

NEVER MIND THE METRICS: DISRUPTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING BY OTHER MEANS

Vanessa Neumann

Measuring and mapping human trafficking are challenging for several reasons and therefore do not lead to effective counter-trafficking strategies. Understanding the drivers of human migration, however, is a much more promising approach for developing policies with risk-mitigating strategies. Insofar as the patterns of human migration are intertwined with other aspects of illicit trade, they can serve as an early warning signal of vulnerabilities in the global trade system for criminal activity. Tracking the financial links between human trafficking and other crimes provides various options for effective degradation and disruption of illicit trafficking networks.

Human trafficking is the second most profitable criminal enterprise for transnational organized crime groups—second only to drugs and more profitable than the trade in weapons.¹ While stirring narratives of tragic exploitation have given human smuggling and trafficking a global platform, the covert smuggling of humans cannot be separated from the illegal trafficking of drugs, weapons, oil, or counterfeit goods. Rather, because humans themselves become commoditized as they are transported over the same illicit superhighways, intelligence from other fields is critical in disrupting human trafficking's financial flows and those of associated businesses. Considering human smuggling and trafficking from a threat-finance perspective better elucidates their financial patterns and drivers and provides a clearer understanding of how organized crime and terrorist networks are funded.² This will be the key to developing effective hybrid solutions to counter the hybrid networks engaged in the trafficking of humans.

TROUBLE DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The traditional distinction between human smuggling and human trafficking hinges on three components: consent, exploitation, and movement. In human

*Vanessa Neumann is the president and CEO of Asymmetrica, which counters illicit trade for industry and government, and has served as sub-chair at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development High-Level Risk Forum Task Force on Charting Illicit Trade.
Email: vanessa.neumann@asymmetrica.net.*

smuggling, the person being smuggled has given consent and has paid, or agreed to pay, the smuggler to be moved surreptitiously across a border. Upon arrival at the final (contracted) destination, the business relationship between the smuggled and the smuggler ends, and the smuggled person is not constrained by the smuggler in pursuing other activities he or she wishes.

Smuggling is based on transportation, whereas trafficking has more to do with exploitation.

In human trafficking, by contrast, the trafficking victim is trapped in an activity without his or her consent, and his or her labor is being exploited for the material gain of the trafficker; movement across international borders is not necessary for human trafficking. Simply put, the traditional distinction revolves around whether the person is free to leave and/or end the professional relationship with the transporter, employer, or other service providers. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has a particularly clear and helpful distinction: Smuggling is based on transportation, whereas trafficking has more to do with exploitation.³

From a policy or legislative perspective, the difference between human smuggling and human trafficking can also be delineated by the victim.⁴ Smuggling is a crime against the state—laws are broken, and border security is breached. It is the combination of skill and risk associated with these two activities that generates the profits of smugglers and their facilitators. Breaching border security takes a skill or connection that is a monetizable asset; the risk of a criminal conviction also warrants financial compensation.

Human trafficking, on the other hand, is generally a crime against persons, violating their human and labor rights in the process. The activity by which the trafficking victims are being exploited may otherwise be legal: mining, housecleaning, agriculture, or dressmaking. However, it may also be illegal: prostitution, pickpocketing, or drug running. The latter category of activities encompasses a crime against the state, intertwining different crimes. I suggest that while measuring human trafficking presents a number of challenges that stymie effective policymaking, its patterns of drivers and links to other forms of illicit trade present better opportunities for enhanced effectiveness in both policymaking and enforcement.

Human trafficking is difficult to measure and assess in at least two ways, both of them arising from the fact that human trafficking is a process, not an event. First, smuggling sometimes becomes trafficking. Often people who start using the services of a smuggler end up in an indentured state, working to pay off debt that does not decrease. The *New York Times* tells the story of Cecilia, who wanted

to escape the dangers of Guatemala, so she used *coyotes* (Spanish slang for human smugglers) to enter the United States. Once in the United States, however, these coyotes demanded more money from her family for her release. “It was clear that if we did not comply, she would wind up in a brothel,” said Ana Reyes, a family friend of the victim.⁵

The other scenario is that the smuggled can end up being trafficked as partial payment between smugglers and other criminal organizations, such as drug cartels. “In some cases, women are used as currency to pay for passage through areas controlled by drug cartels. The cartels generally require each coyote to sell at least one woman into prostitution every two months in lieu of his monthly fee.”⁶ They can be forced into working for a criminal organization committing other crimes. The classic example is to be forced into prostitution, but they can also be indentured as drug runners. If they are forced to transport drugs across borders, then the trafficking victims also become smugglers.

Second, trafficking happens in stages in a person’s life. Whether a particular individual gets counted as a trafficking victim varies from stage to stage of that individual’s journey. For instance, a person may ask to be smuggled for better work and end up in an indentured state (trafficked, as above), and then escape and be smuggled somewhere else. An Asian woman who was trafficked into prostitution may gain her freedom and end up working at a karaoke bar, where prostitution is available but voluntary. If she herself estimates she has a choice, should such a woman be counted as a trafficking victim? Also, is the route she took in her journey a trafficking or a smuggling route? More importantly, from a policymaking perspective, does it even really matter?

Here lies a key complicating factor: the degree of exploitation as perceived by the subject. Illegal immigrants often tolerate a high degree of exploitation as long as they make money to send back to their families. Adding to the complexity, families can pressure their daughters to work as prostitutes elsewhere, under the realization that the financial gains accrued to the family are likely to enhance its social status within the community; in these communities, the daughter exported into prostitution (in the European Union (EU) or the United States) can be lionized as a heroine by her community. In *Illicit*, author Moisés Naím gives two examples: In the tiny Chinese hamlet of Langle, the prosperous houses with tiled floors and air-conditioning are the ones whose daughters have gone to work as prostitutes in Thailand and Malaysia; while in the Nigerian municipality of Benin City, the only shame for *Italos*, women who went to work as prostitutes in Italy, was returning home without adequate savings.⁷ For their hometowns, their labor was translated into better houses and more running water. “Many of these women had left for Italy with not their family’s consent,” Naím writes, “but their enthusiastic

encouragement.”⁸

There are other forms of sexual enslavement. For instance, is it still trafficking when a family agrees to sell their daughter into marriage in another country? As a result of its one-child policy dating back to 1979 and a persistent cultural preference for boys, China has a shortage of women.⁹ The annual growth rate in China averaged 9.10 percent from 1989 until 2014, with this growth rate at times reaching 14.2 percent during this decade of economic boom.¹⁰ The confluence of the shortage of women and rapid wealth creation means that Chinese and foreign brides can command a decent price for marriage. This leaves Southern Chinese male peasants at a competitive disadvantage: They want wives who look ethnically similar, but cannot compete with wealthier men in urban centers. The solution is trade from a seller market with women in poorer circumstances to men in a wealthier market with a demand for the women’s spousal services. The result is that Southern Chinese peasants are buying Vietnamese wives.¹¹ This is a voluntary financial transaction with long-term contractual obligations that severely impair the purchased wife’s ability to exercise free will, even in an issue as simple as returning home for a visit. Should this be counted as trafficking? Cogent arguments can be made both for and against it.

If personal interviews do not bring the accurate quantification that is so important to the policymaker, neither does the measure of prosecutions. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) “2009 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons” was, by its own admission, a report on patterns of prosecution of trafficking in persons, “cataloguing and analyzing the world’s response, based on criminal justice and victim assistance data from 155 countries.”¹² There are a number of reasons why this is a deficient metric that grossly underestimates the number of victims.

First, even in the EU, most trafficking cases are prosecuted under other legal statutes, such as those that pertain to slavery, assault, kidnapping, rape, and labor violations. Second, some EU countries do not even have laws against human trafficking. Third, in some languages “trafficking” is translated as “to kidnap and sell someone.” Thus, trafficking prosecution statistics are of minimal value in measuring and mapping human trafficking. Perhaps these metrics are ultimately irrelevant. On what metrics then can the policy maker rely?

OF METRICS AND DRIVERS

It is a common fetish in policymaking circles to develop metrics such as Key Performance Indicators based on something that can be counted—individuals, prosecutions, border crossings—without ever asking whether what is being counted should be counted in the first place. A more productive approach would entail

looking at human smuggling and trafficking clearly for what they are: an illicit trade. Trade is business. In countering illicit trade, rather than looking at the specific criminal acts in isolation, it is critical to examine the drivers and the vulnerabilities all along the supply and distribution chains of a network. It is the drivers that will provide the key to effective policy strategies; the vulnerabilities, the opportunities for interdiction, and enforcement.

Broadly speaking, there are three key drivers for illicit human migration (smuggling, with or without trafficking). First, unfavorable conditions within the home territory or state (e.g., political oppression, violence or war, marginalization, poverty, or the lack of economic opportunities); second, labor market differentials; and third (and most ironically), better border controls or vast geography. Human smuggling is most prevalent (and profitable) across the border separating two regions of significantly different development levels—namely, they flow from the poorer region into the richer one.¹³ Western Europe and West Africa showcase all three drivers—as do Central America, the United States, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan. Within the Economic Community of West African States, no visa is required to cross borders. However, if the goal is to enter Europe, crossing the Sahara or Mediterranean requires professional services—so does bypassing tightened border controls. When the individual is unlikely to be able to make the crossing unaided, he or she has to turn to a professional smuggling operation, which then increases the risk of abuse and of smuggling becoming trafficking (exploitation).

In order to create effective counter-trafficking strategies one must understand the drivers.

ANALYZING AND PREDICTING THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

In order to create effective counter-trafficking strategies, one must understand the drivers. Flows in human migration (whether smuggling or trafficking) are subject to both economic- and enforcement-related pressures. Migrants move in search of better economic opportunities, and analyses of their patterns of movement indicate a high degree of calculation of risks and rewards, both by migrants and their smugglers. Unless the rewards are worth the physical risks and the financial cost of a perilous journey, the migrants generally prefer to stay in their home country beside their families. UN migration statistics bear this out. Since 2008, when the developed world had a financial crisis that resulted in a substantial economic downturn, migration into the United States and the EU experienced a substantial drop.¹⁴

Previously existing diasporas play an instrumental role in both the spread

One of the most effective Chinese criminal networks centers around the diaspora from the Fujian province of southeastern China.

of migrants and trafficking victims, as well as that of other forms of illicit trade. Illegal migrants tend to go where there are family members. In a UNODC study of West African human smuggling, more than half of Nigerians who intended to emigrate said they are not poor by local standards, but more than 80 percent had family members living in Europe.¹⁵ A popular route will make those who never previously considered emigrating consider it. According to the UNODC, “Once

migration and concomitant remittances start in a community, smuggling can take on a momentum of its own.”¹⁶

For both traffickers and smugglers, previously established networks set up by earlier migrants (from the same origin country and ethnic background) who are now settled in the destination country or networks of individuals who specialize in moving people from one place to another are key.¹⁷ Diasporas also help criminals hide trafficking victims by “absorbing” them, so the new additions are inconspicuous to law enforcement.¹⁸ Urban areas with allied crime groups

that can likewise receive and then distribute the trafficking victims into their associated labor assignments are also prized by smugglers. The links to other crime groups can come from family members with connections in business.

One of the most effective Chinese criminal networks centers around the diaspora from the Fujian province of southeastern China.¹⁹ The human smuggling routes have a high degree of correlation with the trafficking channels for other illicit trades, and they also connect to well-known diasporas. In fact, they blend into a broader community background, for many reasons, not the least because human trafficking is the form of illicit trade where women have the biggest presence as criminals and victimizers.²⁰ However, some theorists consider the traditional Western view of triads as misguided: Their organizations are not as monolithic as most Westerners generally consider them. Feingold quotes a study by Sheldon Zhang and Kolin Ching:

...contrary to widely held conceptions about Chinese organized crime, most smugglers of human beings are otherwise ordinary citizens whose family networks and fortuitous social contracts have led them to take part in a profitable trade... They are loosely connected and form temporary alliances to carry out smuggling operations. With the exception of a shared commitment to money, there is little that holds them together.²¹

For years, I have studied the process of criminalization and/or radicalization of

diaspora networks for the U.S. Department of Defense, starting with Hezbollah's networks in South America.²² The increasing foothold of the "Party of God" in the cocaine trade is facilitated by an enormous Lebanese diaspora that has built up over 120 years in South America and West Africa. Subsequent Lebanese emigration has radicalized long-standing diaspora networks.²³

Many South Lebanese (who are predominantly Shia and support Amal or Hezbollah) emigrated to Latin America and West Africa after the 2006 war with Israel, Lebanon's southern neighbor. Another wave of migration to Latin America and West Africa ensued after Hezbollah's 2008 attack on Beirut, retribution for the government imposing controls on Hezbollah's communications network.²⁴ The 2008 and 2009 Lebanese émigrés were disproportionately Hezbollah-supporting Shia, who chose to emigrate because they were no longer welcome in the Sunni institutions in Lebanon, nor were they welcome in the predominantly Sunni Gulf states.²⁵ Their economic prospects were therefore limited. This is the economic pressure that was identified above as a key driver.

Even prior to their emigration, a significant proportion of these Hezbollah-supporting Shia were unemployed and turned to petty crime, such as robbery, drugs, and prostitution. Some then escaped these dire economic circumstances by emigrating to welcoming regions and countries where they had a significant diaspora network. South America and West Africa were such regions: locations with a high volume of drug trafficking and other forms of illicit trade and a Lebanese community that sent remittances home and funneled a good portion of the illicit financial gains back to Hezbollah.

Law enforcement patterns also heavily influence migration patterns. When Spanish enforcement was tightened in the Strait of Gibraltar, the Canary Islands, and the Spanish-governed enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla within Morocco, human smuggling routes diversified, first for the North Africans, then for the West Africans who followed them. As popular entry channels got blocked, entry points from Africa into Europe have been pushed increasingly eastward, but old channels can reemerge yet again if enforcement patterns change.²⁶

With the command-and-control system being dispersed and alliances being mainly of a temporary nature, the intelligence community identifies these networks as "flat" and "adaptive." They are flat because the hierarchy is shielded from view by disparate cells that interact as equals. They are adaptive because alliances can shift quickly in response to enforcement threats or simply to a better return on investment. The lack of cohesion or effective command-and-control hierarchy in flat and adaptive networks can make them difficult to be infiltrated and disrupted, unless one follows the one binding factor—the money. al Qaeda's cells in many ways have been left up to their own devices, often being self-sufficient when

it comes to funding their operations.²⁷ This “flattening” of the networks, as the intelligence community calls it, makes them too adaptive and complex for law enforcement to destroy them. That this structure is a loosely organized network of cells gives these cells greater organizational flexibility, reduces the risk of law enforcement penetration, provides greater efficiency, and shields the leadership.

A case such as this underlines the need for intelligence sharing and cooperations, which is inherently difficult in an environment of competitive priorities and limited resources.

However, if they are linked by money, then the strategy is clear: Follow the money. This strategy is both a blessing and a curse for law enforcement. If law enforcement follows the movements of drugs or people, they end up with a drug or human trafficking case; if they follow the money, there is no telling where the investigation will end up. It creates more opportunities for a “multi-agency swarm” disruption, but such collaboration is generally very difficult for law enforcement personnel, who often have to cross authorities and budgets to accomplish that objective. For instance, an illegal immigrant who was smuggled by an organized crime syndicate, but is trafficking drugs and is also affiliated with a terrorist group, crosses the authorities of many different organizations: ICE, the

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)—each of which will want to pursue the case in accordance with their own agency’s authority. A case such as this underlines the need for intelligence sharing and cooperation, which is inherently difficult in an environment of competing priorities and limited resources.

LINKS BETWEEN HUMAN SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING TO OTHER THREATS

Illegal migrants present other business opportunities to criminal organizations. As migrants move through gang- or criminal-controlled territory, they are extorted for money and resources, forcibly recruited into their ranks, kidnapped for ransom, and sexually exploited by the gang members or criminals, as illustrated above. Transnational criminal organizations can also use migrants to transport drugs and weapons and to spread the organization into new territories.²⁸

The history of the Mara Salvatrucha gang is instructive as to the role of geopolitical pressures and diaspora movements in the spread of violence and criminality. The Mara Salvatrucha (“the Salvadoran gang”), commonly referred to as MS-13,

was formed in Los Angeles, California in the 1980s by refugees from war-torn El Salvador.²⁹ The “13” is believed by experts to come from the thirteenth letter of the alphabet, “M” for Mara. MS-13 is made up of cliques (*clicas*) with names such as the Sailors, Normandy, Peajes, Uniones, and Fultons. They work through a partnership called *La Hermandad* (“The Brotherhood”) across Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia. The gang network spread across the United States as immigrants migrated in search of work. They are now, aside from being engaged in their own traditional criminal activity, also the enforcers and distributors for the illicit trafficking of foreign terrorist organizations.³⁰

The Central American MS-13 and MS-18 gangs (commonly referred to as the “Maras”) have become a strong presence in Mexican territory and appear to be working for, or competing with, Mexican transnational criminal organizations (TOCs) and gangs. As Max Manwaring points out, in the South along the Belize-Guatemala border, the Maras have gained control of illegal immigrant and drug trafficking movement north through Mexico into the United States. Now within Mexico, nearly 15,000 members of various Mexican gangs and Central American Maras are estimated to be working in more than twenty of the country’s thirty states.³¹

In the case of migrants who have been trafficked, once at their final destination, the victims are put to work in money laundering operations, with their labor further increasing the returns on investment their exploiters get from them. Sweatshops, karaoke bars, brothels, and massage parlors are classic examples of this type of labor exploitation within a money laundering operation. Illegal migrants are often also employed in another classic money laundering scheme: construction. Unneeded hotels and casinos are often built to launder profits, and then abandoned in what is known as the “cockroach effect”: Once a particular goal is accomplished in one environment, the criminals move on to another, more permissive environment.³²

Movements of people also produce a conflation of criminal activity in other ways. Returning to the example of the Chinese smuggling operations, Chinese immigrants smuggled by Chinese triads such as Red Dragon come into contact with the Latin America-based criminal groups that control the territory through which they pass: Those entering through Mexico’s Pacific Coast pass through areas in which illicit activities such as human trafficking are well-controlled and taxed by the Juárez and Gulf cartels; those entering Mexico from Central America follow routes controlled by Los Zetas.³³

The Chinese triads are well entwined with several Mexican drug cartels, particularly the Sinaloa Cartel. The area east of Tijuana on the California-Mexico border, known as Mexicali, has a large Chinese-Mexican population and is the base

of triad operations in Mexico. Sinaloa and Tijuana drug cartels buy most of their precursor chemicals for the manufacture of methamphetamines (e.g., ephedrine and pseudoephedrine) from Asia. The Mexican cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación is similarly globalized in its supply chain; it imports cocaine from Colombia and ephedrine from China. Mexican authorities have been seizing increasingly large amounts of these chemicals coming from China and India into the ports of Lázaro

With that kind of income, these groups are well-equipped with military-grade weaponry and organization.

Cárdenas and Michoacán. The interactions associated with the implied collaboration between Chinese human smuggling groups and the Mexican cartels raise the potential for both these groups to diversify into other forms of collaboration or violent competition.³⁴

While well-funded by drugs, human smuggling and trafficking are part of the business portfolio that funds deadly violence by these groups. In the summer of 2010, the Juárez drug cartel used a remote-controlled car bomb to kill four people and wound twenty others in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico's so-called "murder capital," creating a massive blast within walking distance of downtown El Paso, Texas. A second car bomb exploded outside a police station in Ciudad Victoria.³⁵ At the height of its power in the early 2000s, the DEA estimates that the Juárez Cartel was reaping profits of \$200 million a week.³⁶ With that kind of income, these groups are well-equipped with military-grade weaponry and organization. They are armed not only with automatic weapons, but also with rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns, and 50-caliber anti-aircraft guns. Such weaponry enables them to engage in direct firefights with the Mexican military. They also have a demonstrated capability to abduct squad-sized units of the army and federal police, torture them to death, and decapitate them, and then leave the bodies as a message to the broader community.³⁷

The famous Saudi ambassador plot is an excellent example of the complex and deadly operations that can result from illicit human flows. On 30 May 2013, Manssor Arbabsiar, a naturalized American citizen, was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison in a New York City federal court for his role in a scheme by members of the Iranian government to recruit Los Zetas to kill Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States by bombing a Washington, DC, restaurant. Arbabsiar, a former used car salesman from Corpus Christi, Texas, admitted to arranging a \$1.5 million payment from Iran to kill Saudi ambassador Adel al-Jubeir by bombing the restaurant, describing as "no big deal" the fact that others, including American senators, could die in the attack.³⁸

The veracity and seriousness of the plot, as well as the involvement of Iran, was

ascertained by a number of elements of the crime. First and foremost, Arbabsiar called overseas to arrange wire transfers totaling approximately \$100,000 to be sent in early August 2011 to two FBI undercover accounts as a down payment for the undercover operative to carry out the assassination.³⁹ When, on 20 September 2011, the undercover DEA agent told Arbabsiar that the operation was ready and requested that he either pay one half of the agreed-upon price of \$1.5 million for the murder or that Arbabsiar himself personally travel to Mexico as collateral for the final payment of the fee, Arbabsiar agreed to travel to Mexico to guarantee the final payment, which he did on 28 September 2011.⁴⁰ After his capture, Arbabsiar made phone calls to his Quds Force contact Gholam Shakuri, at the behest and under the monitoring of U.S. law enforcement, wherein Shakuri pressed Arbabsiar to execute the plot as soon as possible. This confirmed that Iran was indeed behind the plot to use Los Zetas to smuggle an assassin: a paradigmatic example of crime-terror pipelines, in this case linking human smuggling, terrorism, and drug running.⁴¹

Somali terrorist group al-Shabaab is also smuggling its operatives into the United States over the U.S.-Mexico border. An indictment was unsealed in Texas Federal Court in May 2010, “that revealed that a Somali man, Ahmed Muhammed Dhakane, led a human smuggling ring that brought East Africans, including Somalis with ties to terror groups, from Brazil and across the Mexican border and into Texas.”⁴²

The indictment also alleged that Dhakane was associated with al-Barakat, a Somalia-based company that is involved in the transfer of money to Somalia. According to a STRATFOR analyst, the U.S. government claims that al-Barakat is involved in funding terrorist groups and has designated the company a terrorist entity.⁴³ “Diaspora Somalis transfer a great deal of legitimate money to family members back in Somalia through organizations such as al-Barakat because there is no official banking system in the country, and militant groups like al-Shabaab use this flow of money as camouflage for their own financial transactions.”⁴⁴

“In a separate case, Anthony Joseph Tracy, of Virginia, who admitted to having ties to al-Shabaab,” was prosecuted in 2012 “for his alleged role in an international ring that illegally brought more than 200 Somalis across the Mexican border.”⁴⁵ The illegal smuggling operations conducted by Muhammed Dhakane and Anthony Joseph Tracy pose a serious threat to the United States because “the smuggled Somalis are believed to have spread out across the United States and remain mostly at large.”⁴⁶ Somali nationals at large in the United States have been thought to be at considerable risk, as al-Shaabaab recruiters have allegedly come through the Mexican border with the aim of radicalizing these nationals.⁴⁷

THE EXPLOITATION OF LINKS WITH OTHER THREATS

The links with other threats and forms of illicit trade create opportunities for greater interdiction and enforcement—nullifying the difficulties in measuring and mapping human smuggling versus human trafficking. Because of the high degree of correlation with other crimes, those crimes which are generally easier to prosecute can be the entry point for effective interdiction of human trafficking. The


The transnational criminal networks present in illicit trade are complex, adaptive systems whose activities fund not just corruption, but also terrorism and insurgency.

first step is to identify the money flows; next, efforts should also be made to identify actors, actions, and authorities to degrade and dismantle the criminal network in question.

The transnational criminal networks present in illicit trade are complex, adaptive systems whose activities fund not just corruption, but also terrorism and insurgency. While the multi-layered complexity and rapid adaptability present challenges to the traditional single-approach interdiction of, say, the DEA pursuing the drug running, or the FBI or military pursuing the weapons trafficking, the cross-border activities and their involvement in threat finance can also be used to build a multi-pronged approach that has a proven record of success: a counterterrorism tactic commonly referred to as a “multi-agency swarm.”

If the network is properly mapped and its vulnerabilities properly identified, the trafficking network can be degraded and disrupted in various ways at once—hence the name, “multi-agency swarm.” Customs and tax agencies can seize the smuggled consumer goods, while drug enforcement agencies pursue the drug trafficking element, local law enforcement liberates the slaves, and the bank accounts are frozen and assets seized. Closing in on these multiple prongs at once is a far more effective strategy for bringing down a transnational criminal enterprise than just tackling one criminal activity with one enforcement authority at a time, especially given the difficulty in crafting effective policies to mitigate against human trafficking, as we have seen above. In short, as the criminals and terrorists collude and share activities, so must military and law enforcement.

Furthermore, we must accept that our personal choices as consumers have a global impact with serious repercussions. Drug cartels exist because people consume drugs. Slavery exists because people want cheap clothes, cheap handbags, cheap labor in mines or homes, and cheap prostitutes. The entire illicit trade in tobacco products exists because people want to smoke and either do not want to or cannot pay full price for the taxes on legal cigarettes. So many of the greatest

harms and deepest sufferings in the world are consequences of our avaricious or intemperate desires. We could easily ameliorate great global suffering by only moderate adjustments to our choices as consumers. 

NOTES

¹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Definition of Human Trafficking,” 22 December 2014, <http://www.dhs.gov/definition-human-trafficking>.

² “Threat finance” generally refers to the (illicit) financing of threats to U.S. national security by state and non-state actors. These actors include rogue nations, terrorist facilitators, weapons of mass destruction proliferators, money launderers, and drug kingpins, according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Counter-threat finance (CTF) encompasses the activities undertaken by the relevant competent authorities to disrupt the activities and dismantle or destroy the underpinning networks that move the money that finances these threats by devising tactics that will deny them access to the means to collect, move, launder, or disburse the money for the aforementioned threatening activities. While the Treasury Department is widely viewed as the leading CTF authority (particularly through its list of sanctioned entities under its Office of Foreign Asset Control), the U.S. Department of Defense also has CTF authorities that include as threats: improvised explosive devices, precursor chemicals (used in the manufacture of narcotics), and people. The mantra of the CTF analyst is, “follow the money.”

³ David A. Feingold, “Trafficking, Trade, and Migration: Mapping Human Trafficking in the Mekong Region,” in *An Atlas of Trafficking in Southeast Asia: The Illegal Trade in Arms, Drugs, People, Counterfeit Goods and Natural Resources in Mainland Southeast Asia*, ed. Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy (New York and London: Tauris, 2013), 57.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Damien Cave and Frances Robles, “A Smuggled Girl’s Odyssey of False Promises and Fear,” *New York Times*, 5 October 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/06/world/americas/a-smuggled-girls-odyssey-guatemala-migration-abduction.html>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Moisés Naím, *Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers and Counterfeiters are Hijacking the Global Economy* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 96.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Therese Hesketh, Li Lu, and Zhu Wei Xing, “The Effect of China’s One-Child Policy after 25 Years,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 353, no.11 (2005), 1.

¹⁰ “China GDP Annual Growth Rate,” *Trading Economics*, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/china/gdp-growth-annual>.

¹¹ Feingold, 83.

¹² “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons” (report, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, New York: February 2009), 6, http://www.unodc.org/documents/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf.

¹³ Ibid., 25.

¹⁴ Ibid., 30; David L. Leal, “Latinos, immigration and the U.S. recession,” in *Immigration and the Financial Crisis: The United States and Australia Compared*, ed. John Higley, John Nieuwenhuysen, and Stone Neerup (Northampton and Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2011), 60.

¹⁵ Ibid., 26.

¹⁶ Ibid., 26.

¹⁷ Feingold, 63.

¹⁸ Louise Shelley, “Human Smuggling and Trafficking into Europe: A Comparative Perspective” (paper, Transatlantic Council on Migration, London: 2014), 7.

¹⁹ There are reams of publications on the Fujianese diaspora, spanning business, academia, and the

military, and even testimony before the U.S. Congress. Some of the better introductory sources are: Kenneth Pomeranz, “The Fujian Trade Diaspora,” *Global Trade*, 29 August 2013, <http://www.global-trademag.com/banking-on-global-trade/the-fujian-trade-diaspora>; R. Evan Ellis, “Chinese Organized Crime in Latin America,” *Prism* 4, no. 1 (2012), 65–77, [cco.dodlive.mil/files/2014/02/prism64-77_ellis.pdf](http://ccododlive.mil/files/2014/02/prism64-77_ellis.pdf); R. Evan Ellis, “U.S. National Security Implications of Chinese Involvement in Latin America” (report, Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA: June 2005); Niccolò Locatelli, “China in Latin America: Political and Economic Implications of Beijing’s Involvement in the Region” (Dissertation.com, Boca Raton, FL: 2010).

²⁰ Shelley, 8.

²¹ Sheldon Zhang and Ko-lin Chin, “Chinese Human Smuggling in the United States of America,” *Forum on Crime and Society* 1, no. 2 (2001), 31–52; Feingold, 63.

²² A lot of what follows is primary source material that was part of the author’s original research in the Levant. Some of those findings, discussed here, are also found in: Vanessa Neumann, “Radicalization of Diaspora Networks,” *Stratagem Asymmetric Operations Working Group Newsletter* 7, no.1 (June 2012).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ UNODC, 26–7.

²⁷ Michael A. Braun, “Iran, Hezbollah and the Threat to the Homeland” (statement for the record before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC: 21 March 2012).

²⁸ Juan Carlos Garzón et al., “The Criminal Diaspora: The Spread of Transnational Organized Crime and How to Contain Its Expansion” (Woodrow Wilson Center Reports of the Americas no. 31, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC: 2013), 13.

²⁹ Maggie Fazeli Fard, “MS-13: What you need to know about the Mara Salvatrucha street gang,” *The Buzz Blog, Washington Post*, 14 November 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-buzz/post/ms-13-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-mara-salvatrucha-street-gang/2011/11/14/gIQAqituKN_blog.html.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Max Manwaring, “Gangs and Cartels in Coalition and Conflict: The Insurgency Phenomenon in Mexico” (speech from proceedings of a Joint Policy and Research Forum, *The Hybrid Threat: Crime, Terrorism and Insurgency in Mexico*, U.S. Army War College and George Washington University, Carlisle Barracks, PA: 20 October 2011), 23–7.

³² Garzón, 12.

³³ Ellis, 69.

³⁴ Vanessa Neumann, “Of Chinese Snakeheads and Mexican Coyotes: The Globalization of Crime-Terror Pipelines,” (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, August 2012).

³⁵ Nathaniel Parish Flannery, “Why is Mexico’s Murder City attracting investors,” *Forbes*, 27 August 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/nathanielparishflannery/2012/08/27/why-is-mexicos-murder-city-attracting-investors/>; Richard Esposito, “Mexican drug cartels’ new weapon in border war – the car bomb,” *ABC News*, 12 August 2010, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/mexican-drug-cartels-weapon-border-war-car-bomb/story?id=11383665>.

³⁶ Jennifer L. Hesterman, “The Terrorist-Criminal Nexus: An Alliance of International Drug Cartels, Organized Crime, and Terror Groups,” (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2013), 139.

³⁷ Barry R. McCaffrey, “Mexico: Drugs, Crime and the Rule of Law” (speech from proceedings of a Joint Policy and Research Forum, *The Hybrid Threat: Crime, Terrorism and Insurgency in Mexico*, U.S. Army War College and George Washington University, Carlisle Barracks, PA: 20 October 2011), 5.

³⁸ “Manssor Arbabsiar Sentenced in New York City Federal Court to 25 Years in Prison for Conspiring with Iranian Military Officials to Assassinate the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States,” FBI press release, (30 May 2013), <http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2013/manssor-arbabsiar-sentenced-in-new-york-city-federal-court-to-25-years-in-prison-for-conspiring-with-iranian-military-officials-to-assassinate-the-saudi-arabian-ambassador-to-the-united-states>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Jana Winter, "Feds Issue Terror Watch for the Texas/Mexico Border," *Fox News*, 24 February 2012, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2010/05/26/terror-alert-mexican-border>.

⁴³ Scott Stewart, "Al Shaabab threats against the United States?," *Security Weekly*, 3 June 2010, https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100602_al_shabaab_threats_united_states.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Winter.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.