

**The Black and Gray Market Arms Trade
in Support of Insurgencies**

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Introduction

Since the end of the Second World War, the nature of warfare has experienced a significant shift in both the means by which it is carried out and the tools with which belligerents take part. In the modern age of warfare, sides have moved well beyond the classic Clausewitzian battle methods of competing armies facing each other across open field, muskets leveled and volleyed in turn until one side simply had too few men to continue to “fight.” The days of large-scale uniformed armies meeting each other across a relatively clearly delineated battlefield are found almost exclusively in the history books. In their place, the world has seen a significant upsurge in asymmetrical and non-conventional warfare around the world. The first of the major conflicts in which non-conventional and guerrilla-style warfare became dominant may have been the conflict between the French and Vietnamese in Indo-China in the 1950s, eventually transitioning into the protracted war fought by the Americans in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s.

More recently, non-conventional conflicts have raged in hundreds of locales and theaters in an astonishingly wide variety of countries. Fighters have taken up arms in search of independence from colonial powers, freedom from political or religious oppression, or any number of various ideological goals. These conflicts are often in the form of home-grown and even imported insurgencies against ruling powers seen as corrupt or unfair. As non-state actors, these insurgent groups are often under experienced, outmanned and disastrously outgunned. National armies and security forces have the distinct advantage of international legitimacy (or international recognition, at least) and all the associated rights and privileges.

One of the most important rights that sovereign nations hold, as opposed to non-state insurgent groups, is international juridical recognition, and as a result, the right and ability to purchase arms and weapons on the open international market. Embargoes and limitation treaties notwithstanding, sovereign nations are able to make purchases of all the tools needed to wage proper warfare from other nations, international arms consortiums and individual arms manufacturers under an umbrella of legitimacy. The legal and transparent international small arms trade among only the fifty largest supplier nations totaled slightly less than \$25 billion in 2010.¹ This sum includes only small arms, light weapons, ammunition and weapon parts; no

¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Arms Transfer Database “Trend Indicator Values,” <http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/toplist.php> (accessed August 4, 2011)

large weapons such as missile defense systems, battle-ready vehicles, aircraft, tanks or naval ships, to name a few. In general, insurgent groups are most likely to focus monetary resources on small arms and light weapons, though some have been known to purchase or attempt to purchase larger, more sophisticated weapons systems.

One of the most pressing issues related to the legitimate arms trade, and a major factor by which the illegitimate trade persists, is the problem of what are known as End User Certificates (EUC). In theory, an EUC is a legal document stating the nature of the particular arms trade deal: who is buying, who is selling, what goods are being transferred, as well as all legal formalities such as embargo notifications. (see Appendix 1) The primary purpose of these documents is to assure all parties involved (including international observation groups such as the U.N.) that the goods are to be owned and used by the purchaser, and that no secondary sales of the items will be made. In short, the buyer agrees not to re-sell any of the goods. A more thorough discussion of EUCs will be undertaken at a later point in this study.

With no access to the legitimate international arms market, non-state actors including revolutionary, counter-revolutionary and insurgent groups have been forced to rely on alternative methods for arms and supply procurement. The purpose of this paper will be to examine the means and methods by which insurgent groups purchase, transfer, steal or otherwise get their hands on the vast stockpiles of small arms with which they waged their insurgencies or continue to maintain their fighting posture. In particular, this paper will ask the question: To what extent do the black and gray arms markets contribute to the ability of insurgent groups to conduct combat operations?

The overall importance of the issue cannot be understated. With the continuation of armed conflicts in far flung areas of the globe as well as new insurgencies, insurrections and rebellions being born in once restive areas, the global arms trade shows no signs of slowing down. The ultimate success or failure of each of these conflicts relies, in no small part, on the ability of the active belligerents to access the arms and materiel they so desperately need. There is little doubt that insurgent groups and revolutionaries would give pause to plans for engaging in hostilities against an armed enemy were they not able to properly and efficiently arm themselves. The old adage still stands that the first rule of a gunfight is, simply, bring a gun.

By limiting illegitimate access to the arms market, that is access to the trade by insurgent groups and their ilk, reason would expect to see a corresponding decrease in the effectiveness of those insurgent groups in their ability to continue armed actions against their respective targets or enemy groups. The means and methods needed to affect that limitation are varied and will be discussed in some detail. Among the most important issues to be addressed will be the involvement of third party suppliers, the overall regulation of the arms trade from the top down, with a focus on tracking of ammunition, weapons and weapon parts after their initial sale, known black market sources, and known sources from which these goods may become available (such as former Soviet stockpiles, thefts of shipments, etc).

For clarification purposes, this paper will consider the “black market” to be any mean or method by which a non-state, illegitimate actor obtains weapons illegally directly from arms traders or uninvolved third parties. The term “gray market” will be used to identify the illegal procurement of arms from otherwise legitimate actors, such as state militaries and other government sanctioned groups. For instance, purchases made by rebel groups of national military arms from corrupt military officials, purchases and transfers of weapons seized in battle, weapons stolen from national military stores, and “leakage,” the inexplicable or unexplained loss or misplacement of weaponry. As the research will show, the gray market is in fact considerably larger than the black market, and therefore poses a much more significant threat to stability.

Structure

The overall structure of this paper work will be relatively simple, given the complexity of the issue being studied. With such a broad area of study, the necessity for keeping the organization of the work is paramount. As a result, the paper will be separated into a small number of key sections.

First will be an introduction to the issue, both from a historical perspective as well as the current state of the arms trade and the black and gray markets worldwide. This section will include historical discussions of the arms trade, the role of the arms trade in global conflict, the shift from conventional warfare to asymmetric warfare, the rise of insurgencies and the particular and peculiar role that insurgent groups play in the geopolitical theater. This section will also include descriptions of general ways by which insurgent group obtain weapons and materiel

beyond the black and gray markets, including thefts, capture of enemy arms and the small-scale manufacture of homemade weapons by some groups. A review of literature to be cited and drawn from will be found in this section as well. Finally, the introductory section will also include discussions of relevant theories relating to the issue, namely realism, liberalism and the new war theory.

Following this will be an in-depth look at the current state of arms control, including relevant treaties, agreements, embargoes, etc, that govern the legitimate trade in conventional small arms and light weapons. Also included will be a look at the issue of end user licensing and certifications, the means by which primary sellers ensure the final destination of the goods they are selling. These certificates pose a very particular problem for those involved in the arms trade, and their involvement in the process warrants examination.

Next will be descriptions of the groups that will be studied. This paper will examine the reasons for each group's struggle, their command and control structure and general history. Historical context can be as important to understanding an insurgent group's means and methods as it is to understanding their ideological reasons for taking up arms in the first place. When possible and relevant, analysis of comparable contexts, ideologies or other common issues found between or among the groups will be discussed.

Next, the black and gray markets will be discussed in detail. Included in this will be detailed work on how the markets are known to operate, where they operate most (and least) effectively, the ways by which SALW find their way onto the markets and how groups or individuals become acquainted with and take part in these illicit markets. Again, historical context on the state of the black and gray markets can offer insight into why they are more common or successful in certain areas than in others. In addition, a number of individuals and small groups of arms dealers and traffickers known (or suspected) to be funneling goods to the black and gray markets will be identified and discussed. Along this same line, this paper would be remiss if it did not discuss possible state sponsors of insurgent groups which may be arming these groups illegally, via the gray market.

Following this will be the analysis of each factor listed previously. Each insurgent group looked at will be cross referenced against the others in order to determine commonalities and

aberrations among the three. This will likely be the most important section of the paper, as it will include detailed discussions of the means and methods by which each group operates and takes part in the arms trade. Each factor will be defined more precisely, and each group's relation to the factor (or its included parts) will be thoroughly documented.

With the detailing of the variables and each group's involvement with each established, this paper will next look at how each variable is propagated and how each involved action is carried out. By determining this, it may be possible to offer suggestions as to how each may be limited, better regulated, kept in check or outright eliminated. This final, hypothetical portion of the paper will bring us to the final conclusions and recommendations based on the research conducted. These conclusions will be based on the results of the variable comparisons as well as on knowledge gained regarding the operation of the black and gray markets within the larger arms trade, the ways by which insurgent groups participate in the market and the current state of regulation and monitoring of the arms industry.

Research Method

In order to understand any universal constants or differences among various insurgent groups and their means of arming themselves this paper must establish a set of factors to look for within each case. Factors this paper will assess include any known state sponsor, past political or military alignment, legitimate involvement on the national or regional stage, types of arms preferred by the group's members, the group's preferred method of carrying out attacks, known existence of regional black and/or gray markets, and any known extra-regional sources from which these groups can obtain small arms and light weapons (SALW).

First, and perhaps most important, this paper will determine whether or not the insurgent group has or has previously had any known state sponsorship. This sponsorship may include military support, financial support, strategic or tactical advising or training of members of the insurgent group. Both direct sponsorship as well as indirect sponsorship via proxies will be looked at, as these secondary transfers from proxy groups may prove to be among the most important means of acquiring arms.

Second, and closely related to the first variable, this paper will look at any past political and/or military alignment. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union flooded

many markets with cheap (if not free) weapons in order to arm allies in the event of the outbreak of a shooting war. As a result, groups sought to align themselves with one superpower or the other, in order to keep the flow of weapons constant. After the Cold War, many of these same groups found themselves heavily armed with no enemy to fight. Thus, thousands if not millions of weapons became available on the international market. Whether or not any of the groups this paper examines had access to stores obtained during alignment would have been key to getting weapons otherwise unavailable to them from local or regional suppliers.

Third, this paper must determine whether or not the particular group enjoyed any measure of legitimacy within the country, local trading area or geopolitical region. Any considerable level of legitimacy could easily have opened a number of potential markets otherwise unavailable to an insurgent group. A brief example would be the Tamil Tiger's status as trading partners within their semi-autonomous region for number of years prior to their move to full-scale warfare with the government of Sri Lanka. While obviously not a legitimate or recognized government, basic services were provided to people in the area, earning a level of trust with the local population.

Next will be a determination of any known local, regional or extra-regional black or gray markets. However, the existence of these markets is irrelevant unless the insurgent group can be determined to have had access to the market. If no known connection can be deduced but the market is known to exist, this paper may conclude that the group had *potential* access, but declined to engage in the market for whatever reason. These reasons may have been ideological, political, logistical or simply financial.

Finally this paper will determine whether the group had access to black and gray markets from outside their region of operation. This access may have come in the form of overseas markets, international arms traders and smugglers, expatriate supporters abroad and so forth. On the same level, were members of the group able to travel to outside markets to conduct business, or were they wholly dependent on suppliers bringing the market to them? After determining whether or not the groups had access to the markets, this paper may also need to ask *why* the group chose to engage with and take part in the market trade, or conversely why they chose *not* to take part.

Groups for Study

As an examination of such a broad issue tends towards a vast amount of information and data to interpret, this paper will focus on identifiable and diverse insurgent groups: *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - FARC), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Nigeria and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam in Sri Lanka,. Within each case, this paper will address the historical development of the groups, their ideologies and purposes for fighting, their geopolitical importance (both regionally and extra-regionally) and the means and methods by which they are known or believed to have accessed illicit goods.

The selection of these three groups offers a look at three very different armed insurgent groups with well-documented histories. In addition, all three have relatively clearly defined goals and objectives as well as very particular enemies and methods. Easy and reliable access to historical records such as government records (combat, casualty, expenditures), interviews, news articles and other documentation relating to each group will also aid in the work at hand. While other non-state actor groups are certainly accessing illicit markets as well, these three groups were chosen so as to best represent what this paper considers to be a proper cross-section of groups vis-à-vis their geographical locations, ideologies, government opposition and relatively high public visibility.

In general, much of the data collected for the purpose of this study could easily be used in predicting or evaluating illicit market utilization by any number of other insurgent or non-state actor groups. Naturally, focusing on three groups among hundreds (or perhaps even thousands) of armed insurgent groups around the world means that the vast majority may never be fully researched along these lines. Groups ranging from the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA, Basque nationalists under French and Spanish rule), to anti-Communist jihadists in Afghanistan and even the major cocaine cartels of the 1980s share or have shared similar market access issues. Though their ideologies and thought processes may differ in some ways, their fundamental understandings and use of the illicit markets can most likely be considered analogous to one another.

Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia

For the purposes of chronology, the first group to be examined in this study will be the FARC. The FARC was initially formed in 1964 as a militant arm of the Colombian Communist party. Following a decade of violence perpetrated by the government against the people of Colombia, the Communist party within the country began to consolidate its own power in direct conflict. As a result, what began as a student-led political movement morphed into one of the largest illegitimate fighting forces in the world, one which would continue to pose a threat to peace and stability in the South American region even to the present day².

As the Communist party in Colombia grew, so too did its perceived need to grow its armed force. The FARC swelled in number, at one point boasting as many as 18,000 armed men and women in their ranks³. Given the unofficial nature of enlistment and banding with such a non-state actor group, the actual number of fighters is simply not measurable. Conservative estimates put the actual number at any given time between 8,000 and 10,000⁴.

As an unevenly matched foe to the established government of Colombia, the FARC has relied primarily on asymmetric methods to get their message across. Most notable, the FARC has been known to use bombings, political assassinations and especially kidnappings in furthering their agenda. Kidnappings of foreign nationals have helped the group garner international press and notoriety. In addition, they have been known to kidnap political figures who are vocal in their opposition to the activities and stances of the FARC. Most famously, they carried out the kidnapping and six-year captivity of French citizen Ingrid Betancourt.⁵ The START Global Terrorism Database includes entries for 112,569 separate terrorist attacks and/or actions perpetrated in Colombia between 1970 and 2011. Of these, FARC has claimed responsibility or is suspected of carrying out 2,045 attacks. According to the database, these attacks have resulted in the deaths of 5,240 individuals, though many more are suspected.⁶

² The FARC and the government of Colombia have recently returned to peace negotiations, beginning in October 2012. However, given the history of start-and-stop peace talks between the groups, little can be assumed with regards to what level of success these talks may or may not achieve.

³ "Never Ending – Security in Colombia;" *Economist*; July 7, 2011

⁴ "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army;" Mapping Militant Organizations; Stanford University; <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/89>

⁵ "Profile: Ingrid Betancourt;" BBC News; July 3, 2008; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7266587.stm>

⁶ START Global Terrorism Database; University of Maryland; 2011. Note: When the data is scrubbed to exclude attacks by "Death Squad" or "Unknown" perpetrators, all other known insurgent groups in Colombia were

South America was a hotbed of anti-government groups during the latter half of the twentieth century. Groups such as *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional de Colombia* (ELN) and Shining Path in Peru brought armed struggle into the public's view, through their various actions. The FARC, while not unique in its views or decision to take up arms, became arguably the most successful of these groups, at least inasmuch as they were able to make their presence known and often win varying levels of concessions from the government.

However, as the political landscape began to shift during the 1980s and especially after the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the FARC also began to shift its focus. With a firm anti-government mentality entrenched in the psyche of FARC leadership (as well as lower ranks), the group sought new ways by which it could continue its struggle. The rise of the Colombian drug cartels in cities such as Cali and Medellin presented an interesting, if somewhat contradictory opportunity for the FARC.

These cartels represented a new group that sought to bring the fight to the government. Whereas the FARC originally sought political power through force of arms, the cartels were dedicated to the simplest of ideologies: capitalism. The government of Colombia presented itself as the common enemy that the two disparate groups could agree was in fact the real enemy. In reality, the political landscape of the country at the time was such that both groups stood to make major gains by change in regime. Or at the very least a wholesale unsettling and delegitimization of the authority that government attempted to exert over the country.

On the one hand, the cartels hoped to cause enough havoc within the country that the government would be either wholly unwilling or unable to contain them. Propensity for unimaginable violence marked the activity of the cartels; including assassinations, kidnappings and bombings. Among the most vicious and high-profile of these attacks were the assassination of Luis Carlos Galan, a Colombian Senator and candidate for President in 1989.⁷ This type of high-profile attack by the cartels was in stark contrast to the guerilla warfare tactics favored by the FARC, but also proved that the cartels were a major player in the political process.

responsible for 3,288 known attacks resulting in 3,061 recorded deaths. In this context, the FARC is rightly regarded as the most prolific insurgent group in Colombia.

⁷ "Colombian Presidential Candidate is Slain at Rally;" August 19, 1989;

<http://www.nytimes.com/1989/08/19/world/colombian-presidential-candidate-is-slain-at-rally.html>

As this violence increased, the FARC no doubt learned a thing or two about how to take their fight to the enemy. In the past, the FARC had relied almost exclusively on jungle-based attacks, preferring to launch raids against relatively remote government and military outposts. For the most part, the government seemed somewhat content to allow the FARC to maintain some measure of autonomy in the jungle. However, as the cartels began to expand their territory deeper and deeper into the jungle, into prime land needed for growing, cultivation and processing of cocaine, it seemed only a matter of time before the two groups either came into direct conflict, or formed some sort of alliance.

It is unclear exactly when the two groups came together, but what is certain is that they did so. At some point, the FARC became something of a jungle enforcement arm of the cartels. Their once (and future) political aspirations were set to the side in favor of making money guarding cocaine processing facilities and associated workers. In addition, the FARC's muscle was flexed in extortion schemes against locals who opposed the cartels' presence in their areas. In return, the FARC was presumably well paid, though estimates as to how much money was transferred to the group are difficult to come by.

Needless to say, though, this activity helped tremendously in filling the FARC's coffers. As a result, the FARC was able to maintain weapon and materiel stocks and become one of the best-armed groups in the region. Along with this new source of revenue also allowed the FARC to broaden its reach into further regional and extraregional markets. With support from Venezuela and other insurgent groups in Peru, FARC was able to obtain weapons and goods from sources as far away as Jordan and Ukraine. This extraregional market access can be invaluable to a group which encountered fading support at home.

During the 1990s, especially after the death of Medellin Cartel boss Pablo Escobar in 1993, the government was emboldened with a new sense of power against home-grown insurgency.⁸ With outside aid from the United States, the Colombian government began massive sweeps through jungle areas, destroying large swaths of jungle land necessary for cocaine

⁸ Peter Eisner; "Cocaine Trafficker Pablo Escobar Killed in Colombia;" Newsday; December 3, 1993; accessed online <http://tech.mit.edu/V113/N62/escobar.62w.html>

production.⁹ Having previously moved in to protect these areas, FARC fighters were often killed or captured during these government raids.

In the past decade, efforts have been made to reconcile the FARC's political and socio-economic agendas with the changing face of Venezuela as a whole. Peace talks have been commenced in Cuba and Sweden notably, but to little affect. As recently as October 2013 peace negotiations have been initiated between the FARC and the Colombian government, only to collapse amidst disagreements over disarmament, land grants, release of hostages and prisoners and any handful of other points of contention. Given these constant attempts to re-start the process, it appears as though elements within each group belligerent party are at least nominally interested in a permanent cessation of hostilities. Future efforts will likely focus on reintegration of FARC members into society as well as granting of some measure of political and social autonomy for the FARC. However, with the continued support of United States drug interdiction efforts, as well as funding, it does not appear likely that the FARC can muster adequate forces or support to achieve any lasting victory against the government. Their greatest enemies are no longer government troops, but rather time and dwindling support and resources.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE)

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam are unique to this study in that they are the only insurgent group included which is primarily ethnocentric. Ethnic Tamils are native to southern India and parts of Sri Lanka. During the Colonial era, Tamils enjoyed some measure of freedom from official oppression, as they and their neighbors were under the overarching control of the British Crown.

The LTTE was formed in 1976 by a conglomeration of members of various ethnic Tamil groups which were already operational in Sri Lanka. The majority of these were founded following the end of the British colonial era when the minority Tamil populations on the island were subjected to increased discrimination and systemic oppression by the newly formed government. Tamil community groups quickly evolved into defense and opposition groups as violence between ethnic groups began to flare during the 1970s.

⁹"Intelligence Support Activity;" The Center for Media and Democracy;
http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Intelligence_Support_Activity

One of the most distinct groups which contributed to the creation of the LTTE was the Tamil Students Movement (TSM). The TSM was created in 1970 to protest Sri Lankan government plans to limit educational opportunities for ethnic Tamils. Although these protests originally began as non-violent, a shift to violent activities began shortly after creation. In or about 1972, the TSM, along with other pro-Tamil groups such as the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) began to splinter. From these emerged two distinct (and distinctly terroristic) groups, the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) and the Tamil Elam Liberation Organization (TELO).¹⁰

Like the FARC, the LTTE had a suspected sovereign supporter. The post-colonial government of neighboring India was an early supporter of the LTTE. However, support from India was not officially state sponsored. Nor was it *unofficially* state sponsored in the way that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. sponsored contemporary insurgent and counterinsurgent groups via proxies and third- or fourth-party brokered deals. Rather, India's primary means of supporting the LTTE was in its ability to play upon outside loyalties and exert pressure on other countries to sway opinion in favor of the Tamils. Recently released documents indicate that former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi attempted to use her political strength to convince British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to end British training of Sri Lankan security forces¹¹. It was believed at the time that British Special Air Service (SAS) commandos were training special units specifically to target the LTTE.

Unfortunately for the LTTE, support from India was not to last. By the late 1980s India had sent its own military advisors and troops to Sri Lanka to help quell the ongoing civil war. Any measure of support remaining for the LTTE was effectively nullified following the May 21, 1991 assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Gandhi was assassinated while campaigning in the Tamil Nadu state of India. The assassin was identified as Thenmozhi Rajaratnam, a known member of LTTE.

In addition to support from India, the LTTE was known to have one of the most complex and sophisticated black and gray market networks ever created in support of an insurgent group.

¹⁰ "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam" South Asia Terrorism Portal;
<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/terroristoutfits/LTTE.HTM>

¹¹ "Indira Gandhi asked Thatcher to stop helping Lankan military;" The Times of India;
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/indira-gandhi-asked-thatcher-to-stop-helping-lanka-militarily/articleshow/29210478.cms>

Primary support was provided by regional neighbors, but access to wider reaching, extraregional secondary and tertiary markets was a hallmark of the Tamil Tiger's network. Later studies of the LTTE networks revealed a vast trove of suppliers and benefactors from far flung areas of the globe.

Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta

Of the three groups included in this study, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) is most recently emerged threat. No official creation date has been established for the group, though it is generally agreed that their emergency appears to have begun in late 2005.¹² One of the first recorded (and claimed) actions of the group was the January 2006 kidnapping for ransom of four employees of a multinational petroleum firm, followed by the February 2006 kidnapping of nine employees of the Shell oil company.¹³ Since then, MEND has carried out a number of armed attacks against various government as well as international petroleum installations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Until recently MEND was unquestionably the primary insurgent threat posed to stability in both the Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole.¹⁴

However, the group's roots tie directly to its predecessors in the Niger Delta, most notably the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), a sort of umbrella organization comprised primarily of ethnic Ijaw fighters in the region. The NDPVF was created under the guidance of Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, a former government official of Nigeria who broke with the government and took up arms against what he saw as unfair distribution of wealth derived from Nigeria's vast petroleum reserves. Asari was arrested in 2005 and charged with treason and a number of weapons smuggling charges. Upon his arrest, the NDPVF fell from the spotlight,

¹² Courson, Elias "Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta: Political Marginalization, Repression and Petro-Insurgency in the Niger Delta;" *The Nordic Africa Institute*; Discussion Paper 47; Uppsala; 2009

¹³ "Intelligence Brief: MEND Escalates Instability in Nigeria;" *World Security Network*; April 27, 2006; http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/Africa/no_author/Intelligence-Brief-M.E.N.D.-Escalates-Instability-in-Nigeria

¹⁴ The rise of Boko Haram in the past few years has pushed them more into the government's focus than MEND as the threat posed by Boko Haram is much less narrowly targeted. Boko Haram's radical and militant push for Islamic sharia law in Nigeria poses an entirely different threat to stability in the region.

likely a result of their leader's call for them to cease attacks in hopes of improving his own chances of escaping harsher punishment.¹⁵

As the NDPVF closed ranks and ceased military operations, more radical members of the group splintered and created what would eventually become the MEND. Unlike the NDPVF, there is no clearly-defined hierarchical control structure within the MEND, no single, identifiable leader, and no easily mapped chain of command. Rather, MEND is more closely akin to a common flag under which various smaller groups are able to operate, ostensibly with common ideals and goals in mind. Ike Okonta, African research fellow at the University of Oxford argues that the group is more of an "idea" than an actual established organization.¹⁶ A number of publicly release communiqués attributed to the group have named various individuals within the group, though it is unclear if these individuals speak as leaders of the group or merely as spokesmen, more along the lines of a press secretary rather than president. As such, proper study of the group and its overall functionality is complicated and susceptible to more than a fair share of guess work and hypothesizing.

There has been some speculation that the MEND also absorbed a number of smaller militias that were known to be operating in different parts of Nigeria. It is not uncommon for local government officials as well as nationally elected politicians to maintain their own small standing militias. These armed groups are employed for various tasks including intimidating opponents, securing politically important resources and ensuring the continued prominence of one group or other in a region. With this maintenance of power inevitably come accusations of more strong-arm activities such as coercion, extortion, threats and even murder. Most pertinent to this study, however, is the possibility that such groups could be obtaining arms via gray markets legally accessed by politicians at various levels throughout the country. With possible government benefactors and sponsors, it is entirely conceivable (if not certain) that these groups could have accessed SALW either from government stores or through the political influence of their benefactors.

¹⁵ MEND would later include release of Asari from prison as one of its stated goals and a point of negotiation.

¹⁶ Hanson, Stephanie "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group;" Council on Foreign Relations *Backgrounder*; March 22, 2007; <http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/mend-niger-deltas-umbrella-militant-group/p12920>

Unlike the other two groups being studied though, the MEND does not align itself with a particular political ideology. Rather, MEND is focused very specifically on affecting change in the petroleum exploration and extraction industry in the Niger Delta region. This focus on a particular industry seen as an existential threat to not only Nigeria but more importantly to the people of Nigeria has earned the group the distinction of being one of the very few groups worldwide to be considered a “petro-insurgency,” that is, a group whose underlying purpose is the opposition of instruments of the petroleum industry.

The socioeconomic inequalities created by the petroleum industry in Nigeria have created vast differences and disparities between the haves and have-nots. This should not be interpreted to imply that the group is motivated by financial goals; that is something of an oversimplification. The deeper sentiment held is that the government of Nigeria is acting in collusion with petroleum corporations to ensure profits and economic prosperity for the political elite, at the expense of the average Nigerian who suffers in one of the poorest regions of the continent. This disparity is clear to see in a country where profits from oil sales are intended to be distributed evenly among the states, yet estimates say that as much as 70% of these profits are stolen from the government at some point prior to reaching those who need it most.¹⁷

Opposition to increased petroleum exploration and exploitation in Nigeria is nothing new. In 1966 a brief revolt was staged against the government and the oil companies, led by a college student and revolutionary named Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro. Boro raised a small army of like-minded militants and launched an armed insurgency against the government and foreign oil companies already beginning operations in the Niger delta. Early battlefield victories against Nigerian federal police forces emboldened Boro, instilling in him a false sense of military adequacy. When faced with the full force of the Nigerian army, Boro’s group was crushed, he was captured and sentenced to death. His conviction was later overturned though his short-lived revolution came to a screeching halt.

Another facet of MEND worth discussing is the fact that the group has declared itself to be dominated by members of various Christian faith groups in Nigeria. This is notable especially in the face of increased threats from Muslim extremist groups such as Boko Haram and the

¹⁷ Hanson; 2007

spread of other Al Qaeda-affiliated groups throughout Africa. MEND have on more than one occasion made mention of their desire to secure Christianity and followers of Christianity in an area that is increasingly hostile to that faith. As a predominantly Christian nation, Nigeria has been a target for radical Islamic terror groups which have risen to prominence on the African continent over the past decade. Boko Haram is the most well-known, as well as the most violent, in Nigeria, but is hardly the only such group. The emergence of these groups and their conflicting ideologies (religious zealotry as opposed to desire for economic equality) has only added to the troubles facing Nigeria today. The potential for a westerly spread of groups like Al-Shabaab or encroachment from the north by armed groups in Mali, for example, are ever –resent.

Overall, the prominence and threat posed by the MEND may very well continue to wane in the coming years. They have made at least the most basic of attempts to reconcile some of their differences via diplomacy, rather than force of arms. This is, of course, an encouraging trend. However, with other groups on the periphery which are beginning to make their presence known more explicitly, the MEND may very soon be the least of Nigeria’s problems. As a major exporter of petroleum, Nigeria is both blessed and burdened with the benefits and accompanying troubles. It seems unlikely that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons can be eliminated in the country, as the region as a whole may never be stabilized.

Current State, Theory, Literature

The current state of the illicit arms trade can perhaps best be described as in flux. As long-established customer bases have eroded following the end of the Cold War and stocks from the collapsed Soviet Union demanded new buyers, markets have shifted to less traditional locales and customers. This is not to say, however, that long-time customers are not still active in these markets. Rather, laws of supply and demand have taken force in order to help introduce goods into new markets where they may not have been so sought after in years past. This dichotomy is illustrated by the three insurgent groups presented here; while FARC and LTTE have engaged in illicit markets for decades, MEND is a relative newcomer to the scene. The emergence of these new customer bases has helped the illicit markets to survive economically lean times, if ever there are any for such an industry.

To better understand how the black and gray markets have flourished it is important that their history be understood. As the focus of this study is the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, market histories of the latter half of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first century are of most vital importance. Prior to the 1950s, the illicit trade was mostly limited to colonial powers which often sought to arm non-state groups who were friendly to their colonial masters. Following World War Two as the colonial era began to wind down, the focus of colonial powers such as the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Portugal turned towards ensuring that post-colonial governments would be remain friendly and open to future ties, especially economically and militarily. As a result, white market aid began funneling into conflict zones in Africa and Southeast Asia in particular.¹⁸

As the globe was separated into First-, Second- and Third-Worlds, the bi-polar adversaries of the Cold War hoped to channel arms to friendly proxies in Africa, where numerous countries were heaving off the yoke of colonialism and turning towards independence. In order to ensure that these new countries remained friendly to the United States or the Soviet Union, each of the superpowers established arms trading networks with local groups. Though these trades were ostensibly legal, they were carried out covertly in order to provide some semblance of neutrality on the part of the originating party (U.S. or U.S.S.R.) and give at least the slightest impression that the outcomes of the wars they funded were to be determined only by the actual combatants.

Naturally, only the most naïve of observers would have believed that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were uninvolved in these regional conflicts. In fact, entire networks had to be created to fund procurement of arms, arrange their legitimate transfer to an authorized end user, then continue their journey on into the hands of the ultimate beneficiaries. These networks soon evolved into what Michael Bourne refers to as “micro-economies,” that is complex economies dedicated solely to a single product type being provided by a small group of providers to a similarly sized group of recipients.¹⁹ The term micro-economy is something of a misnomer, however, as the intricacies of these economies are truly anything but micro. Subset economies

¹⁸ For the purposes of this discussion, arms markets in support of rebel and counterrevolutionary groups in Central America (CONTRAs, Sandinistas, etc) are not covered. While the existence of such markets is hardly in dispute, their overall impact on the groups studied herein was minimal. However, in cases such as Iran-CONTRA when a larger geographical overlap is evident, further discussion is warranted and should be included in future research.

¹⁹ Michael Bourne, *Arming Conflict: The Proliferation of Small Arms*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

and secondary illicit markets sprang up in support of nearly every aspect of the illicit trade. Front companies were created to provide logistical support (i.e. Air America), individuals were recruited to act as couriers, manufacturers were paid to look the other way, corrupt officials in strategic ports had to be bribed via non-official channels, and a veritable army of forgers creating false shipment and licensing documents had to be funded and maintained. The illegal trade in counterfeit and forged End User Licenses (key to the appearance of legal arms trading), became a cottage industry in its own right. And in some cases, just as profitable. The most important apparatus in this covert supply chain were the actual shipments and the End User Licenses (EUL).

It is also this shipment phase of the arms market activity that is most prone to interruption. A startling example of this was the 2008 hijacking and capture of the Ukrainian ship the *Faina* by Somali pirates off the coast of Somalia.²⁰ The *Faina* was carrying 33 Russian T-72 tanks and “a substantial quantity of ammunition.”²¹ Granted, T-72 tanks may prove marginally more difficult to turn around and deploy by the pirates or offer for sale on illicit markets, this incident demonstrates the vulnerabilities of the arms trade. At any step along the way, these are merely hard goods which can be taken by force if necessary. Much like any other good with considerable cash value, small arms and light weapons are susceptible to theft, as a considerably more economically viable alternative to actually paying for them.

On the surface, the physical movement of arms may seem to be among the simplest issues to negotiate within the SALW trade. However, it has historically proven to be much the opposite. Parties involved on the ultimate ends of the trade (supplier and end user) establish a set of requirements vis-à-vis what goods are to be traded under what terms. The actions within this chain are often much more complex. Front companies, that is companies established in false names or created for the sole purpose of facilitating the trade, are relatively easy to construct. Among the most popular forms of these front companies are shipping companies, which are used to carry out the transport of goods.

²⁰ *Faina* was under contract by the Ukrainian government, sailing under a Belize flag, and destined for the port of Mombasa, Kenya. The ship’s crew of 21 was captured and released following ransom payment.

²¹ BBC News; “Somali pirates seize 33 tanks;” September 26, 2008; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7637257.stm>

The problems that arise surrounding these companies and their goals can be most easily described as transparency issues. While neither party to the trade (nor any party, as there are often more than two) wishes its activities to be fully transparent, they are, in reality, held hostage by the individuals and groups through which the arms must be transshipped. For example, a shipment of U.S. made arms bound for UNITA rebels in Angola cannot be simply shipped directly to them. Instead, they must be shipped to another party which is then expected to carry out final shipment. During the 1980s, arms transfers to UNITA rebels were often shipped legally to government buyers in Zaire or Liberia, wherein corrupt officials could be bribed to allow their transport on to UNITA. By shipping to government officials, the U.S. was able to provide and obtain legal End User Licenses, as the arms were ostensibly bound for the national armies.²²

Transshipment of arms via multiple ports, countries and parties added further layers of complexity to the trade. Evidence indicates that transshipment was among the most important means by which the LTTE obtained arms from their suppliers. Arms destined for the LTTE were often transshipped through the Tamil Nadu region of India. At the time, elements of the government of India were friendly to the LTTE movement in Sri Lanka²³. As its name suggests, Tamil Nadu was home to a large number of ethnic Tamils in India, with deep ethnic ties to their counterparts in Sri Lanka. This type of ethnic connection was most beneficial to the LTTE, though of less importance to FARC or MEND.

The FARC, however, is and was no stranger to obtaining arms via transshipment from neighboring countries. In particular, the FARC was known to receive arms from sources in Peru. These SALW were legal transfers to the government of Peru originating from Jordan.²⁴ Once the arms were in Peru, it was merely a matter of time before they found their way either directly into Colombia or even overland into Brazil, north to Venezuela and then ultimately on to Colombia. Overland smuggling routes in South America are well documented and highly active even to this

²² Bourne, p. 123

²³ "RAW: India's External Intelligence Agency;" Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder; November 7, 2008; <http://www.cfr.org/india/raw-indias-external-intelligence-agency/p17707#p4>

²⁴ The ultimate originator of these arms may or may not have been the Jordanian government proper. Similarly, the fact that the arms were transferred out of Peru does not necessarily indicate that the government of Peru was implicit in the trade. It is possible that arms were in fact shipped on to FARC by an individual or group within the Peruvian military complex.

day²⁵. The tri-border region, or “triple frontier” created by the convergence of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil is among the most active smuggling corridors in the western hemisphere.²⁶

In some cases, establishment and employment of private companies offered a further level of opacity to the trade. Private companies could be hired by national governments to provide some sort of service, while their true intention was to allow these companies to carry out trades on their behalf. A hypothetical circumstance might be thus: a private firm is contracted by the government of Burkina-Fasso to provide port security and container searches. By virtue of this granted power, the company could be expected to allow illicit cargo to be unloaded at dock without passing necessary inspections or proper declarations of the cargo or its ultimate destination. In some cases this could be as simple as turning a blind eye to incoming containers and merely “waving through” at customs or inspection stations.

Theory

When discussing an issue such as conventional and small arms proliferation, theories abound as to how the existing systems work, how they interact with each other, and why such systems exist in the first place. This brief section of the paper will discuss three main theories relating to the arms trade: classical realism, liberalism and the rather recently developed “new war” theory.

While attempting to fit three unique groups and situations into a single theoretical framework, it can be difficult to match all to a single theory. Countless theories have been created, debated, discarded and resurrected over the centuries, all in somewhat vain attempts to reconcile seemingly disparate groups and situations under a common theory. For the purposes of this paper, three general theories will be discussed, in addition to a discussion of the groups within the framework laid by 19th century philosopher Jon Stuart Mill. Mill’s various methods of classifying and analyzing phenomena are worth mentioning, in particular his methods for comparing groups experiencing similar phenomena and similar circumstances.

²⁵ Miryekta, Cyrus “Hezbollah in the Tri-Border Area of South America,” United States Army Combined Arms Center – Center for Army Lessons Learned, newsletter 11-15, February 2011

²⁶ Boote, John “A Criminal Haven: The Tri-Border Area of South America,” tracc.gmu.edu

Mill's Method of Difference infers that changes to an underlying event or thing should have a corollary effect on the final phenomenon being studied. In the context of this study, it can be deduced that changes to the supply chain of illicit SALW should have some noticeable effect on the abilities of the insurgent groups who rely on those supplies. For example, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the market was perceived (somewhat erroneously at first), to have been flooded with SALW. As a result, it would be logical to see marked increases in activities of groups who were now able to access these stores. However, as we have demonstrated, this was not exactly the case.

By a similar note, his Method of Similarity posits that if two otherwise different groups appear to have only a single characteristic (or a very small subset thereof) in common, in this case access to illicit markets, then it can be inferred that it is that single characteristic which drives their ability. In this way, it can be theorized that three groups in completely different circumstances and in far-flung geographical areas which generally share only one common characteristic (illicit market access), are able to persist primarily *because* of access to those illicit markets.

Third, and one of the most recently developed theories relating to conflict and instability is the so-called "New War" theory. This theory, postulated by Mary Kaldor, focuses on the cause of conflicts not on a state-on-state basis, but more so on low-intensity conflicts, civil wars and insurgencies.²⁷ In addition, the theory points to conflicts within states rather than between them. In particular ethnic diversity, sociopolitical inequality, class systems and the like are demonstrated causes of these new wars. Relating especially to this paper, New War theory addresses the targeting of civilians and non-combatant targets by insurgent and non-state groups as a primary mean of carrying out their combat campaigns. As such, the New War theory is perhaps most applicable to this study.

While these theories each have merit, at least one other theory warrants mentioning. The "Fourth World" theory, applied to conflict and warfare, addresses the issue of intrastate conflict as a result of groups that may have been folded into a state somewhat against their will, and therefore forced under that state's rule. This theory is especially applicable in cases of

²⁷ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2007), 25

nationalist struggles such as those of the Irish Republican Army (under forced British rule) or the *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA, Basque nationalists under French and Spanish rule). Generally speaking, this theory can only be properly applied to the LTTE, as an ethnic minority subjugated under Sri Lankan rule following the end of British colonialism on the island.²⁸

Given available information and context, Mill's Method of Similarity appears to best fit the three disparate groups studied here. Access to illicit markets was not the driving factor behind the creation of these insurgent groups, nor was it necessarily an initial source of motivation. However, given the extent to which these groups were (and are) able to persist, illicit market access is undoubtedly the most important contributing factor to their historical military successes and their future endeavors.

As anti-SALW regimes and policies are implemented around the world, both by sovereign nations as well as international bodies, Mills Method of Similarity would infer that these groups (and those of their ilk), should face increasing difficulties in survival, as their supply lines are cut off. History shows, though, that when an illicit market is closed in a country or region, another, parallel market often takes its place without missing a beat. Considering this, the theoretical framework for identifying how and why these groups are able to continue to be a threat is unclear. A combination of multiple theories is perhaps best in this case.

Literature

When approaching a thorough academic study such as this, the availability of quality sources cannot be underestimated. To begin with, this paper must include as much relevant information and background on the international arms trade, the black and gray markets as well as the nature of insurgency in general. Among the most important literature on these topics will be a number of international agreements and treaties governing the arms trade. Also, theoretical discussions on how the black and gray markets are operated, sustained and accessed by groups will be included. By comparing the literature about the trade with literature on the individual

²⁸ Not discussed though worthy of mention is the generalized Conflict Theory most often associated with the works of Karl Marx. This theory can be simplified as a basic conflict between the "haves and have-nots." While this theory may have some validity in the context of the MEND's petroinsurgency, the fact that the theory is overly broad and vague led to the decision to exclude it from this study.

insurgent groups being studied this paper will gain a clearer picture of what role the black and gray markets play in arming insurgencies.

Secondly, the paper must include relevant literature on each of the insurgent groups being studied. The selection of the three groups was made, in part, in order to assure that sources would be both numerous and readily available. Each of the groups that will be studied has considerable documentation relating to them, including academic journal articles, newspaper and magazine articles, books and more. Each of these types of sources will be used and cited throughout the study. The literature cited below represents only a small sampling of the total literature available.

First, the paper must familiarize readers with a number of treaties and agreements which govern the arms market. These agreements and treaties are designed to keep in check the flow of weapons and goods to authorized buyers, and prevent their transfer to unintended buyers. Any list of such agreements would necessarily include the European Union's Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, a guideline for the arms industry operating within the EU. Also of vital importance is the Wassenaar Agreement, a more detailed agreement in effect and signed by thirty-two nations worldwide. Other sources which will be included here are United States Code rules that apply to the arms industry and trade in the U.S. as well as similar statutes in the United Kingdom, including the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) list of military items that require export authorization.

Among the most important and informative sources on the international arms trade is the eponymous *The International Arms Trade*, by Rachel Stohl and Suzette Grillo.²⁹ The text includes a comprehensive but easily understood description of the state of the arms trade today. The focus is primarily on the legitimate, legal trade, though there is discussion of the illicit trade. Stohl and Grillo lay a detailed framework for better understanding of the topic, especially for those readers who may not be too familiar with the issue. As a primer, the book brings quality analysis, thoughtful insight, and well-explained basics of how the arms trade operates, and perhaps more importantly, how it came to be the way it is today.

²⁹ Rachel Stohl and Suzette Grillo, *The International Arms Trade*, (Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press, 2009), 1

While Stohl and Grillot's book presents the arms trade in its generality, Michael Bourne's *Arming Conflict* offers considerable more detail as to how the trade and the market play into the arming and perpetuation of conflict worldwide.³⁰ Most relevant to this study was Bourne's inclusion of data on sub-topics such as covert arming of insurgent groups, weapon spread and global and regional market dimensions. In addition to his book, a number of Bourne's articles published elsewhere will be referenced, including "Controlling the Shadow Trade" and "Netwar Geopolitics: Security, Failed States and Illicit Flows".³¹ The latter is quite specifically focused on the illegal arms trade and its role in the international security arena.

Literature relating more to the illicit trade specifically is also quite extensive. Among the literature gathered so far is Thomas Jackson's article entitled "From Under Their Noses: Rebel Groups' Arms Acquisitions and the Importance of Leakages from State Stockpiles."³² In this work, Jackson argues that while globalization has perhaps opened new external markets to groups in search of weapons, it is more commonly found that *internal* sources are preferred. That is to say that insurgent and rebel groups are more likely to acquire weapons from stockpiles within their own country than from external markets. Included in this are secondary transfers by corrupt officials, capture of weapons from defeated enemies, and thefts from government stockpiles.

Along similar lines is Aaron Karp's articles "The Rise of Black and Gray Markets."³³ In it, Karp's primary argument holds that while the black market certainly exists, access to and preference for it are rather limited. It is his assertion that the gray market is likely to be much stronger in most cases, based on a relatively simple economic model. Weapons may be available on the black market, but given the fluidity, limited resources and imminent danger involved, goods purchased on the black market are often to be found at considerable monetary mark-ups. Karp holds that the idea of purchasing assault rifles, for example, at a 500% mark-up makes no sense to insurgent groups that are probably operating on strict budgets with little room for such

³⁰ Michael Bourne, *Arming Conflict: The Proliferation of Small Arms*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

³¹ Michael Bourne, "Controlling the Shadow Trade," *Contemporary Security Policy*, 32, no. 1, 215-240, (2011)
Michael Bourne, "Netwar Geopolitics: Security, Failed States and Illicit Flows," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (2011)

³² Thomas Jackson, "From Under Their Noses: Rebel Groups' Arms Acquisitions and the Importance of Leakages from State Stockpiles," *International Studies Perspectives* 11(2010), 131-147

³³ Aaron Karp, "The Rise of Black and Gray Markets," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science – The Arms Trade: Problems and Prospects in the Post-Cold War World*, 535 (Sept. 1994): 175-189

extravagances. Instead, these groups are more likely to find gray market sources from which to make their purchases.

On a related topic, Denise Garcia's "Arms Transfers beyond the State-to-State Realm" offers a similar viewpoint to Karp's.³⁴ This article discusses the means by which arms and goods are transferred via legitimate state-to-state sales and trades. More importantly to our research, though, it delves into the issue of transfers by supposed end-users (that is the state making the purchase) to third parties for whom the weapons and goods were never intended. These secondary sales to unauthorized buyers are believed to account for much of the illegal trade in arms. Garcia points to documented examples such as Chinese transfers of weapons to the North Vietnamese government, which then funneled the weapons to the non-state Viet Cong.

For Future Study

Naturally no paper or study of this type of issue can be all-encompassing. Limitations on time, funding and access to parties involved make extensively detailed study difficult, if not outright impossible. The issue should not be expected to fade from prominence or simply go away, though. To believe or hope for such a development would be not only naïve but also dangerous. Therefore, the issue must continue to be studied in the future, in a process and method that is as close to ongoing as possible. As demonstrated, constant geopolitical shifts, national allegiance changes and in-group leadership shake ups can all have dramatic effects on the issue. There are numerous issues which must be studied in the future, including (but not limited to) those described below.

First, as the technologies involved in research, development and manufacture of small arms and light weapons advance, the types of arms which may make their way to illicit markets can also be expected to fluctuate. Enormous production scales of AK-47 variant rifles during the second half of the twentieth century made that weapon the most prominent on nearly every battlefield in the world. This simple steel and wood rifle may soon give way to cheap, easily produced polymer weapons such as the American M-16 style rifle. Technologies used to manufacture those weapons have evolved and associated costs have plummeted.

³⁴ Denise Garcia, "Arms Transfers beyond the State-to-State Realm," *International Studies Perspectives* 10 (2009): 151-186

Phillip Killicoat's 2007 study of illicit arms prices "Weaponomics: The Global Market For Assault Rifles" found prices for AK rifles as low as \$12.³⁵ However, as low intensity conflicts throughout the world continue to fester, these prices may soon become a thing of the past. The proverbial "seller's market" will more likely drive prices up as the demand for small arms and light weapons increases. The most likely scenario appears to be one much like the Cold War alignment process, in which state sponsors will funnel arms to the gray market via proxies, to keep friendly forces well-armed while avoiding the political trappings of official sponsorship. This type of activity is already being seen in places such as Syria, Libya and the Horn of Africa.

At the other end of the technology spectrum is the persistent threat posed by homemade weapons. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have caused more bloodshed during a decade of war in Afghanistan than just about any other weapon type. These homemade bombs are cobbled together using materials found in the locale of the bomb maker, which makes predicting their future nearly impossible. In one region bomb makers may use government donated high explosives, in another the preferred source may be stolen artillery shells, gutted of their explosive material or simply buried beneath a street attached to a pressure-sensitive trigger. In addition, craftsmen in small workshops the world over can produce their own small arms using melted down metals obtained from scrapped cars.³⁶ These workshop guns may be time intensive to produce and generally untrustworthy, but they are cheap, effective and their manufacture can never be stamped out. Many of the same shops (or even caves, as has been seen in the past) can also be utilized to maintain and repair other small arms. It is not uncommon to find century-old Enfield rifles on the battlefields of Afghanistan, holdovers from British colonial rule, held together by the sheer will of local craftsmen.³⁷

As the Global War on Terror continues to slog along in its second decade, the spread of terrorism and terrorist groups does not appear to be ebbing. Future studies of arms markets will

³⁵ Killicoat, Phillip *Weaponomics: The Global Market for Assault Rifles*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4202 (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2007)

³⁶ "The Gun Markets of Pakistan;" Vice News; <http://www.vice.com/the-vice-guide-to-travel/the-gun-markets-of-pakistan>

³⁷ Dunnigan, James "Afghans Rediscover the Lee-Enfield;" Strategy Page; January 22, 2009 <http://www.strategypage.com/dls/articles/Afghans-Rediscover-The-Lee-Enfield-1-22-2009.asp>

need to include focuses on the spread of the threat posed by these groups as well as the arms and goods they procure and the markets from which they obtain these arms and goods. Will particular groups narrow their focus to particular weapons? How will new types of weapons find their niche in the overall order of battle for insurgent groups? What groups will be early adapters and how will that help or hurt their cause?

In addition, research will necessarily need to focus on the spread of the underlying ideologies espoused by these groups. Globalization and the growing interconnectedness among people that has resulted thereby have helped radical and revolutionary ideologies spread further and faster than at perhaps any other time in history. Increased internet connectivity, social networks, Facebook, Twitter, VKontakt, and the like have helped groups of all kinds to spread their messages and their work. Whereas in decades and centuries past these groups may have had to rely on couriers and parcels to deliver information, they now do so by satellite phones, encrypted emails and internet chat rooms.³⁸ Printed communiques in newspapers have been replaced by YouTube videos and live Tweets of insurgent activities.³⁹ Each of these new tools could potentially be utilized in a group's efforts to reach beyond local and regional markets and acquire goods and weapons to which they may not have had access previously.

Fortunately for those who wish not only to study but interdict this activity, the spread of these technologies and networks can also be used to track groups, learn their activities and gather valuable intelligence on them. Data mining of social networks is already a common practice not only within governmental departments, but all the way down to the private sector. This dearth of information can be aggregated and sorted so as to provide important data on parties being studied. Various governments have already begun compiling vast stores of data on individuals, groups, companies and parties both inside and outside of their countries. Integration of this data may someday provide the so-called "missing links" that aid in preventing terrorist attacks, or at the very least, tracking those responsible after the fact.

As history has shown, the cessation of action by one group, whether by force, political integration, dissolution or otherwise, is often followed by the emergence of another such group.

³⁸ The now-famous case of the Osama Bin Laden courier is an excellent example of the drawbacks of the "old" system. But that does not mean that those systems or methods have been discarded entirely.

³⁹ Russell Goldman "Terrorists, Cops Battle on Twitter During Kenya Mall Attack;" ABC News; September 24, 2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/fighting-raged-inside-kenya-mall-war-words-escalated/story?id=20360124>

When the Irish Republican Army (IRA) drew down its arms and joined the political processes in the United Kingdom, a new faction known as the Real Irish Republican Army (Real IRA) emerged first as an idea and eventually as a new armed group. The FARC evolved from a non-violent political party into the fiercest counter-governmental force in Colombia. Various non-affiliated groups in Yemen banded together to form a single, cohesive group that came to be known as Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP). Added to this must be studies of the new breed of terrorist-style groups such as transnational criminal organizations and drug cartels. Each has its own goals, means and methods, though the underlying markets will likely be similar if not identical. Future studies of small arms markets will need to address these new emerging groups.

By having a starting point such as has been described here, future studies may be able to predict where new markets may develop, based on past activity with known groups. Markets themselves are ever evolving as well. These evolutions must be studied and better understood in the future. Only by understanding these evolutions, their causes, their effects, can an accurate picture be painted of the state of the markets. In addition, thorough understandings of the current states of markets are absolutely vital to any effective form of predictive work on the future of markets.⁴⁰

As general products of supply and demand, it is logical to believe that markets will emerge and grow in geographical regions wherein conflicts are known to exist. In the future, these “hot spots” should be studied to understand what characteristics they may have that could be driving the markets. The African Maghreb region may see an influx of shoulder launched anti-aircraft missiles in order to counter the activities of the French Air Force in Mali. Central American drug cartels may seek to import plastic explosives to use in car bombs, in much the same way Colombian cartels did in the 1980s. Jungle fighters in Indonesia may increase the market demand for polymer assault rifles which can withstand that country’s heat and humidity better than wood-stocked AK-47s. Other areas of concern would likely include the Arab Peninsula, Horn of Africa, Caucasus and Central Asia, Southeast Asia and China. Countless

⁴⁰ Of course there will always be phenomena that skew such research, such as unpredictable events like the end of the Cold War via the collapse of the Soviet Union. Proper understanding of the markets as they exist at any given time should give general guidance as to their futures even following such anomalous events. As with the end of the Cold War, many of the parties involved in the markets remained the same, only under different national flags, with different political ends, or simply with different names.

possibilities exist for nuances within markets in different regions. More focused studies may be conducted in order to address individual characteristics of these markets, while all-encompassing studies may be all but impossible.

Most important to any future study, though, will be continued and consistent updating of literature and information on the issue. This must include not only academic studies such as this, but also government reporting databases (compiled by United Nations, U.S. State Department, Interpol, etc). Non-governmental organizations such as START and the Federation of American Scientists provide valuable data for this type of research, though their continued existence is contingent on private funding. Another benefit of globalization and increased connectivity is that groups such as these are better able to share their data among others who may be doing similar work. Sharing of data and results (whenever possible) will continue to add insight and input to the issue.

Conclusion

A classic theory on warfare maintains that weapons do not win wars, men do. While not discounting such long-held and traditional beliefs, the proliferation in small arms and light weapons has certainly made those men more capable of waging their wars than perhaps ever before. Increased access to a growing number of stockpiles has allowed the illicit market to grow unchecked, while the international community labors extensively to limit it.

As access to these illicit markets has grown, the number of individuals and non-state actor groups with access has grown simultaneously. When the issue of globalization is taken into account, with its increased international trade and ease of access to not only goods and materiel but also vast stores of weapon-related information via the internet, the problem is only compounded. By increasing access, illicit traders on both ends of the transaction allow groups that may have been previously unable to obtain such weapons to take part in the trade. By doing so, allies and enemies alike are better able to arm themselves and thus take continue their fight into the foreseeable future. The second rule of a gunfight is to always bring friends with guns.

As previously stated, the nature of warfare and the means by which it is executed has changed dramatically in the course of the past half-century. These changes have put exponentially more power in the hands of smaller groups wearing no recognizable uniform or

fighting under no recognizable flag. These groups have been able to maintain fighting posture and their overall threat to state-level, regional and even international security by intelligently utilizing the various tools available to them, including the illicit market for weapons.

The role played by the arms market as a crucial aspect of the study of international security cannot be understated. The overall effect that the global and regional black and gray markets have on the furtherance and sustainment of insurgencies is an issue that should be studied in every aspect possible. Ideally this paper will be able to gather as much information and insight into the issue as possible in order to reach valid and valuable conclusions on the subject. Numerous resources will be tapped, experts consulted and interviewed, piles of data pored over and analyzed. In the end, this work will be thorough and detailed, in both its quantitative measurements as well as its qualitative assessments. . By undertaking such an in-depth and exhaustive inquiry into the state of these markets and how non-state actors utilize them future policy makers, planners and warfighters will be able to act more efficiently and effectively in countering the proliferation in small arms and light weapons.

The overall conclusions of this study can be summed up in the following table (Table 1). This table addresses the five key factors intended to be discussed. This brief snapshot of the groups studied as well as their general characteristics gives a glimpse of the factors studied and the role that each factor plays in the continued (or historical, at least) threat posed by the groups. The assertions made with regard to these factors are based on the research done for this paper. Future studies may reveal previously unknown information about the groups which could change some of the conclusions reached. In addition, any of the groups studied may cease to be, re-emerge, shift focus or evolve into entirely new groups, which would impact the overall dynamics of the results of this study. As we can see, FARC is not only the oldest of the groups, it also appears to have the most favorable factors for success (five positive factors). At the other end of the spectrum, the relatively young MEND appears to be the most limited (two positive factors).⁴¹

⁴¹ State Sponsorship: FARC – Venezuela, LTTE – India (via ethnic Tamil populations therein); MEND has suspected ties to local and regional political groups, though no well-documented ties could be found which would make determination absolute. Similarly, MEND has acted sporadically in opposition to other insurgent groups such as Boko Haram, which may indicate some type of agreement or alignment with factions of the Nigerian government.

Group	Known State Sponsor?	Alignment?⁴²	Legitimacy	Existence of Illicit Markets in Region	Access to Extra-regional markets
FARC	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
MEND	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
LTTE	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES

Table 1 – Study Factors

The hope is also that this paper will serve as something of a primer for future study of future illicit markets. One thing that should be clear to see is that the market has a considerable amount of fluidity and flexibility, and is able to adapt to changes in supply and demand as well as changes international sentiment and law relating to the subject. This should not serve as the final word on the subject, by any means. Rather, its theories and ideas should be adapted to future studies, while maintaining the basic principles of the economics, ideologies and realities of the illicit market and the actors involved in it at all levels.

⁴² Although both the FARC and LTTE were initially aligned with political groups (Colombian Communist Party and Tamil secessionist parties and India), they were not ultimately supported throughout their existence. The FARC spun off from the Communist Party and the LTTE essentially surrendered what little Indian support they had with the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991

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