Assessing State Responses to Security Threats in Central Asia

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The links between terrorism and transnational organized crime are an emerging challenge to international peace and security. While these links may take different forms, several broad patterns are clearly evident. The disruption of global networks of terrorist financing has led a number of well-known terrorist organizations to turn to illegal means for financing their operations, such as illicit trafficking of counterfeit items, weapons, natural resources, cultural property, and people. The Islamic State (or ISIS), for example, is the “best-funded terrorist organization” confronted by the US, according to David Cohen, the undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. ISIS’ principle source of finance is derived from the sale of oil, but also kidnapping for ransom, extortion networks, and other criminal activities.

Drug trade, in particular, has provided funding for insurgency and terrorist attacks in various regions throughout the world, and has risen to the top of the list of illegal money raising activities. The 2004 bombings in Madrid represents an example of how terrorist attacks were funded by drugs and crime. At the same time, transnational criminal groups have increasingly engaged in violent tactics or supported their terrorist counterparts with funds. The Pakistan-based Indian criminal syndicate, D-Company (led by Dawood Ibrahim) has established relations to Al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiva, and other terrorist groups. D-Company has been implicated in a range of criminal and terrorist activities in India, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates, including the 1993 Mumbai terrorist strikes. As of November 2011, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration had linked 19 of the 49 organizations on the State Department’s list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations to the drug trade. Similarly, in 2010, 29 out of the 63 organizations on the Justice Department’s Consolidated Priority Organization Targets list, which includes key drug trafficking and criminal organizations, possessed links to terrorist groups.

Eurasia is an important site where terrorism and transnational organized crime intersect. Islamist groups in Afghanistan and Syria see a strategic opportunity to reach out and

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1 Research for this paper was supported by Minerva Research Initiative grant ONR N00014-15-1-2788 (“Trafficking/Terrorism Nexus in Eurasia”) funded by Office of Naval Research.
3 Stravridis 2013, vii.
4 As cited in Lister 2014. Other terrorist groups involved in criminal activity are Abu Sayyaf Group, Al Qaeda, Kurdistan Worker’s Party, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and Hezbollah (Dishman 2001).
5 See, for example, del Cid Gómez 2010.
6 Clarke and Lee 2008.
7 Wechsler and Barnabo 2013, 235.
8 White House 2011, 14.
9 For the purpose of this Program, Eurasia includes the states of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia), and Russia.
radicalize Muslims, who constitute a religious majority in all states of Central Asia and Azerbaijan, and total to 12% of the Russian population. While the funding for a range of Islamists groups operating in the region comes from a variety of sources, drug trafficking from Afghanistan is an important tool that partly explains the strength of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), and Al-Qaeda, all of which are on the U.S. foreign Terrorist Organizations List. Drug trafficking has benefitted jihadists indirectly by strengthening local mafias and feeding deep-seated corruption that has eroded the functioning of security forces, judiciaries, and local governments throughout the region.

Moreover, Eurasia has many of the conditions that favor the development of the trafficking/terrorism nexus. Struggling economies, unresolved conflicts, porous borders, corruption, and weak law-enforcement characterizing these territories have allowed organized crime and terrorism to flourish in the region. Central Asia is one of the major drug trafficking hotspots in the world that support insurgent movements and terrorism. It serves as a major transit point, enabling a steady supply of narcotics from growers in Afghanistan to buyers in Russia and Europe. By some estimates about 25-30% of drugs produced in Afghanistan (an annual average of 90-120 tons, primarily heroin) are transported through the Northern route. Illicit arm sales abound throughout the area, and locals – targeted for forced or cheap labor and sexual exploitation – are frequently drawn into human trafficking rings. The countries of the South Caucasus have become a center of cross-border smuggling, involving the illicit transport of arms (including nuclear materials), people and other commodities fueling criminal networks. Russia – though capable of asserting itself as a regional power abroad – is nonetheless grappling with multiple security threats that are exacerbated by border problems, large in-migration issues, an extensive drug trade, deep-seated organized crime, and terrorism. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that all of the countries of Eurasia are “high risk” countries of origin, and all but two (Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) are destination countries for intra-regional trafficking, while the International Labor Organization estimates that Eurasia has the highest prevalence rate of forced labor trafficking in the world, 4.2 per 1,000 people.

Despite the many points of intersection between trafficking activities and terrorism, however, there is still a tendency to treat these forms of transnational crime as discrete, and examine them separately or as part of the overlapping trafficking routes. While the links between terrorism, organized crime, and human trafficking are now widely

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11 The list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations is available at http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm. On May 26, 2011, the Secretary of State has designated North Caucasus-based Caucasus Emirate under Presidential Executive Order 13224, which targets terrorists and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism.
12 Balci and Chaudet 2014.
13 Burnashev 2007; Madi 2004; UNODC 2012.
14 Traughber 2007.
15 Orttung and Latta 2008.
16 UNODC 2009.
17 United States Department of State 2012.
assumed, the nature of the nexus is insufficiently addressed and poorly understood. A key capacity constraint that has thus far inhibited attention and effective responses to the terrorism/trafficking nexus has been the dominant “culture” within the U.S. national security community. This “culture” underestimates the growing power of non-state actors or the magnitude of the threat they pose; it plays down the possibility of the convergence of criminal, terrorist, and insurgent groups; and it distrusts interagency cooperation and information sharing.

This paper analyzes the interface of drug trafficking, human trafficking and terrorism in Eurasia and focuses specifically on national capacities to respond to the trafficking/terrorism nexus. In doing so, it investigates the following research questions:

- What is the nature of terrorism-criminal connections?
- What are the conditions under which terrorist-trafficking alliances are forged and change?
- What is the capacity and willingness of national governments to prevent, monitor, and dismantle the terrorism/trafficking nexus?

To trace out national capacities, the paper uses case study analysis of nine hotspots in Eurasia to assess national capabilities to respond to the threats of trafficking and terrorism. Research on national and international responses will be performed via the content analysis of their formally announced programs and in-depth individual interviews with a wide range of experts in selected field sites (i.e., government officials, local policy experts, and nongovernmental representatives of international agencies).

BACKGROUND ON THE TRAFFICKING/TERRORISM NEXUS

In February 2012, James R. Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, testified before the U.S. Congress and identified a “threatening crime-terror nexus” as one of five key threats to U.S. national security. The emergence of a “crime-terror” nexus is not new, but the terminology and scope of what is meant by the “nexus” has evolved over time. In the contemporary literature, the “nexus” between organized crime and terrorism most commonly refers to the use of crime, such as drug trafficking, by terrorist

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18 The challenges posed by the terrorism/trafficking nexus are a focus of the National Security Strategy approved by President Obama in July 2011 (White House 2011).
19 The 2011 Strategy recognizes that despite a long and successful history of dismantling criminal organizations, the U.S. government has not kept pace with the expansion of 21st century transnational criminal threats.
20 Shelley 2014, 5.
21 Iwanenko et al. 2014; Miklaucic and Brewer 2014.
22 United States Senate 2012.
23 The notion of “narco-terrorism” preceded the idea of the crime-terror nexus. The former Peruvian president, Fernando Belaunde Terry, referred to the Shining Path’s attacks on his counter-narcotic police force as “narco-terrorism.” The terminology was adopted by the U.S. diplomats in the 1980s in the discussions of the actions by Colombian drug cartels, and later, by Ronald Reagan in reference to ties between international drug trafficking and terrorism among the USSR’s allies (Clarke and Lee 2008). The concept is still used today; however, the more comprehensive idea of the “crime-terror” nexus has been gradually replacing the narco-terrorism terminology.
groups as a source of funding. In a broader sense, the “nexus” has been conceptualized as a continuum tracing changes in organizational dynamics and the operational nature of terrorism and organized crime over time. Along this continuum, different types of relationships - alliances, tactical uses of terror or criminal activities for operational purposes, and convergence into a single entity displaying characteristics of both groups – may develop between criminal and terrorist organizations.

The literature on the crime-terrorism nexus lacks systematic evidence. In fact, there are studies that dismiss the claim that the nexus is a serious and real threat. For example, scholars have recorded cases of longstanding transnational criminal organizations – the Sicilian and Russian Mafias, the Hong Kong Triads, to name a few – and rejected arguments that they are associated with terrorist organizations. Others have argued that the collision of political goals of terrorist groups and financial motivations of criminal organizations render them mutually exclusive and prevents their collaboration. Terrorists seek to force political change, but organized crime supports a status quo that favors their illegal profit-making activities. These differences in motivation, in turn, shape ways in which criminal organizations utilize violence. Terrorists’ goals are to stage “terror,” i.e., strike fear in the population through indiscriminate attacks on crowded locations. Organized criminal groups use more selective targeting and calibrated violence against competitors or uncooperative representatives of government.

But these arguments assume a permanent link between a group’s objectives and strategy, and neglect the impact of the changing operational environments affecting the goals and strategies of criminal organizations. As other studies suggest these groups can undergo significant internal transformations. For example, a terrorist organization becomes adept at using illicit economic activities for pursuing its political aims. Conversely, a criminal organization can turn to anti-government violence for advancing its economic goals. Recently created transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups can also create alliances on the basis of strategic and tactic linkages to acquire operational support and professional skills.

How does human trafficking fit into the crime-terror nexus? Typically drug and human trafficking converge when drug organizations diversify their criminal activities into human trade. Evidence indicates that human trafficking is a rapidly growing industry, which has attracted many criminal organizations. These groups have entered trafficking predominately for economic reasons “as certain markets have become saturated and

24 Makarenko 2004, 130.
26 Rollins and Wyler 2013
29 Dishman 2001; Wang 2010.
31 Dishman 2001; Makarenko 2004; Shelley 2005; Wang 2010
many more criminal and terrorist organizations have entered the drug trade.”

Easy access to victims, porous borders, and weak states create low barriers of entry into human trafficking that allow new groups to get into the business and start making profits quickly. Much of the relationship between the drug trade and human trafficking remains understudied, however, since different types of drugs lead to, and feed off of, different forms of human trafficking.

Terrorist groups resort to human trafficking for the same reasons they enter the business of drug trafficking. “Militant political movements require resources for arms, logistics, and sustenance and shelter for militants. Consequently they frequently engage in criminal activity to finance their activities, relying on robbery, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, and trafficking in drugs and humans.” Although terrorist groups have not exploited human trafficking markets as heavily as the drug trade, “in many areas of the world where there is a significant illicit economy there are linkages, such as in the Balkans, Southeast Asia, Philippines and parts of the former Soviet Union.” Beyond motivation, however, the literature has not adequately explored the extent and nature of these linkages.

As Applied to Eurasia

Because of its geographic position between the major narcotics producing territories (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan) and the major narcotics markets in Europe and Russia, Eurasia naturally serves as a transit area for drugs. For some states, such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, drug trafficking is one of the few fully functioning, income-generating activities that brings most of the cash into the underdeveloped local economies. The region is also home to a number of native and foreign terrorist groups, some with a proven record of violence and operations inside and outside Eurasia. In addition to the IMU, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate) are the two militant Islamist organizations operating in Central Asia. All of these groups established ties with the Al Qaeda and Taliban networks and engaged in skirmishes with the US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan. Russia’s Caucasus Emirate – an umbrella group for several regional militant organizations (Dagestani Shari’ah Jamaat, Ingush Jamaat, Yarmuk (Kabardino-Balkaria) Jamaat, and others) – has been part of the global jihadi alliance since its establishment in 2007. Its predecessor – the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria – had ties to the global jihadi movement

33 Shelley 2012.
34 Shelley 2012.
35 Mincheva and Gurr 2013.
36 Shelley 2003.
37 The relevance of Eurasian countries continues to grow in light of the efforts to counter drug trafficking in the Balkans that caused a shift in drug trafficking routes toward the Caucasus, and more stringent drug trafficking policies in Iran that contributed to the increase in drug trafficking volumes through Central Asia (Arasli 2007).
38 Kupatadze 2012, 1. See also Latypov 2012.
39 There are also several extremist organizations that have eschewed violence in Central Asia: Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Tablighi Jamaat, and Akromiya.
for nearly two decades. It has been estimated that the Caucasus Emirate’s operatives have carried out 55 suicide bombings and nearly 3,000 attacks overall.\textsuperscript{40} Several foreign terrorist networks, such as Al Qaeda, the Kurdistan Workers Party, and Mujahedeen-e-Khalk have been operating in the South Caucasus, in addition to local terrorist organizations.\textsuperscript{41}

Drug trafficking has not only become a source of funding for terrorist organizations, but it is also a source of intra-state conflict, such as the 2010 ethnic clashes in Southern Kyrgyzstan.\textsuperscript{42} It is now well established that the IMU was a leading trafficker of opiates from Afghanistan, especially under the leadership of Jumaboi Namangani.\textsuperscript{43} It remains likely that the remnants of the IMU and its splinter groups (e.g., the Islamic Jihad Union) will continue to depend on drug trafficking to secure funding for their operations. There are also speculations that Hizb ut-Tahrir cells have been engaged in drug sales, using the same infrastructure as the IMU and other trafficking organizations. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s adoption of violent tactics would constitute a new linkage between terrorism and organized crime.\textsuperscript{44} D-company, a radicalized organized crime group with key links along the drug trafficking routes flowing out of Afghanistan into Pakistan and Central Asia, has much to offer in terms of support to terrorists.\textsuperscript{45}

Several states of Eurasia continue facing insurgencies on their territories. Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia often accuse the insurgents from Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, and Dagestan of terrorist crimes. Similar situations exist in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia.\textsuperscript{46} Since these are the same separatist regions that are complicit in criminal activities to finance their existence, including arms and drugs trafficking, then there is a nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism there.\textsuperscript{47} This is further corroborated in the official reports on the detained and tried Islamists and traffickers, which often contain terrorism- and drug-related charges. Furthermore, some of the connections between criminals and terrorists are formed during their

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Hahn2014} Hahn 2014. Other organizations on the Russian list include the Congress of Peoples of Ichkheria and Daghestan, the Supreme Military Majlis Shura of the United Forces of the Mujahedin of the Caucasus, Jamiya al-Islamiya, the Islamic Party of Turkestan, and the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba.
\bibitem{Arasli2005} Arasli 2005; Krikirian 1999.
\bibitem{Zelichenko2012} Zelichenko 2012.
\bibitem{TheIMUsincursions} The IMU’s incursions in Kyrgyzstan in 1999, which have been commonly portrayed as an attempt of a radical Islamist movement’s intrusion into Uzbekistan for overthrowing the secular government of President Karimov, pursued a different purpose, namely, securing drug trafficking route from Afghanistan. The stockpiles of opium and heroin had built up in the Afghan territory following one of the largest harvests of opium and waited to be transported to Russia and Western Europe (Falkenburg 2013; Madi 2004; Makarenko 2002).
\bibitem{AhmedRashidasCited} Ahmed Rashid, as cited in Curtis 2002, 18.
\bibitem{Shelley2014} Shelley 2014, 47.
\bibitem{Untiltheextensivepoliceandmilitaryreforms} Until the extensive police and military reforms carried out by the former Georgian President, Mikhail Saakashvili, the Pankisi Gorge, a sparsely populated mountainous region in northeastern Georgia adjacent to the Chechen republic and South Ossetia, was an important center of terrorist and narcotics activity. The area is considered to be safer now. However, recently the senior ISIS leader “Omar the Chechen”, who grew up in this area, reportedly threatened to return to the Gorge to lead a Muslim attack on Russia’s Chechnya.
\bibitem{Arasli2007} Arasli 2007.
\end{thebibliography}
incarcerations. Prisons provide a fertile ground for Islamists’ recruitment.\textsuperscript{48} According to Louise Shelley, Director of Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center at George Mason University, criminal groups in Eurasia are not averse to working with terrorists and often the two groups feel they have a common enemy.\textsuperscript{49}

As for the linkages between Islamist organizations’ activities, drug trafficking, and human trade, sparse evidence has been found for the complicity of Islamist groups in human trafficking.\textsuperscript{50} The lack of direct links could be due to the difficulties in differentiating between terrorist and organized criminal organizations. However, the potential for the development of future links between trafficking and terrorist groups is present in Eurasia. When connections between drug trafficking and human trade were found in the region, those occurred in the form of kidnappings for ransom and using humans as payment for debt for narcotics. Women have been increasingly used as couriers, forced to transporting drugs in order to support children and family. In this capacity, they are frequently abused, exploited, and threatened by both officials and drug traffickers.\textsuperscript{51} There is also evidence of forced marriages of the kidnapped women to Islamist fighters and drug dealers.

The gaps in our knowledge of the precise conditions precipitating the formation of the terrorism-trafficking nexus call for the development of testable hypotheses and analytical models of the interface of trafficking and terrorism. A thorough understanding of the complex and interdependent relationship between terrorism and various types of trafficking is needed in order to develop effective strategies to prevent and disrupt these crimes at the national, regional, and global levels. In the context of Eurasia, ignoring the complex relationship of terrorism, insurgency, and trafficking is bound to severely undermine national and international counterterrorist, counter-narcotics, and anti-human trafficking efforts there. Criminal motives spread deep and wide throughout terrorist organizations, not least because drug trafficking and trade in illicit goods “feed” the militants and support their operations. Therefore, the danger posed by terrorist organizations is linked to not only their extremist motivations, but also their complex capabilities. If the connections with drug trafficking groups or involvement in criminal activities form the foundation of terrorist groups’ capabilities, then the prevention and interdiction of these exchanges call for joint interagency efforts to degrade the capacity of both terrorist and drug-trafficking organizations.

For the purpose of the project, the trafficking/terrorism nexus is defined as temporal and spatial coincidence of terrorist, drug trafficking, and human trafficking activities. The nexus is comprised of a continuum of four types of relationships between terrorist and trafficking groups:

\begin{itemize}
  \item No relationship, i.e., terrorist and criminal groups operate independently but occupy the same geographical area;
  \item An operational relationship, in which their activities coincide as a means of
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{48} International Crisis Group 2009.
\textsuperscript{49} 12 December 2005 Kennan Institute talk, as cited in Hofmann 2005.
\textsuperscript{50} Jackson 2006.
\textsuperscript{51} Madi 2004.
advancing specific objectives. For example, a terrorist organization can divert into the business of human trafficking in order to raise money for financing its activities or forceful recruitment of new insurgents; and a drug trafficking organization can use trafficked individuals as human containers for transporting drugs or “commodities” for paying the debt bondage incurred for arrears for unsold drugs;

- An alliance relationship, in which their activities lead to more durable, multifaceted ties between them. In some instances, a terrorist group may form an alliance with a criminal organization to exploit its expert knowledge in forging travel documents and smuggling persons. In other instances, a criminal organization may ally with a terrorist group for long-term access to and protection of the drug trafficking routes; and

- A convergence relationship, in which their aims and motivations become so interrelated that these groups morph into a single entity displaying characteristics of both groups simultaneously.52

The actual relationships between groups engaged in terrorism and trafficking, of course, are neither unitary nor static, and they can assume varying forms, but they fall within one (or more) of these hypothesized types of relationships within the larger terrorism/trafficking nexus. The continuum is represented in Figure 1. It is expected that all types of relationship between terrorism and criminal groups may be present in Eurasia.

**Figure 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Relationship</th>
<th>Operational Relationship</th>
<th>Alliance Relationship</th>
<th>Convergence Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist, drug trafficking, and human trafficking groups remain independent, but operate within the same area, utilize similar routes for movement and transportation, and rely on the same networks of corrupt state/local agencies.</td>
<td>Drug trafficking groups use terrorism and human trafficking as an operational tool. Terrorist groups take part in drug and human trafficking as an operational tool.</td>
<td>Terrorism or criminal group forms an alliance of different nature (ad hoc, short-term, long-term) with their criminal counterpart for ideological, pragmatic, or opportunistic motivations.</td>
<td>Previously independent criminal and terrorist groups alter their purposes and tactics and morph into a single entity exhibiting characteristics of terrorist and criminal organizations simultaneously.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52 The idea of the continuum is borrowed from Makarenko 2004.
THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF SECURITY APPARATUSES: 
STATE RESPONSES TO THE NEXUS IN CENTRAL ASIA

This paper explores the capacity and willingness of national governments to respond to the trafficking/terrorism nexus across Eurasian states. Countering the trafficking/terrorism nexus hinges upon the comprehensive national to this threat. It is also contingent on a variety of political, economic, and security responses of national governments to monitor, prevent, and dismantle the intersections of terrorism and trafficking.

Using Michael Mann’s concept of the state as “polymorphous” and crystallizing in different ways according to different political issues, this paper argues that post-Soviet state apparatuses were significantly shaped by their emergence in an era of new security threats (such as terrorism, drug and human trafficking, and civil war). Specifically, the evolution of states’ security apparatuses since the collapse of the USSR has centered on the rise of real and perceived intersecting threats and the resources made available to states to address those threats. As Mann writes, states have “multiple institutions, charged with multiple tasks,” but they crystallize differently as the center of different networks of power.53 While in past eras, states have crystallized as “capitalist,” “dynastic,” “confederal,” or “militarist,”54 post-Soviet states in Central Asia and the Caucasus have crystallized “security-pursuing” states because of the internal challenges to their sovereignty they confronted in the early 1990s and the external resources they received to combat transnational threats amid the global war on terrorism in the 2000s. These states and their security apparatuses, however, formed differently as they were differentially shaped by the threats they confronted and the resources accorded to them.

Overview and Conceptualization of the State-Crime Nexus

In addition to extension research into the terrorism-trafficking nexus, a parallel stream of studies emerged in the study of Central Asia’s post-Cold War environment that emphasized the interrelations between organized criminal activity and the state. This focus on the “state-crime nexus”55 contended that state actors and criminal groups (including those involved in insurgency and terrorism) often formed relationships of coexistence.56

Among the major factors that have shaped the involvement of states in criminal activities, such as human trafficking and drug trafficking, two in particular have been identified. First, the nature of post-Soviet transitions led to very different trajectories in state development, with some states experiencing a consolidation of political authority while others witnessing its fragmentation.57 The differences in emerging state structures, in

53 Mann 1986, p. 75.
54 Ibid, p. 76.
55 Marat 2006.
57 Heathersahaw 2009; Markowitz 2013; Driscoll 2015.
turn, provided varying opportunities for political and economic entrepreneurs to capture resources and secure protection from the state.\textsuperscript{58} In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, where Soviet-era leaderships remained in power, reassortments of government control over the economy and society enabled these regimes to absorb criminal networks and drug trafficking activities into the state, approximating the qualities of a “narco-state.”\textsuperscript{59}

In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where regimes faced conflict, instability, and a general weakening of state authority (though these features vary over time and across regions in each country), the boundary between state security structures and groups of non-state violence (warlords, militias, etc.) was fluid. This fragmentation of state authority (within and outside government institutions) enabled far greater interrelations and collusion between organized criminal actors, state officials, and insurgent actors who were often loosely absorbed into state structures.\textsuperscript{60} Therefore, the nature of post-Soviet transitions and their effects of emerging state authority has significantly shaped the nature of the state-crime nexus – leaving it more centered around patron-client relationships within state institutions in some countries and characterized by more diffuse patronage ties extending to actors outside the state (and pervaded by violence) in others countries.\textsuperscript{61}

A second factor in shaping the state-crime nexus has been international assistance projects designed to enhance counter-drug trafficking and counter-terrorism capabilities of Central Asian states. Considerable aid has focused on counter-narcotics, enhancing border control, reorganizing law enforcement agencies and created specialized anti-drug squads, providing more technologically advanced vehicles and equipment, and offering training on interdiction techniques. The results are highly uneven. On one hand, this aid reportedly improved state capacities in addressing the terrorism-trafficking nexus, which did lead to a rise in drug seizures, but over time it has not substantially altered the flow of narcotics through the region. Likewise, it has enabled a reassertion of state power over regions deemed unruly by central leaders (i.e., eastern Tajikistan and southern Kyrgyzstan), there remain ongoing outbreaks of violence and the political authority of the center lacks credibility and still does not extend down to the regional and local levels. As many observers have noted, this has allowed the state-crime nexus to perpetuate. Though they have not led to their expected outcomes, international assistance projects have nonetheless been influential by enhancing certain (militarized) state capabilities – though those capabilities have been used to combat the state-crime nexus in some areas while enabling it in others.

In sum, while broad trends of the shape of the state-crime nexus are possible to identify, the points of crystallizations of state structures and the nature of state relationships with drug trafficking and insurgency vary greatly across states in Eurasia.

\textsuperscript{58} Cornell and Jonsson 2014.
\textsuperscript{59} Lewis 2010.
\textsuperscript{60} See, for example, Nourzhanov 2005.
\textsuperscript{61} See De Danieli 2014.
Research Propositions

In focusing on national government capacity, the paper assesses the political, economic, and security responses of national governments to monitor, prevent, and dismantle intersections of terrorism and trafficking within their borders. This entails two objectives: 1) assess what the responses are (which is exploratory in nature); and 2) assess the correlation between responses and their outcomes in terms of their ability to deal with the nexus (which is explanatory in nature). In pursuing both of these, this research area will focus on how states carry out concrete functions of security that directly relate to the trafficking/terrorism intersection:

1. Prevent acts of terrorism;
2. Deny criminal and violent actors the ability to operate within their borders;
3. Protect critical infrastructure;
4. Carry out effective border control;
5. Engage with communities to counter radicalization;
6. Halt the trafficking of illegal goods and persons; and
7. Coordinate across government offices.

The analysis is premised on defining state capacity to monitor, prevent, and dismantle the trafficking/terrorism nexus along two dimensions:

1. Capabilities of security institutions of the state; and
2. Willingness to utilize its capabilities.

The first dimension of state capacity addresses the question, “Is the state able to address the trafficking/terrorism nexus?” This encompasses the institutional structure established to respond to trafficking and terrorism, the formal policies and strategies designed to address these threats, and the technical/financial/human resources available. These aspects of state capability are themselves shaped by the institutional design of the state security apparatus, resource structure and revenue extraction by these offices, and foreign military assistance. 62 The second dimension looks into whether the state is willing to address the trafficking/terrorism nexus. The willingness dimension entails putting formal policies and strategies into action, the application of technical/financial/human resources, and outcomes of policies’ implementation in terms of terrorist acts prevented, drugs seized, insurgent activities interdicted, and criminal networks dismantled. These aspects of state willingness are themselves shaped by regime type and associated abuses of power and state corruption – both of which have been major obstacles to countering organized crime, terrorism, and their nexus in Eurasia. 63

From these two dimensions, four types of state capacity are hypothesized. States with high levels on both dimensions possess hegemonic state capacity (when state offices are

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62 Cooley 2005; Gavrilis 2008; Markowitz; 2013; Gorenburg 2014. These background conditions will be assessed across all nine cases using selected proxy measures combined with descriptive statistics from cross-national databases (such as US Department of State Foreign Military Financing Account Summary).

63 Levitsky and Way 2010; Kupatadze 2012; Latypov 2012; Markowitz 2013; Cornell and Jonsson 2014. These background conditions will be assessed across all nine cases using selected proxy measures combined with descriptive statistics from cross-national databases (such as Freedom House rankings and Transparency International corruption perceptions).
able to effectively translate their high institutional, technical, financial, and human into preventing, monitoring, and dismantling the nexus). States with high capabilities but low levels of willingness to apply those capabilities possess captured state capacity (when state offices are used to protect and serve the interests and activities within the terrorism/trafficking nexus that severely limits the effective use of national capabilities). States with low capabilities but high levels of willingness to apply their capabilities possess degraded state capacity (when state offices attempt but only partially succeed in preventing, monitoring, and dismantling the terrorism/trafficking nexus). States with low levels on both dimensions possess failed state capacity (when state offices cease to exercise any influence over the interests and activities within the terrorism/trafficking nexus, which in turn challenges the authority of the state itself). These outcomes of state capacity are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Outcomes of State Capacities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Capability to Address Nexus</th>
<th>Low Capability to Address Nexus</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Willingness to Address Nexus</td>
<td>Hegemonic State Capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Willingness to Address Nexus</td>
<td>Degraded State Capacity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

States of Eurasia differ in their responses to the terrorism/trafficking nexus that translates into variation on the two dimensions of state capacity. In some Eurasian countries, state apparatuses lack “infrastructural power” - the logistical capability to carry out policies, while others have the necessary institutional infrastructure and resources, but lack political will to enforce state policies and laws. Using nine strategically selected case studies across Eurasia (see discussion below), this project will provide assessments and recommendations that will apply to not only other states in the region, but also 109 other weak states worldwide.  

Data collection will focus on the capabilities of three sets of state offices in each case: 1) national government offices (military, law enforcement, counterterrorism, intelligence); 2) provincial / district governor and law enforcement offices; 3) offices of border protection. Each office’s state capacity outcome—hegemonic, captured, degraded, or failed—will be determined using carefully selected indicators: (a) the specific formal and informal policies (outlined in formal documents or proclamations) enacted to prevent, monitor, dismantle, or allow the nexus; (b) the financial, technological, and human resources committed; and (c) the number of arrests (or injuries or deaths), seizures (of

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64 According to the 2014 Fragile States Index (http://ffp.statesindex.org/), there are 109 countries across Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Middle East, and Latin America that are at a high risk of instability (categorized as either from “High Warning” up to “Alert,” “High Alert,” and “Very High Alert”).
narcotics or other contraband), and interdictions (of organized criminal operations) that are carried out as these offices respond to specific crimes or security threats.

The project will assess national responses to terrorism/trafficking nexus through nine in-depth case studies in Eurasia. These cases were chosen to reflect variation in the range of potential factors influencing national responses to terrorism/trafficking nexus activities. These cases are:

1. Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO), eastern Tajikistan;
2. Hojand region, northern Tajikistan
3. Tajikistan-Afghanistan border
4. Osh and Jalalabad regions, southern Kyrgyzstan
5. Talas and Chui regions, northern Kyrgyzstan
6. Abkhazia region, western Georgia
7. South Ossetia region, northern Georgia
8. Chechnya, Russia
9. Dagestan/Ingushetia, Russia

Three of these zones (1, 2 and 3) are in Tajikistan, where a civil war (1992-1997) has left large swathes of its territory outside the reach of the central government and vulnerable to opium and human trafficking from Afghanistan on its south. These territories also evince ongoing power struggles between regional and central elites. Two of the zones (4 and 5) are in Kyrgyzstan, where two revolts (2005, 2010) have left the state extremely weak: its southern regions (4) remain a center of opium trafficking, criminal networks, and insurgency; its northern areas (5) harbor smuggling networks linking Chinese products to Eurasian markets, criminal groups, and serve as a relay point to opium trafficking into Kazakhstan and Russia. Two more zones (6 and 7) are in Georgia, where two short civil conflicts (1991-1992, 2008) reflect a state internally divided. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are de facto autonomous regions, enmeshed in organized crime, cross-border smuggling (of consumer goods, opium, and agricultural products), human trafficking, and Russian-backed insurgent activity against the central government. The last two cases are Chechnya (8), which lost two wars against Moscow [1995, 1999], and Dagestan/Ingushetia (9) – all of which have been footholds of insurgency, terrorism, long-standing organized criminal groups, and recent narcotics trafficking. These cases, in short, are all major zones of trafficking and terrorism activity (though we will empirically verify this from data analyses in Projects 1 and 2).

Field research will be conducted in three countries that are strategically selected to cover seven of the nine cases. The study will conduct semi-structured expert interviews with journalists, government officials, NGOs staff, and local scholars. These individual interviews will be conducted primarily in Russian or Uzbek (both languages are common in Central Asia) unless respondents speak English. These interviews will be supplemented by data collection from NGO reports, national and regional newspapers (located in KU’s library holdings and central libraries at research sites), government reports, published (and unpublished) histories on individual regions; economic
handbooks of each country (*Narodnoe khozaistvo* among others); and statistical data obtained from national ministries.

**STATE RESPONSES TO THE NEXUS IN TAJIKISTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN**

The crystallizations of state security apparatuses in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have taken different forms over the late and post-Soviet periods. In Tajikistan, civil war and existential threat to the regime has led to the initial institutionalization of security apparatuses as mechanisms of cooptation and coercion of competing, regional interests. Over time, however, the global war on terrorism, Tajikistan’s long border with Afghanistan, and the infusion of international assistance has also led to the crystallization of slightly enhanced institutional capacity in strategic and operational counter-narcotics efforts at the center. However, this enhanced capacity is limited to this sector (and does not extend to addressing the terrorism-trafficking nexus) and security agencies remain captured by regional and local interests below the national level. The crystallization of Tajikistan’s security apparatus reflects a highly uneven concentration of institutional capacity at the center that does not extend into the regions.

In Kyrgyzstan, international linkages and assistance initially led to plans for improved security institutions despite chronic underfunding and infrastructural deficiencies. This institution building, however, was thwarted by two uprisings, and long-term inter-ethnic tensions in its southern regions, which have crystallized security apparatuses as institutionally weak and underfunded at the national and local levels (in part because they are more open to and dependent on collaboration and support from civil society and international organizations). Long-standing Kyrgyz-Uzbek ethnic tensions, however, have led to the crystallization of Kyrgyzstan’s law enforcement and security agencies in its southern regions as more predatory and repressive toward the Uzbek minority. Coupled with infrastructural weaknesses, this has exacerbated the terrorism-trafficking nexus by fostering distrust between the state and minorities and pushing those religious members of the latter to isolate themselves (i.e., go underground for fear of arrest). The crystallization of Kyrgyzstan’s security apparatus reflects weak institutional capacity at the center and in the regions, with focused predatory behavior in the south further weakening it capabilities while inadvertently strengthening its threats.

**Tajikistan**

After state failure and civil war (1992-97), Tajikistan’s central government has struggled to reestablish control over many parts of the country. An internally divided fractious state, one regime strategy for stabilizing postwar Tajikistan initially ceded control over key institutions (including parts of the security apparatus) to former commanders and prominent politicians and allowed them to establish and expand ties to organized criminal groups and drug trafficking.66

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65 Markowitz 2013.
66 Heathershaw; Markowitz (2013); Driscoll (2015).
Concurrent with rising drug trafficking in the late 1990s, a weak central government left Tajikistan with failed or degraded state capacity to address the trafficking/terrorism nexus emerging under some local elites.

**Figure 2: Drug Trafficking Routes into/out of Tajikistan**

As illustrated in Figure 2, most of the drugs trafficked through Tajikistan go through the Panj district. The eastern flow is smaller in volume and travels through the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) in the area between the Tem and Ishkashem border points. GBAO has been economically depressed since independence and is less accessible than the rest of Tajikistan.
Table 2. Summary of Findings: Mapping State Capacities

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<tr>
<td><strong>Tajikistan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>--Hojand Province</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Captured</td>
<td>Captured</td>
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<tr>
<td>--GBAO</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
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<tr>
<td>--Border areas</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Captured</td>
<td>Captured</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kyrgyzstan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>--Talas &amp; Chui Provinces</td>
<td>Hegemonic</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Captured</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osh &amp; Jalalabad Provinces</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Captured</td>
<td>Intermittent &amp; Failed</td>
<td>Captured</td>
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</table>

**Coordination and Capacity among Security Agencies.** Despite reports of rising state capabilities among the various agencies addressing terrorism, trafficking and organized crime in Tajikistan, there is little evidence of coordination among them to address the trafficking-terrorism nexus. As demonstrated by the agencies’ self-reporting, rates of drug seizures varies greatly between them (see Figure 3). The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) seized far more narcotics than other agencies, doubling its seizure rate in 2003 and remaining at that high level through 2009. The Drug Control Agency (DCA) drug seizure rate gradually increased from 2000-2009 but only marginally increased its total drug seizures, from roughly 600 kilograms (in 2000) to 1000 kilograms (in 2009). One report found that the DCA had made a concerted effort to increase its capacity but was limited as it is only one agency among several.67 The DCA, under Director Rustam Nazarov, was deemed fairly effective by criminologists and drug trafficking experts in the region. Nazarov was reportedly removed not long after a two-year investigation of corruption and drug trafficking led to 30-40 arrests (of whom some were leading figures and senior officials) in 2015.68 Over the past several years, the DCA had built up its strategic analysis section, staffed with approximately 50 analysts, to collect, analyze and use statistics on criminal activity and security threats – an institutional capability that far exceeded its counterparts in the government.69 The State Security service (formerly the Tajikistan branch of the KGB) included two separate rates, with its overall seizures rising and declining but remaining largely below 1000 kilograms per year, while its Border Guard steadily increased its seizures from 350 kilograms (in 1998) to 1000 kilograms (in 2009). The Customs Service, lastly, has had very little involvement in drug seizures. While there are logistical and institutional reasons for varying rates of drug seizures, the broad range over time indicates a low level of inter-agency collaboration.

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68 Interview #9 with former senior law enforcement official, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
69 Interview #12 with UNODC expert, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
From Degraded Capacity to Captured Capacity: Hojand and Border areas. There have been conflicting analyses on the trends in Hojand Province and border areas in Khatlon Province. On one hand, state statistics demonstrate increasing and high levels of drug seizures and interdiction efforts in these regions, suggesting an increasing capacity. As Table 3 shows, in 2008-09 (the peak of Tajikistan’s drug seizures), Khatlon Province and Hojand Province witnessed the highest levels of drug seizures. In Khatlon, most of these were seized in Hamadoni District and Shurabad District (which are slightly more accessible from the provincial capital than Pyanj and Farkhar Districts). On the other hand, in-depth field research by specialists on politics and security in Central Asia have concluded that this increased seizure rate indicates an initiative by senior Tajikistan government officials to consolidate their power vis-à-vis opponents within the state following conclusion of the country’s divisive civil war. This contention holds that state elites have gained control over the drug trade and used it to maintain elite support; that organized crime remains embedded within state structures (especially within the country’s security apparatus); and that insurgency and terrorism is more likely to emerge as insiders defect as they lose their protection and patronage from the Tajikistani leadership.

While it is difficult (if not impossible) to fully verify either perspective there are strong indications that state capacities in Khatlon and Hojand Provinces have shifted from

70 Author’s field notes, 2002.
71 See, for instance, Bleuer and Kazemi 2014; Lewis 2010.
degraded in the early post-civil war years (1997-2005) to captured (2005-present). Numerous reports find that small-scale traders and local traffickers were targeted in counter-trafficking efforts while larger organized syndicates remained untouched, allowing the latter to consolidate their control over the drug trade. Rather than centralized cartels or mafia organizations, these regions contain several competing medium-sized groups that were residual formations of warlord militias the civil war. These groups have been absorbed into and controlled by regional and national political elites, who have at most utilized, at least influenced counter-trafficking efforts to eliminate rivals and force many of these groups to support the regime. The arrests of senior government officials (or their relatives) for involvement in drug trafficking – such as the son of the head of Tajikistan Railways and the brother of a deputy head of the national security service – support this analysis. As a result of these collaborative arrangements, these regions experience high-levels of drug trafficking and drug seizures, but remarkably little drug-related violence.

From Failed Capacity to Degraded Capacity: GBAO. In contrast to Khatlon and Hojand Provinces, Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (or GBAO) has experienced far less drug trafficking and organized criminal activity, yet there have arisen a number of episodes of violent conflict relating to insurgents and possible terrorist networks leading to Afghanistan. As suggested in Table 2, GBAO has the lowest level of drug seizures in Tajikistan by 2008-09, a marked contrast to its role as an important hub of trafficking in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Table 2. Drug Seizures by Region (in kilograms), Tajikistan, 2008-09

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province / City</th>
<th>Amount of Drugs Seized</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khatlon Province</td>
<td>Over 630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hojand Province</td>
<td>617-630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dushanbe city</td>
<td>561-617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent districts</td>
<td>289-561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBAO</td>
<td>Under 288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data compiled from estimates in Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan, Report on the drug situation in the republic of Tajikistan for 2009 (Dushanbe: DCA, 2009).

NOTE: THIS CASE TO BE COMPLETED AFTER FIELDWORK IN DEC 2016

Kyrgyzstan

Marked by intra-elite divisions, state paralysis, and twice overwhelmed by elite-led protests (2005 and 2010), Kyrgyzstan has emerged as an intersection of organized criminal organizations, drug trafficking, and limited terrorist activity. Having initiated political liberalization in the early 1990s, Kyrgyzstan’s parliamentary and regional elite

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72 De Danieli 2014; Driscoll 2015.
73 De Danieli 2014.
74 Markowitz 2013.
remain influential actors in undermining the state’s capacity to combat the trafficking/terrorism nexus, which has oscillated between degraded, failed and captured – but has gradually eroded.

Whereas Tajikistan has witnessed the consolidation and gradual incorporation of drug trafficking and organized crime within its state apparatus after civil war, Kyrgyzstan has experienced the erosion of its state capacities to respond to the trafficking/terrorism nexus in both the northern and southern parts of the country. The largest decline in capacity occurred between 2005 and 2010 during the leadership of Kurmanbek Bakiev, and efforts to counter this downward trend have remained marginal. Under Bakiev, there were reportedly 31 different criminal groups (relatively small, between 5-15 members) in the country, many of which operating under the patronage and protection of their own regional and local elites. During and immediately after periods of upheaval in 2005 and 2010, moreover, these criminal groups were able to operate without seeking political protection from weakened law enforcement authorities.75 As one person with ties to the Bakiev regime admitted, “there was open approval for drug trafficking” at the highest levels at the time and that the government since 2010 had “on paper made a reversal of that policy.”76 During the Bakiev period, law enforcement’s role at the local level diminished, which empowered criminal groups willing to fill this vacuum. In rural areas where police were not present, people would seek out criminal groups to solve their problems. This became common enough that some groups even advertised on television openly claiming that they could collect a debt or settle a dispute – something to which many companies and everyday people resorted. It was the post-2010 government’s concern with the political clout of these groups – reaching into parliament and the presidency – that spurred it to crack down on them.77

The intersection of drug/human trafficking, organized crime, and terrorism does exist but it is mediated through specific, often indirect mechanisms: a) organized criminal groups’ members can adopt religious ideologies when they occupy the same prison cell as religious extremists (and this continues after the former are released);78 b) organized criminal groups’ lower level members have peeled off from main groups and attached themselves to influential local religious leaders (often through involvement in sports clubs and associations);79 c) after 2010 violence law enforcement and local administrations in the south have targeted Uzbeks who now face exclusion, persecution, and are susceptible to recruitment to religious groups as well as being more likely to go underground when they suspect government repression.80 In sum, organized criminal groups are more decentralized than in Tajikistan as is the drug trade, but it remains extensive. Moreover, rising religious radicalization in recent years has remained nonviolent, but there are triggers that can lead to violence, and the government’s nationalistic orientation and policies toward ethnic Uzbeks constitutes a complicating

75 UNODC 2007.
76 Interview #1 with political analyst and academic, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
77 Interview #3 with political and security analyst, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
78 Interview #6 with former senior law enforcement official, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
79 Interview #4 with political analyst and academic, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
80 Interview #10 with NGO head and expert on religious extremism, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
factor that makes the possibility of ethnic and religious violence a very serious concern in southern Kyrgyzstan (as discussed below).

**Coordination and Capacity among Security Agencies.** Kyrgyzstan has a long history of anti-drug trafficking policing, but that has not translated into effectiveness in dealing with the drug trade (which is by far the greatest challenge confronting the state at present). Since the 1980s, Kyrgyzstan has sought to establish interagency relationships to address the multifaceted nature of trafficking, crime and instability but there is ongoing competition (over credit and rents) rather than collaboration. As one informant noted, there are periods of time when agencies have a standing arrangement on how those payments are distributed. But when there is an external reshuffling of elites (i.e., after 2005 or 2010) or when one agency seeks to gain more of a share of the rents, indications of open competition can be seen in the charges of corruption or misuse of office that are brought by one or two agencies against another. While Tajikistan is deemed to be closer to a “narco-state,” in which large portions of the state apparatus are involved in the drug trade, there are only “key persons” within Kyrgyzstan’s state – mostly within its law enforcement and security agencies – that provide protection. Moreover, security agencies lack the necessary funds for salaries, equipment and infrastructure. Despite these challenges, the MIA has collaborated with civil society groups in instituting democratic police reform, reducing corruption and predation while making it more responsive to society. This suggests a willingness to engage in reform, but these efforts have been fairly uneven across the country and, as discussed below, do not extend to ethnic minorities in southern Kyrgyzstan.

International organizations have promoted joint or inter-agency roundtables and trainings, and security offices do participate in these efforts (and point to the need for these linkages). But these inter-office trainings are solely sectoral in nature – focusing on how drug trafficking should be addressed or how to incorporate protections of human rights in prisons. Moreover, each security ministry conducts its own training and these are generally not coordinated. Likewise, there is little information sharing across agencies and each one produces its own reports. There is no effective top-down mechanism to coordinate them. Following the 2010 violence, for example, it became evident that a coordinating mechanism would be needed should another mass violence episode or other crisis arise.

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81 Interview #9 with former senior law enforcement official, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
82 Interview #2 with political analyst and academic, Bishkek, June-July 2016
83 These include well-known cases, such as MIA Minister Melis Turgenbaev and so-called “gray cardinal” Kurson Asanov. Interview #1 with political analyst, Bishkek, June-July 2016; Interview #9 with former senior law enforcement official, Bishkek, June-July 2016; Interview #5 with political analyst and former government official, Bishkek, June-July 2016. On the involvement of the customs service, see http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1071272.html.
84 Marat 2016.
85 Interview #12 with UNODC expert, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
86 Interview #3 with political and security analyst, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
87 It was known that at least one top level law enforcement official could not be reached during the 2010 violence for lack of a satellite phone. Interview #2 with political analyst and academic, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
that would bring together different agencies during a crisis, but the donors pulled out after it became clear the government was not committed.\textsuperscript{88}

One attempt at interagency cooperation that has been formed is the Defense Council, which advises the President. As such it touches on every aspect of the trafficking/terrorism nexus and there are even working groups established for each area or field in which there might be relevant security threats.\textsuperscript{89} A recent Defense Council session, including the different branches of security services, was convened with senior religious authorities and put forward a joint plan to have the state more involved with madrassas and mosques (to ensure that the “right” form of Islam is practiced).\textsuperscript{90} However, this is mainly a venue for actors to meet and it does not gather or analyze information, nor does it have the capability to implement policies formulated.\textsuperscript{91} Major policy formulations must first be approved by Parliament (which has several factions) before being translated into law.\textsuperscript{92}

The Drug Control Agency in Kyrgyzstan, in contrast to its counterpart in Tajikistan, has long had internal problems and external pressures that undermined its institutional capacity. Created in 2003, then closed under Bakiev in 2009, it reopened in 2010 and has been disbanded in 2016 (absorbed primarily by the MIA). Its seizures were markedly smaller than the National Security Service and the MIA, and it eventually fell victim to a turf war with the latter.\textsuperscript{93} Border control and customs control agencies remain marginally involved in counter-narcotics efforts. Border control officers were reportedly instructed not to make drug trafficking a priority (and to focus on espionage instead), while customs agents claimed their primary role was to enforce tariffs on cross-border transited goods.\textsuperscript{94}

There is also very limited strategic analysis (collection and use of statistics) especially on drug trade) and little interest by higher-ups to "modernize" in this regard. This varies from Tajikistan where there is much greater institutional capacity in strategic analysis (though not necessarily on operations). Compared to Tajikistan’s 50-person strategic analysis unit, Kyrgyzstan has only 10 persons (of whom only 2 individuals actually collect and analyze statistical data).\textsuperscript{95} Moreover, there remains a quota system in place in terms of arrests, seizures and operations – as well as reported crimes in a province. As a result, there is a standard practice of having each month’s (or year’s) quota barely met,

\textsuperscript{88}Similarly, a proposal put forward by Interim President Roza Otunbaeva to carry out reforms of the MIA was not carried out. Interview #3 with political and security analyst, Bishkek, June-July 2016.

\textsuperscript{89}Albeit most of these working groups consisted of academics. Interview #4 with political analyst and academic, Bishkek, June-July 2016.

\textsuperscript{90}Interview #5 with political analyst and former government official, Bishkek, June-July 2016.

\textsuperscript{91}Interview #3 with political and security analyst, Bishkek, June-July 2016.

\textsuperscript{92}Interview #7 with academic, Bishkek, June-July 2016.

\textsuperscript{93}Interview #6 with former senior law enforcement official, Bishkek, June-July 2016.

\textsuperscript{94}Interview #9 with former senior law enforcement official, Bishkek, June-July 2016.

\textsuperscript{95}Senior officials demand only aggregate data so lower level officials see little incentive to collect this data. Efforts by international organizations to change these practices are met by suspicion, with security officials believing such reforms are an attempt to access secret information (a mentality some ascribe to their age and their Soviet-era training). Interview #12 with UNODC expert, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
which stymies any effort to properly analyze patterns of crime and security threats. Likewise, there were only six officials in Kyrgyzstan devoted to human trafficking until 2016, when 300 MIA officers were assigned to focus on the problem, and there is no line item for human trafficking in the state budget. This lack of institutional capacity has been in part due to the government’s dependence on the NGO sector to address human trafficking in Kyrgyzstan.

There is wide variation in informants' assessments of how corrupt security/law enforcement is -- though specific agencies are clearly more involved in particular aspects of the trafficking/terrorism nexus (i.e., border control involvement in human trafficking). But the corruption in Kyrgyzstan’s agencies is generally seen as linked to key persons and their staff/underlings that extends widely but is not as systemic as in Tajikistan. In short, Kyrgyzstan compared to Tajikistan may be less permeated by corruption and more open to influence from free media and civil society watchdogs, but it may be far weaker in institutional (strategic and operational) capacity.

From degraded to captured/failed: Osh and Jalalabad regions. For the most part, these regions clearly exemplified captured state capacity. There were periods of time after the 2005 and 2010 uprisings when they manifested failed state capacity – i.e., when law enforcement agencies lost control over criminal groups and drug trafficking networks – but these appear to have been very brief. Moreover, these uprisings did not bring about a reorganization of security institutions, which remained intact while ministers or deputy ministers were replaced depending on their political ties.

Institutional capacity to address intersections of drug trafficking, crime, and various forms of social unrest remain underdeveloped. As noted above, efforts to reform policing and security services’ decision-making and response times were not successfully carried out. In the wake of the 2010 violence, an agency called the Agency for Local Government and Ethnic Diversity was established to serve as an early warning system. While this agency has begun to work well with civil society and local community leaders, most security agencies are not involved in conflict resolution but focus on the investigation and prosecution of crimes.

96 Interview #12 with UNODC expert, Bishkek, June-July 2016. This practice of barely meeting one’s quota traces back to Soviet institutions in the mid-1900s. See Berliner’s (1957) discussion of the “ratchet principle.”
97 This planned surge of police left OSCE officials distressed that the government poorly understood how to address the needs of victims of human trafficking. Interview #14 with project analyst on human trafficking, OSCE, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
98 Interview #15 with project analyst on human trafficking, OSCE, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
99 After 2005, international agencies decided to avoid working with the state and set up a network of 30 NGOs to address human trafficking. Interview #13 with project analyst on human trafficking, IOM, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
100 Interview #4 with political analyst and academic, Bishkek, June-July 2016. Indeed, the flow of rents to elites for oil delivered to Manas air base went uninterrupted during these uprisings so it stands to reason that rents from the drug trade were similarly unaffected. Interview #2 with political analyst and academic, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
101 Interview #5 with political analyst and former government official, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
102 Interview #3 with political and security analyst, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
This also highlights a strong ethnic component to security dynamics (especially in the south before and after the 2010 violence). There is pressure put from society on security agencies to be more responsive in order to prevent another clash. One result of this is that security agencies have exceeded their power; for instance, they reportedly discriminate against Uzbeks by targeting them for searches, as well as entering their homes without justification. It is claimed that these policing strategies are carried out in order to preserve security, but they are often a means by which security offices extort payments of bribes. Since these searches and abuses tend to target ethnic Uzbeks, there has arisen considerable anger and distrust between the latter and these provinces’ security and law enforcement offices.¹⁰³

This situation is reinforced by the makeup of these offices. There are few Uzbeks in security agencies and police in Osh city, which are largely Kyrgyz. This does not reflect the 45% of the population that are constituted by Uzbeks in the city. Uzbeks are not recruited even though they want to join; they are not recruited because it is feared they’ll serve the interests of Uzbekistan and not Kyrgyzstan – that they will somehow share information with Uzbekistan and spy for it. This also reflects a broader sentiment in society that sees Uzbeks as aliens and not as equal citizens in Kyrgyzstan. This is also true of political offices Osh city, which are 95% Kyrgyz.¹⁰⁴

This ethnic component to security in these southern regions has impacted the patterns of religious extremism. Since the 2010 violence, and in more recent years, extremist groups have been “self-isolating,” or going underground, in order to avoid the repressive tactics of state security agencies that are targeting them due to their Uzbek ethnicity. This trend has intensified in recent years due to triggering events, such as the arrest of the prominent cleric Imam Kamolov (which generated fear of arrest in other groups) and news from Syria that a suicide bomber had come from Jalalabad Province (which led many to fear an intensified crackdown in the region).¹⁰⁵ As a 2016 survey by the NGO Search for Common Ground found, the state and Uzbek minority are increasingly pulled into a cycle of perceived extremism, repression, marginalization, and extremism. It states:

Law enforcement agencies are actively engaged in arresting radical members and extremists. However, there is an increased fear of arbitrary arrests, especially among members of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities… In this environment, there is a high level of distrust in law enforcement and government authorities regarding matters of the fight against extremism by the population… which is seen as unfair by families of arrestees, thus lead[ing] them to join extremist organizations. The extremist organizations, in turn, can take advantage of this situation and start recruiting the relatives of those who were innocently arrested, offering support to their families.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Interview #3 with political and security analyst, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
¹⁰⁴ Interview #3 with political and security analyst, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
¹⁰⁵ Interview #10 with NGO head and expert on religious extremism, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
The long-term conditions of state-minority relations in the south had primed religious groups in the south to react to these events by “self-isolating.” As the Search for Common Ground report noted, its “survey revealed that the marginalized ethnic groups are also subject to radicalization. Those who have become isolated in their communities and not involved in social life and processes are especially vulnerable.”

More broadly, this trend demonstrates how ethnic tensions, weak state apparatuses, and the misuse of law enforcement, security, and court institutions can interact to inadvertently lead religious activists to become further marginalized. While most religious activists have assumed more extremist interpretations of Islam, very few have taken up violence. Nonetheless, there are a number of “pull and push factors that could very quickly lead to violence” given the volatile situation in Osh and Jalalabad Provinces.

Moreover, electoral rules and party structures within Kyrgyzstan’s post-2010 parliamentary system tend to reward rather than penalize those political elites who reinforce nationalistic sentiment, marginalize minorities, and overlook issues in the south.

CONCLUSION TO BE COMPLETED

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107 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
108 Interview #10 with NGO head and expert on religious extremism, Bishkek, June-July 2016.
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