences of the interaction between terrorism and criminality in the three scenarios

The different forms of convergence between terrorism (or insurgent activity in general) and organised crime described above have had adverse repercussions at more than one level. The co-existence of both threats in Af-Pak, in the post-Saddam Hussein Iraq and in the Western Sahel has severely punished the local population, worsening the conditions of security in the extreme and exposing them to the risks of attacks, aggression, threats of the practice of extortion, theft, etc. In addition –and this could not be otherwise– the coincidence of terrorism and organised crime in the same scenario has caused harm to the economies of the countries and areas involved, raising security costs for the existing local businesses, increasing investment risks and, along more general lines, putting the brakes on all options for growth and economic development.

Going beyond the preceding human, social and economic repercussions, it is necessary to consider those of a political nature. This convergence has aggravated the particular institutional shortfalls which, from the outset, had stimulated and facilitated the terrorist, insurgent and criminal activities. Firstly, the substantial economic resources extracted by the jihadists and other insurgent factions, thanks to their involvement in illegal businesses and practices, have augmented the prevailing political instability at the same time. Second, the destabilising impact that is provoked by the terrorist and insurgent activity contributes towards deepening the problems of governability and repressive inefficiency that had existed before that. This serves to remove obstacles to the work of the criminal networks and organisations, and in this increases their opportunities for enrichment and provides incentives for them to collaborate with the terrorists and insurgents, so as to maintain the climate of instability and the repressive vacuum that they both take advantage of. This vicious circle, which at the time helped to prolong several of the internal liberating wars in Africa over the last days, has also

manifested itself in the jihadist focal points analysed in this section.

Lastly, the high degree of terrorist-criminal convergence attained in some failed parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and the Sahel strip also brings about adverse implications for global security. To start with, this convergence helps the regions affected to stay in contact with the movements of illegal activity that provide the resources to expanding transnational organised criminality: this is a type of criminality that the international bodies already consider to be a serious risk factor for peace, stability and global security. On the other hand, the empowerment of jihadi terrorism within the particular convergence scenarios simultaneously assists the expansion of that form of terrorism through different routes to the global scale: it spreads regionally, serving as an inspiration and stimulating jihadists groups and organisations from other latitudes and, finally, attracting and temporarily making use of foreign extremists and terrorists that are willing to fight and receive training, the orientation and support necessary so as to end up exporting the jihad to another part of the world.

5. Conclusions

The causal relationship set out in this paper is consistent with a gradual convergence between terrorism and organised crime. It can be asserted that in the best of cases, worldwide jihadist terrorism has not been unconnected with a certain degree of interaction with organised criminality, which actually spans all of the possible modalities and involves the different types of individuals and structures that provide the shape to the varied and changing morphology of the worldwide jihadist movement.

However, the examples that have been set out were chosen for their illustrative value, and not as cases that confirm a general pattern. For now, the structures selected do not exhaust the list of the individuals involved who are associated with global terrorism. With the information available to date, it cannot be confidently asserted that the overall situation of global terrorism is inevitably advancing towards a full and definitive convergence with organised criminality. In reality, while some of their representatives have collaborated closely with organised criminality, others have only done this in an isolated, sporadic or superficial way. Amongst other facts, we lack evidence about any manifestation of that convergence. But nothing should surprise us about this. Involvement in activities that are particular to organised crime may entail considerable risks and inconveniences for terrorists, with such them becoming discredited in the eyes of public opinion and their own social bases; the increase in the opportunities of being identified and located by security forces; possible infiltrations and betrayals; or finally, the “depoliticisation” of their own militia⁴⁹. In most of the occasions in which

49 As regard the costs that are involved for terrorists in their involvement in criminal activities or their association with criminal organisations see: GUPTA, Dipak K. *op. Cit.*

terrorists turn to crime, they do so with the intention of financing themselves. However, insofar as other sources of financing that are not strictly illegal become available, it seems logical for the terrorists to opt to exploit these and avoid unlawful actions⁵⁰. This has occurred, for example, with Al Qaida central itself, whose connections with criminality over the course of its history have been minimal⁵¹. In part, this characteristic may have been due to their capacity to gain access to money from legal investments and donations, and also to some extent to the need to develop their security measures. These include refraining from becoming involved in any activity that may draw the attention of those pursuing them, because it is illegal.

Our analysis also shows that not all of the options of criminal convergence are equally frequent within the sphere of global terrorism. Rather, direct and independent participation in criminal activities (confluence or appropriation of methods), both for the purposes of financing and logistics, is the preferred course of action, as compared to the less frequent collaboration with organised organisations and gangs. According to one argument that is worth corroborating, it is possible that the growing involvement of jihadist individuals in small-scale crimes in western country has been assisted by the proliferation of local cells or networks that are not subordinated to any of the leading and more powerful organisations related to global terrorism⁵². In any event, it seems that terrorists preferring acting with complete autonomy whenever possible, even when they carry out operations that are typical to organised criminality. A separate issue is to say that this is not always possible for them. Once again, we could consider security reasons as the most credible explanation for that preference. As regards the third type of convergence (hybrid blending or transformation), the examples of the evolution of terrorism towards conventional organised criminality, with the consequent deferral or abandoning of the particular political-religious agenda, are somewhat in the minority in the jihadist universe.

However, as we have indicated, the likelihood of terrorism and organised crime –in any of their forms– converging also depends on contextual factors. In fact, in the case of global terrorism, convergence has been seen to be much more frequent and significant in those parts of Central Asia, the Middle East and Western Africa, places where the structural or economic conditions have made it a financing option that is more lucrative, simple and opportune than any of the alternatives to this. This is demonstrated by the last sections of this paper, devoted to examining the experiences of convergence with organised crime that have been detected since the last decade of

50 FREEMAN, Michael. "The Sources of Terrorist Financing: Theory and Typology", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 34, nº 6, 2011, 461–475.

51 DEL CID GÓMEZ, Juan Miguel, op. cit.; ROLLINS, John, WYLER, Liana Sun y ROSEN, Seth, op. cit.

52 DISHMAN, Chris. "The Leaderless Nexus: When Crime and Terror Converge", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 28, nº 3, 2005, pp. 237–252.

the 2000's, in three geo-political spaces of greatest relevance for global terrorism, namely: the *Af-Pak* region, the post-Saddam Hussein Iraq and the Western Sahel. This examination shows it is in these places where the circumstances permit this and these stimulate the confusion of jihadist activism and organised crime that may reach extremes that are really dangerous.

In short, while the connection between global terrorism and organised criminality should not be assumed, *de facto*, it constitutes a genuine trend that is a cause for concern and is underway, which requires preferential treatment and attention. On the other hand, the problem of the critical scenarios would require specific and integrating interventions, based upon a greater level of cooperation between the national and multinational bodies and agencies that respectively have anti-terrorist and organised crime-fighting objectives assigned to them.

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