

Crime and Terror: Vanishing and Emerging Threats – New Criminal Markets

Xavier RAUFER^{a,1}

^a*Professor, Director of Research with Department for the Study of the Contemporary Criminal menace, University Panthéon-Assas – Paris II, France*

Our research institute [www.drmcc.org] basically produces diagnoses on what we call “the dark side of globalization”, a concept broad enough, wide enough, inclusive enough so we do not miss anything seriously dangerous, in today's or tomorrow's world. Thus, we are able to detect any mutating or evolving entity, say, from terrorism to organized crime.

1. Seen from Europe, the new threats are emerging

First, a fundamental fact – and an extraordinary one indeed: Today for us in Europe, and for the first time in one thousand years, who the enemy is, is unclear – and that will last for the foreseeable future.

In my generation, my father fought the Second World War, my grandfathers the First. If you asked them who the enemy was, they answered in a minute and with one word. But now this question is utterly meaningless. We are facing major threats, in a chaotic world, and only to define them, to have a clear idea of their nature and persistence is a terribly difficult exercise.

So let's look at what really happens in Europe, as far as threats are concerned, and see if this gives us any positive, any fruitful ideas.

What do we see? And what does it mean?

1. Brutally, terrorism is disappearing from Europe. Let us look at the recent figures, gathered by EUROPOL, as they are sensational indeed. In 2006, there were about 600 terrorist attacks (successful, or failures) in the EU. In 2012, real attacks (executed or attempted) scaled down to 161. As of end 2011, the last serious European terrorist group, ETA in Spain, renounced armed struggle.

The vast majority, 150 out of 161 occurred in Corsica or in Northern Ireland, mainly from the last of the Mohicans in Northern Ireland and France, from hybrids indeed in Corsica, terrorists that turned into racketeers. These are surely law enforcement problems, but they do not pose strategic threat anymore. So, there remains only 11 attacks for the entire rest of Europe! This means that 25 of EU's 27 countries have now, for the last 3 years, been terrorism free.

Terrorism in Europe is so low now that one more or one less “nuit bleue” in Corsica (“blue nights”, waves of nocturnal bombings) strongly affects the yearly statistics, at

¹ xraufer@drmcc.org.

the whole European level. In 2011 and 2012, an even bigger event occurred in Europe: Not one single attack from organized Islamists, jihadi (i.e. networks, groups, etc.). This suggests that for the time being and in the shape and form we know, after 40 years of catastrophic “holy war” (where Shia had the only lasting success) known forms of Salafi terrorism have little future – the last deadly attacks in Europe involving mostly lunatics or lone wolves.

So for us in Europe, the terrorist nightmare we have lived since the end of the 1960s seems to be fading away. Remember, this was our 4th terrorism wave: anarchists in the 1910s, Balkanic in the 1930s, Middle Eastern in the 1960s-1970s and followed immediately by jihadi terrorism starting after the terrible year of 1979.

2. But this is not the only important fact, as far as global security is concerned. In Europe also, we see (not everywhere and not equally) an important decrease in the use of illicit drugs by the younger drug addicts. First in the UK, then in various countries, mainly in Western Europe, we see the 16-24 year olds consuming far less cannabis, cocaine, heroin or ecstasy than before. In England, for instance, 90% of the youngsters participating in Rave parties used to take illicit drugs in 2007 – less than 50% of them did it in 2012.

The same trend is visible in France with the population of 17 year olds. Alas, the same could be stated for many other European countries.

And now, for the UK and for the first time in 50 years, this decrease tends to affect the broader category of drug addicts: 16 to 59 years old. But then, for any market, legal or else, young consumers are the future – and this has not escaped the big shots in the major cartels and mafias which are now busy migrating to new lucrative criminal activities.

So here is the perspective: ahead of us, down the road, there is less terrorism, but what will the terrorists become? They will obviously not oblige us and commit a mass suicide like the People's temple cult – so, what will they do?

Narcotics market is less attractive, which means huge amounts of money are missing. Let us only consider the cannabis market: around 175 billion dollars a year worth of profit according to the UN. Minus 20% means that 35 billion dollars are missing. Do you see big mafias and cartels peacefully accepting such a financial disaster? This bleak future means, of course, a lot of dead bodies, but also a rush for new sources of profit.

2. What are the new criminal emerging markets?

For us, the 3 major ones are:

- Dangerous counterfeit (dangerous to public health, mostly, counterfeit medicinal drugs, food or cosmetics),
- Migration from the real world to the cyber world (cybercrime),
- Corruption and looting of the major sports, through fixing bets, etc. Tons of money (legal or illegal sports betting has been estimated at around 200 billion dollars these recent years) and a very attractive situation for the bad guys, the crime scene and the criminals themselves being often ten thousand miles apart.

And here comes the hybrids: ex-guerrillas, former terrorists or fanatics investing in the criminal field and the new criminal businesses.

This trend has already started in France. If we consider the last 10 raids on counterfeit luxury brands in France: 6 specialized networks were discovered, all of them being

former jihadi from Algeria and Morocco. All of them are now in counterfeit bags and shoes business; they do it no more for jihad, for the cause, but for themselves.

This means that, for the foreseeable future, we should closely look at a fascinating intersection or nodal point: mutating entities entering mutating criminal markets.

Finally, here is our criminal forecast for the years to come (roughly, 2013 – 2020):

- Industrialisation of mass counterfeit production, particularly with regard to capital-consuming “criminal manufacturing” (dangerous counterfeit goods, etc.);
- Intensification in illegal trade coming into Europe, North America and developed parts of Asia;
- Increasing hybridization between “politics” (guerrillas, armed gangs), “religion” (various forms of fanaticism, jihadists) and criminal trafficking in all its guises;
- Flourishing cross-border crime, as always stemming from links between criminal fiefs and diasporas;
- Mega-gangs and degenerate guerrillas holding greater sway over uncontrolled parts of the emerging world;
- The criminal-hybrids keep a tighter rein on the people from “their” diasporas who have emigrated to major developed centres, especially in lawless housing estates and neighbourhoods;
- A gradual weakening and criminal degeneration of the Salafi-jihadist movement, with a concurrent rise in “political” Salafism (Muslim Brotherhood);
- Eco-terrorists' on-going ability to effectively harass their targets, but at the present level of danger, not more.

3. Conclusion: The Five Faces of Globalized Crime

Top

Criminal finance

Bottom

Hybrid and mutant groups, mega-gangs, prison gangs, etc.

Territories

Lawless neighborhoods and anarchic megacities

Flows

Major trafficking and dangerous counterfeit goods

Technology

Cybercrime and identity crime (data theft, etc.)