

The Crime-Terror Nexus: Transformation, Alliance, Convergence

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Abstract

The crime-terror nexus includes two independent, but related, components. First, it incorporates the straightforward involvement in criminal activities by terrorists as a source of funding, and second, it refers to the linkages between organized criminal organizations and terrorist groups. Indeed, the criminal and political organizations appear to be learning from each other, adopting each other's tactics and strategies and frequently partner with one another. The crime-terror nexus is directly challenging the security of U.S. and other nations, thus having an in-depth understanding of the crime-terror nexus is the first step toward problem solving.

Keywords: Organized Crime, Terrorism, Crime-Terror Nexus, Transformation, Alliance, Convergence

1. Introduction

During the Cold War, the problems of transnational organized crime and terrorism were relatively insignificant, and often considered separate phenomena. However, tremendous changes in the international environment at the end of the cold war, and subsequently as a result of the loss of their main donor—the disintegration of the Soviet Union—created conditions that challenged the financing system of terrorism (Makarenko, 2004; Shelley, 2002). Moreover, the United States has played a dominant role in the “war against terror” through the suppression of the financing of terrorism after the 11 September 2001, including freezing assets and blocking the financial transactions of informal banking system and financially crippling individuals, charities and welfare organizations associating with terrorists (McCulloch and Pickering, 2005). The evaporation of funding sources encourages terrorist groups to develop into “Narco-Terrorist”, who increasingly engage in drug trafficking and other illicit organized crime to acquire money and material (Dishman, 2001).

On the other hand, transnational criminal organizations are equally affected by changing circumstances, which has grown into powerful hybrid criminal/terror entities with “in-house” capabilities of engaging in terrorism activities in order to get maximum illegal profit (Dishman, 2001; Sanderson, 2004). Indeed, transnational criminal groups and terrorist groups share many operational and organizational similarities and characteristics. They often learn from one another and imitate each other's successes and failures and frequently partner with one another in their organizational construction and practical operation so as to keep one-step ahead of law enforcement (Levi, 2007; Makarenko, 2004; Shelley and Picarelli, 2002; Sanderson, 2004). The nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism is increasingly complex and sophisticated, which is directly challenging the security of states at a national and international level (Wang and Wang, 2009). The counter-terror system cannot deal with the 21st century's problems by applying methods, strategies, principles and tactics rooted in the last century. Thereby, it may be argued that having an in-depth understanding of the crime-terror nexus is the first step toward problem solving.

This article focuses not only on analyzing great changes of the financial system of terrorism, but also on examining how terrorism and organized crime intersect and converge that now become a national security threat. In particular, this analysis comments on reasons and opportunities that led the transnational terrorists undertaking the organized crime so as to raise revenue and the financial support. The article also examines numerous factors that enable terrorists and newer organized crime organizations to partner with each other in tactic and strategic ways. There is no evidence to prove that convergence of the two entities has existed and they have become the same or quite similar entities. The two actors share both organizational and operational characteristics and tend to adopt similar methods but they are striving for divergent ends (Shelley and Picarelli, 2002; Sanderson, 2004; Makarenko, 2004). For transnational terrorists, the usage of ordinary criminal activities is to support their political ends and ideological objectives. While transnational organized criminals lack an ideology and involve in organized crime primarily for economic ends (Shelley and Picarelli, 2002).

2. Suppressing the Financial System of Terrorism

In the past, al-Qaeda as the most powerful terrorist group based in Afghanistan has preferred to interact with crime networks in a limited way and to run its own criminal enterprises for very specific reasons (Wannenburg, 2003). Moreover, Wannenburg argues that “al-Qaeda depended heavily on reverse money laundering, that is, channeling funds from clean sources such as Islamic charities, individuals and legitimate businesses to its military council” (2003:6).

After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, the US has adopted a very broad and strict approach to combat the financing of terrorism (McCulloch and Pickering, 2005; Wannenburg, 2003). Combating the financial system of terrorism is a significant factor in the “war against terror” (Ayers, 2002). Following the direction of the United States, a lot of international and national measures have been carried out—the UN Security Council Resolution and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, for instance (Sheppard, 2002; Hardister, 2003). The United States has the capability of targeting and naming groups and individuals as terrorists as well as freezing the funds of terrorism and deterring people from associating with such terrorism organizations (McCulloch and Pickering, 2005). These measures extremely expand the power of law enforcement to suppress the financing of terrorism; however, even some supporters of the US “war on terror” agree that these aggressive measures seem to “overreach and intrude into the national politics of other countries” (Hardister, 2003:660). In this case, Hawala, one of main informal banking systems, was forced to close and its businesses removed as well as a large sum of assets have been frozen and blocked, because of its terrorist connection (Fox News, 2002). Bank accounts of welfare, Islamic charities, individuals, social justice organizations and companies suspected of associating with al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups have been blocked or are under scrutiny by authorities (Goodstein, 2003). The total sum of 112 million dollars in funds linked to al-Qaeda and other groups sympathetic to it has been frozen (US Center for Defence Information, 2002).

The connection between terrorist and transnational organized crime has frequently occurred consistent with its ideology and also “reflects its recognition of the need to become self-sufficient in the post-September 11 environment”, especially in view of the fact that more than 165 countries have enacted national counter-terrorism measures and frozen the assets of individuals and organizations that are allegedly connected to terrorism (Wannenburg, 2003:3). Thereby, many terrorist groups are increasingly reverting to criminal activities in order to find alternative sources of funding.

3. What Enable and Sustain the Crime-Terror Nexus?

Increasingly since the loss of state sponsorship after the Cold War and the subsequent crackdown on the financing of terrorism led by the United States, the use of organized criminal activities has become an important revenue source for terrorist groups. Theoretically, when referring to the relationship between organized crime and terrorism, “the nexus most commonly applies to the straightforward use of crime by terrorist groups as a source of funding”—such as engaging in drug trafficking or involving in credit-card fraud (Makarenko, 2004: 130). The other aspect of the nexus has simultaneously been used to relate to the linkages between organized criminal organizations and terrorist groups (ibid).

3.1 Similarities between organized crime and terror groups

In addition to suppressing the financial system of terrorism, there are a number of reasons and opportunities that enable terrorist to embrace organized crime as a main source of funding. First and foremost, both organized criminal organizations and terrorist groups share numerous inherent organizational and operational similarities (Dishman, 2001; Shelly, 2002; Makarenko, 2003; Sanderson, 2004).

Similarities between organized crime and terrorist groups include:

- Both are generally rational actors
- Both use extreme violence and the threat of reprisals
- Both use kidnappings, assassinations, and extortion
- Both operate secretly, though at times publicly in friendly territory
- Both defy the state and the rule of law (except when there is state sponsorship)
- For a member to leave either group is rare and often fatal
- Both present an asymmetrical threat to the United States and “friendly” nations
- Both can have “interchangeable” recruitment pools

- Both are highly adaptable, innovative and resilient
- Both have back-up leaders and foot soldiers
- Both have provided social services, though this is much more frequently seen with terrorist groups (Sanderson, 2004: 53).

Similarities between organized crime and terror groups make it possible for the two entities to adopt each other's characteristics and tactics. In this case, terrorist groups begin to develop their own revenue through engaging in a number of organized criminal activities, including narcotics trafficking, Intellectual Property Crime, credit card fraud. Moreover, the similarities between the two entities are a basis factor for the links between organized criminal organizations and terrorist groups.

3.2 Points of Divergence for Organized Crime Groups

Longstanding transnational organized criminal groups and the newer crime groups have a very different relationship to terrorism (Shelley, 2005). The longstanding organized criminal groups—including the Sicilian Mafia, the Russian Mafia and the Hong Kong Triads—possess long term financial strategies and are depending on the long-established states (Gambetta, 1993; Chu, 2000; Varese, 2001). The linkage between these traditional groups and the state seems like symbiotic relationship, thus these groups benefit a lot from the post-war recoveries of their countries (ibid). For instance, the Hong Kong Triads have transformed into entrepreneurs in order to adapt to the changing economic circumstances, such as the involvement of Triad in interior decoration business (Chu, 2000). The Japanese Yakuza even “serves the state” through corrupting law enforcement, which creates mutual benefits for organized criminal groups as well as police (Hill, 2003). Therefore, the older crime groups usually reject association with terrorists. A notable example is the Russian Mafia:

The Russian Mafia is not willing to ally with terror groups or involve in the CBRN market (Dishman, 2001). National security experts and analysts have focused their attention on the Russian Mafia because they feared that the Russian organized criminals would cooperate with terrorist groups and involve in moving CBRN material out of Russian in order to gain huge amount of money. However, there is no evidence to prove that the Russian Mafia has engaged in this business. The Russian Mafia are satisfied with their steady and huge profits raised from their traditional and low-risk business, such as private protection service, debt collection, extortion and legitimate business (Varese, 2001). On the other hand, involvement in trafficking CBRN materials tend to bring a fierce response from the Russian authorities and huge political pressures from the United Nations, the doom of the Russian criminal groups would be inevitable (Lee, 1998).

Additionally, there remain cultural, operational, and practical differences between older criminal groups and terrorist groups, thus the different aims and motivations of the two entities also make them difficult for collaboration (Dishman, 2001; Sanderson, 2004; Shelley, 2005). In practical and political terms, older criminal groups are engaging in organized crime without attracting the public attention, while terror groups tend to draw unwelcome law enforcement attention (Sanderson, 2004). The older criminal organizations are closely associating with the law enforcement agencies through the political-criminal nexus (Chin and Godson, 2006). Thereby, the United State keeps a close eye on terror groups rather than organized criminal groups, as a result, most states would participate actively in counter-terrorism campaign (Sanderson, 2004).

Other important distinctions are motivations and aims. The organized criminals are not concerned with influencing and affecting public opinion; they are involving in organized crime to their solely to criminal profits and illicit wealth. On the other hand, terrorists are engaging in either terrorism activities or criminal activities in order to seek their political ends (Hoffman, 1998; Shelley & Picarelli, 2002). In this case, organized criminal groups more likely to acquire “in-house” capabilities to guarantee their organizational security and organizational operations without cooperate with other terrorist groups.

However, some newer transnational crime groups, often originating in ungovernable regions, are now establishing their links with terrorist groups; because the criminal groups do not possess long-term and efficient financial strategies and they want neither nether stability nor strong states who can control them. Another significant reason is that new transnational groups likely take advantages of the chaos of war and dysfunctional state functions and generate huge profits from cooperating with terrorists (Shelley, 2005). Consequently, the new types of transnational crime groups share consistent interests with terrorist and they gradually form terrorist-transnational crime relationship. As Louise Shelley (2005: 105) argues that “the terrorist-transnational crime relationship extends beyond a marriage of convenience that generates profits or provides logistics: it goes to the very heart of the relationship between crime groups and the state”.

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In sum, it is clear that the contradictory financial and political aims and motivations between traditional criminal syndicate and terrorist group lead to great challenges for their collaboration (Dishman, 2001; Makarenko, 2004). Most traditional criminal organizations are mainly in the process of self-transformation and rejecting association with terrorist organizations. Traditional criminal organizations and terrorist groups are inclined to go through self-transformation to advance aims and interests (Dishman, 2001). Transnational criminal organizations are growing into hybrid organizations with “in-house” capability of employing mass, indiscriminate violence. Meanwhile, terrorist groups tend to transform into criminal organizations who are interested in generating revenue in order to achieve political objectives. The situation would change only if these traditional groups were seriously crippled and compelled to combine with terrorists for combating their common enemies—the state authorities.

On the other hand, the alliances of transnational criminal organizations (especially for new crime groups) and terrorist groups indeed exist and constantly occur depending on their consistent interests. There are two comparative modalities between organized criminal group and terrorist group—strategic and tactic linkages based on a variety of reasons, such as pursuing operational support and professional skills (Williams, 1995). Furthermore, the crime-terror continuum will arrive at convergence stage, which means organized crime and terrorist groups can converge into one single entity displaying both groups’ characteristics—a powerful and destructive organization seeking political and financial ambition (Makarenko, 2004). Furthermore, increasing pressure from international law enforcement with result in the breakdown of illicit organizations is creating new and dangerous opportunities for collaboration between criminals and terrorists and network extension (Dishman, 2005).

4. Transformation Organizations

Combating the financing of terrorism has led some terrorists to transform their organizations into transnational criminal organizations with “profit-minded agencies” in order to effectively seek their political ends; these groups then engage in illegal activities in order to generate revenue for financial or organizational needs (Dishman, 2001; Sanderson, 2004). As U. S. intelligence analyst Chris Dishman points out that there are different degrees of transformation: at one extreme, transformation has not occurred, such as the EZLN and the Russian Mafia who have not “transformed any of their organization and remain politically and criminally ‘authentic’”; at the other extreme, terrorists abandon their ultimate aims and political motivations and completely transformed into different type of groups with vary ends (2001: 48).

There is one strong viewpoint that terrorists are accustomed to receiving financial support from other parties, which leads them to mimic and ally with organized crime groups that could successfully generate funds though engaging in illicit cross-border activities over a long time (Sanderson, 2004). However, it seems that some terrorists have actually developed into self-sufficient organizations with “in-house” criminal capabilities through the process of self-transformation.

4.1 Narco-terrorism

The nexus of terrorism and narcotics has been described as narcoterrorism, and drug trade is now becoming one of main sources of profits for both terrorists and transnational organized crime (Zagaris, 1991; Shelley and Picarelli, 2002). In the drug trade, those who are in charge of refining and distributing the drug tend to share the largest proportion of the profit, while producer groups receive the least profit. In this case, narcotics production and trafficking in the Central Asian are often cited as one significant factor for the rise of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Taliban and Al-Qaeda (Shelley and Picarelli, 2002).

All the evidence suggests that the primary motivation of the IMU prior to September 11 was criminal, the IMU successfully maintain and secure narcotics transportation interests through terrorist activities and has become a leading trafficker of opiates into Central Asia (Makarenko, 2002). However, the ultimate motivation of the IMU has been changed. As Tamara Makarenko describes that:

“Current anecdotal evidence suggests that Yuldashev is reforming the IMU, and thus likely attempting to reserve membership to individuals dedicated to radical Islamic ideals. In the absence of a financial and operational support base that once existed in Afghanistan, it however remains likely that a resurgent IMU will continue to depend on narcotics trafficking to secure financing. Thus unless the regional drugs trade receives greater international attention, the IMU’s continued involvement in trafficking operations may eventually secure the funding required for it to overtly seek political objectives through terrorist activities.” (2002:15)

As for Taliban, it would be incorrect to maintain that the Taliban played the dominant role in the planting, cultivation, production and trafficking of all opiates. The main finances of Taliban were generated from the

cross-border smuggling of licit commodities and credit card fraud as well as robberies (Makarenko, 2002; Wannenburg, 2003).

4.2 The Provisional Irish Republican Army

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) was a militant organization whose aim was to remove Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom and set up the United Ireland through terrorist activities and guerilla warfare before its campaign of violence was over in 2005 (Dillon, 2003). Following the worldwide campaign of crackdown on the IRA's financial system had achieved remarkable effect; the IRA was compelled to find the alternative sources of funding. The IRA likely encouraged its members to involve in criminal activities in order to raise funds for organizational needs, rather than ally with any other organized criminal organizations (Dishman, 2001). These activities the IRA members involved in were policing, bank robbery (David and Sean, 2005), fuel laundering (Jim, 2008) and kidnapping (Diarmaid and Bronagh, 2008) for the purposes of raising funds.

The IRA is a classical example of a mutual terrorist group who stepped into organized crime but the aims and motivation of the group's were still paramount (Dishman, 2001). The IRA to some extent acted like mafia, which provided the private or criminal protection for citizens and in return gained plenty of money. The IRA have successfully developed into an organization with "in-house" ability of involving in organized crime so as to become self-sufficient entity, thus they rarely seek alliance with other criminal groups for fundraising.

5. The Linkages between Transnational Criminal Organizations and Terrorist Groups

Transnational linkages between criminals and terrorists have occurred on some level for centuries, but have evolved during the past several decades because of the increasing international law enforcement pressure (Makarenko, 2004). The worldwide anti-terror campaign and an extremely broad approach of repressing terrorist funding make cooperation become a rational choice for both organized criminal groups and terrorists. Moreover, the crime-terror nexus could also take advantage of the communication technology and advanced equipment to minimize their risk getting caught. The linkages between organized criminal groups and terrorists have occurred in a combination of ways, both tactical and strategic. A tactical relationship means one-spot or short timeframe cooperation without any complementary enduring goals. In contrast, strategic alliances between organized crime groups and terrorists base on their consistent interests and aim to achieve mutual expectations of long-term goals (Williams, 1994; Dishman, 2004).

5.1 Tactical Alliances

In much the same way, different aims and motivations of political and criminal groups lead organized crime groups and terrorists more likely to cooperate on a short-term basis (Dishman, 2001). Most of the evidence of linkages between the two entities could prove that cooperation tend to be one-spot alliance or functional cooperation within shorter time. Whether criminal organizations seek cooperation with terrorists or terror groups form alliances with criminal organizations, these linkages are based on a variety of reasons. Alliances are established in order to share "expert knowledge" (i.e. bomb-designing, money laundering, communication technologies) or "operational support" (i.e. access to trafficking routes) (Makarenko, 2004: 131). Terrorists groups are just getting access to criminal activities and develop their own revenue through contacting with organized criminal organizations. While, cooperating with terrorists could help organized crime groups gain significant profits through the prolongation of conflict, corruption and undermining law enforcement (Shelly, 1999). But their alliances turns out to be superficial and short-time because both of them try to keep their group's secret (Associated Press, 1982).

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) and FARC.

Although the IRA seldom contacted with other criminal groups because its self-sufficient financial system, a notable example indicated that its cooperation with other criminal groups did exist. Three members of the IRA engaged in cooperating with the FARC and shared their expert knowledge of bomb-making (Sanderson, 2004). The linkage between the IRA and the FARC can be regarded as "one-spot" cooperation designed for specific aims and operational needs.

The Italian Red Brigades and the Naples Camorra.

Another example of short-lived cooperation between organized criminal groups and terrorists is the Italian Red Bridges formed an alliance with the Naples Camorra in the early 1980s (Dishman, 2001). Although, their motivations and views are extremely different from each other, the reasons the Red Bridges attempted to establish this alliance was their organization and terrorism activities had been seriously crippled by Italian authorities. As a result, the Camorra and Red Bridges wanted to exchange services for a brief of time and

combated their common enemy—the Italian authorities. For instance, the police reported that the Red Brigades and the Camorra partnered with one another in order to kill or kidnap a number of police officers and senior politicians (ibid).

Alliances in the international drug trade operations.

For example, Colombian police have reported that the Medellin cocaine cartel hired ELN guerrillas to plant car bombs in 1993 because the Medellin was lacking of in-house capabilities of engaging terrorist acts (Clawson and Lee, 1996). Furthermore, Colombia's AUC terrorist took part in Drugs-for-Guns deals in 2002; this type of transaction was regarded as one of the most serious criminal problems for the United States (Charles, 2002). A similar relationship was that Russian criminal groups sent massive quantities of weapons to Colombia for exchanging cocaine (Makarenko, 2004).

5.2 Strategic Alliances

Since transnational criminal organizations and terror groups gain significant benefits (i.e. profit maximizing and risk reduction) from their one-spot cooperation, it is increasingly difficult to prevent them from alliances in strategic way. Sustaining cooperation between organized crime and terrorists seems to be a possible thing because they are running in the same circles— they already operate out of the law and they often create and take advantages of the same surrounding (i.e. little governmental control, open borders, chaos of national boundary and dysfunction of law enforcement) as well as they usually need the same resources, including “false identification, shipping documents, operators, transportation networks, and counter-surveillance techniques” (Sanderson, 2004: 53). Moreover, the increasing tension of counter crime-terror policy is another growing problem for both organizations, strategic alliances make them possible combine together to combat their common enemy—the state authorities.

In most cases, it is clearly that some of the alliance between criminal and political crime groups can be regarded as a rational way of risk reduction. Organized crime groups and terrorists often operate based on their networks, organized crime groups can seek protection from terror groups in order to guarantee their criminal profits, and terrorists can hide themselves through cooperating with organized crime groups (Shelly, 2002). Furthermore, organized crime groups and terrorist usually share the similar money laundering measures and financing ways (Ridley, 2008).

Crime, Terror and the Central Asian Drug Trade.

Central Asian criminal network is an exemplary example which indicates the strategic alliance between organized crime groups and terrorists. There are three types of groups are interested in profiting from the lucrative narcotics trade: drug mafia, transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups (Makarenko, 2002). These groups have established extensive smuggling networks and developed into a criminal empire that are dominant in the global supply of illicit opium. Moreover, Makarenko (2002: 6-16) in his article gives a detailed description in the following:

The first group associated with the central Asian drug trade is drug mafias. They are acting as middlemen and holding one of two extreme poles of the crime-terror nexus in the regional trade. Drugs mafias are mainly engaging in distributing opium poppy seeds to local farmers, or assisting local farmers with financial support to encourage them to plant opium poppy crops. Moreover, drug mafia act as the first line of buyers in the international drug trade so that they play significant role in this criminal empire. The second type of group is transnational criminal organizations. These groups seem to be an important linkage between regional and international actors, which pose the single greatest threat to the region. Transnational criminal groups have formed a variety of drug trade networks and transport large quantities of drugs to different parts of the world. The last group of actors engaged in Afghan/Central Asian drugs trade is terrorist groups, including Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Unlike the ongoing misunderstanding that the Taliban played the dominant role in the producing and trafficking of all illicit drugs in Afghanistan, the Taliban plays a limited role in drugs trade because of the power of domestic drug mafias and warlords in this region. As a result, the Central Asian drugs trade has been controlled by the crime-terror nexus where domestic drug mafias, transnational criminal groups, warlords and the Taliban converge.

Chechnya

Enduring cooperation has also occurred between two separate groups—the Moscow-based Chechen Mafia and Grozny-based Chechen guerrillas. Chechen guerrillas have engaged in assassinations, kidnappings and terrorism activities which irritated Moscow Government. Russia chose war against Chechen rebels and destroyed Chechen's cities and killed a large number of the Chechen people as well as suppressed Chechen Criminal

syndicates in order to create a stable environment (Menon and Fuller, 2000).

Although the aims and ideological beliefs of these two groups differ from each other, an extensive crackdown on Chechen Mafia activities compelled Chechen criminals to change their mind and seek to cooperate with the Chechen rebels (Dishman, 2001). The Russian Interior Ministry reported that the Chechen Mafia was responsible for offering financial support to Chechen guerrillas. In return, the Chechen Criminals would obtain protection services, intelligence and weapons. In this case, the Chechen rebels could successfully engage in retaliatory acts in Moscow and two other cities that killed approximately 300 people in 1999 (Insight on the News, 1999).

5.3 Convergence

Since the end of the cold war, the increasing rise of transnational organized crime organizations and the changing nature of terrorist groups are creating new opportunities to resist their common enemies through collaboration. According to Tamara Makarenko (2004) and Chris Dishman (2005), the final point of the crime-terror continuum is convergence. The convergence of crime-terror nexus means these two groups arrive at one situation in which organized crime groups and terrorists gradually become the same or very similar organizations with a convergence of views or beliefs. Thus, as Makarenko presents that:

“The criminal and terrorist organizations could converge into a single entity that initially displays characteristics of both groups simultaneously; but has potential to transform itself into an entity situated at the opposite end of the continuum from which it began. Transformation thus occurs to such a degree that the ultimate aims and motivations of the organization have actually changed.” (2004: 135)

However, there is no evidence to prove that the criminal and political groups have converged into a single entity with similar ideologies, motives, and views of success and failure. Cooperation between these two groups in a tactical way has occurred frequently based their contemporary consistent interests, but strategic alliances have occasionally happened based on their long-time common goals. While different aims and ideological beliefs of these two entities are obvious and conflicts between them do exist, these realities make the two entities extremely difficult to maintain long-time cooperation or combine into one single entity. However, the criminal or terrorist group would transform itself into one entity with features of both groups.

It seems that state authorities could not judge organized criminal group and terrorist by their cover (Dishman, 2001). Criminal groups may display political motivations, they would adopt terror tactics to obtain political leverage or initially use terrorism to control natural resources and financial institutions, and subsequently they would gain political power over the state (Makarenko, 2004). On the other hand, terrorist groups may increasingly focus their attention on criminal activities that they merely maintain a public façade, but underneath, they have transformed into another kind of groups with different end game (Dishman, 1999).

6. Conclusion

There is no definite conclusion that how organized crime and terrorism intersect and converge. During the period from 1999 to 2009, the model of “crime-terror nexus” was developed and followed by the various of works written by distinguished academics, such as Levi, Dishman, Fijnaut, Makarenko, Shelley and Sanderson. The alliances between criminal and political groups in a combination of ways, both tactical and strategic, would always depend on their specific purposes and the particular changing surroundings. Transnational organized crime groups (i.e. the Sicilian Mafia, the Hong Kong Triads, and the Russian Mafia) usually refuse to cooperate with terror groups because of their longstanding financial strategies and stable state contacts. The situation would change only if these traditional groups were seriously crippled by the state authorities and they have been compelled to combine with terrorists for survival. In contrast, more recently formed crime actors thriving in ungovernable regions and on-going conflict have a very different attitude to the terrorists. The newer groups do not have long-established financial strategies or long-time ideological beliefs, thus they would seek to cooperate with terrorist groups for short-time survival.

The cultural, ideological, political, operational and practical differences between these criminal and political groups are obvious, thus it can be argued that these two groups are more likely to engage in self-transformation rather form alliances with other groups. Moreover, the tactic and strategic alliances between organized crime and terrorist organizations have frequently occurred depending on the changeable situation. It is inherently difficult for these two groups to maintain their harmonious relationship for a long time because of their separate aims and motivations. Furthermore, the cooperation between criminal and political groups remains in the tactical or strategic phase, there is not enough evidence to test and verify that these two groups have converged into one single entity displaying natures and characteristics of both groups at the same time.

Makarenko (2003) points out that the nexus between organized crime and terrorism has occurred and developed

because of their “common convergence of causes”. Shelley (2005) also maintains that the regions in which transnational crime groups and terrorists interlink, particularly in a state of chaos and on-going conflict as well as regions with the largest shadow economies have provided a safe haven for the nurturing of the crime-terror nexus. Moreover, Ridlay (2005) offers that the linkages are related to certain states, either in economic transition or failing states, because the criminal activities and the intersection of both groups are least risky in these regions. In addition, Sanderson once said that the crime-terror nexus seems like this lethal cocktail, “consisting of one part criminal, one part terrorist and one part weak or corrupt state, poses a formidable and increasingly powerful challenge to U.S. and global interests” (2004: 59).

To sum up, the crime-terror nexus is becoming increasingly intensive and requires efficient responses. In this case, it seems that a state cannot judge illegal transnational organizations by cover, and thus seek to formulate effective responses through employing the significant overlapping strategies and policies between counter-terrorist and anti-crime. Therefore, countering money laundering as the utmost target in the process of ending terrorism and organized crime should concentrate on information exchange and copy successful practices among different agencies at a national and international level. If governments and international organizations were more responsive and agile than transnational terrorist and organized crime groups, it might be the termination of these problems. (Word Count: 5380)

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Table 1. Transnational crime and terrorism (Varese, 2000; Shelley, 2005:106; Chin and Godson, 2006)

	Traditional organized crime	New transnational crime
The term of fundraising	Long-term financial interests	Short-term financial interests
The history of groups	Longstanding crime groups Such as the Sicilian Mafia, the Russian Mafia, the Hong Kong Triads the Japanese Yakuza	Recently formed crime groups Such as drug-trafficking and human smuggling groups.
Relationship to the Nation-State	Symbiotic relationship, Criminal-Political Nexus, grows with the weak state.	Take advantages of dysfunctional state institutions and porous borders, develops with the weak state.
Relation to Terrorism	Usually rejects association with terrorists. Only if they are seriously crippled by the state authorities.	Frequently seek relates with terror groups for short-term survival.