



Fixers, Super Fixers and Shadow Facilitators: How Networks Connect
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Introduction

The multi-billion dollar illicit trade of commodities (from cocaine to blood diamonds, weapons and human beings) has many complexities, from creating or extracting the product to moving the product to international markets to delivering payments. The return cycle is equally complex, including the types of payments used to acquire the commodities, from cash to weapons and other goods the seller may need. This cycle relies on a specific group of individuals who act as facilitators in connecting different facets of the criminal and/or terrorist networks of state and non-state actors. This chapter addresses this crucial role of a cohort of actors -- “fixers,” “super fixers” and “shadow facilitators”¹ -- in empowering social networks that operate within illicit commodity chains.

These commodity chains often span significant geographic space and require multiple steps, in multiple countries to be successfully completed. One individual, or even one criminal and/or terrorist group, seldom has the capacity to operate throughout this complex landscape. Instead they must turn to specialized individuals, often primarily motivated by economic incentives rather than ideology, who can navigate specific links in that chain. These individuals are the crucial links or bridges between different worlds that do not often overlap. The often isolated and relatively unsophisticated procurers of commodities (coca leaf growers and cocaine laboratory operators in the Chapare, Bolivia; warlords controlling lucrative mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo), do not have direct access to the markets for those commodities in Europe, the United States and elsewhere. Those who can move the products often have no direct access to the money laundering, procurement and transportation networks for the profits for those commodities. The payments include not only cash, but sophisticated weapons, chemicals or other material that need to be transported back to the source region or elsewhere.²

The chapter will look at two case studies of the “fixer” chain, using a model that has applicability in many parts of the world in helping to understand illicit networks. The value of identifying these players is that this serves to identify crucial points of vulnerability in disrupting multiple criminal activities simultaneously, because the super fixers and shadow facilitators usually deal with more than one criminal network at a time. Eliminating them or removing them from operations can not only wound several networks at one blow but offer insight into

the operations of multiple networks from an intelligence perspective. Evidence of this is that of the 43 foreign Terrorist Organizations listed by the Department of State, the DEA states that 19 have clearly established ties to Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs), and many more are suspected of having such ties.³ As discussed below, in many of these cases the networks rely on the same super fixers and/or facilitators.

The first case is the relationship of Russian weapons trafficker Viktor Bout with Charles Taylor in Liberia, and the commodities for weapons trade in a highly criminalized state that had a significant impact on the conflicts of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The second is the enduring Cold War network of weapons supplies and suppliers consisting of Communist Party operatives in El Salvador and the FARC guerrillas in Colombia, now primarily a commercial rather than ideological enterprise. This network enjoys growing support from the rapidly criminalizing states of the Bolivarian states in the region, primarily Nicaragua and Venezuela.⁴

The term “criminalized state” refers to states where the senior leadership is aware of and involved – either actively or through passive acquiescence – on behalf of the state in transnational criminal enterprises, where Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) groups are used as an instrument of state power and where levers of state power are incorporated into the operational structure of one or more TOC groups. The benefits may be for a particular political movement, theocratic goals, terrorist operations or personal gain of those involved, or a combination of these factors.⁵ Few states are wholly criminalized. Most in this category operate along a continuum. At one end are strong but “criminal” states, with the state acting as a TOC partner or an important component of a TOC network. On the other end, are weak and “captured” states, where certain nodes of governmental authority, whether local or central, have been seized by TOCs, who in turn are the primary beneficiaries of the proceeds from the criminal activity -- but the state, as an entity, is not part of the enterprise.

This differs in important ways from the traditional look at “weak” or “failed” state, which assume that a government that is not exercising a positive presence and fulfilling certain basic functions (public security, education, infrastructure) is not a functioning state. In fact, such states can be highly efficient at the functions they choose to perform, particularly if they choose to participate in an ongoing criminal enterprise. By choice, their weakness exists in the fields of positive state functions that are traditionally thought of as essentially sovereign functions, but not in other important areas.

One can understand the complexities of illicit trade best by viewing the pieces or nodes as a part of a series of recombinant chains with links that can merge and decouple as necessary, rather than by looking at the purchase or exchange of commodities for cash or other goods as a series of individual transactions.⁶ Many illicit goods pass through the same physical space, same border crossings, and same specialized groups of handlers for specific jobs. A ton of cocaine or a load of AK-47 assault rifles or 100 Chinese being smuggled to the United States will move

through the same pipeline, and the same chokepoints when moving from Latin America across the southern border of the United States.

The flow of goods and cash for those goods is not linear but circular (figure 1). Nor is the flow usually limited to a single commodity. In Liberia for example, timber and diamonds flowed out through interrelated networks to different markets, while weapons, uniforms, food and fuel flowed back through a trusted group of super fixers.

In the cocaine trade, the drugs flow from South America to markets in the United States and Europe, often through the same channels as illicitly moving human beings, contraband, and other drugs such as marijuana. The return flow brings bulk cash, weapons, precursor chemicals, aircraft and multiple other products necessary to keep the business functioning.

The transient and sometimes fungible nature of these pipelines means they are often in flux and easily rerouted when obstacles arise in any part of the chain.⁷ This makes them almost impossible to track at ground level in real time. Investigations usually offer a snapshot of what has taken place rather than a moving picture of how they are evolving.

Figure 1. Circular flow of goods and cash



The “Fixer” Chain

Illicit networks often develop in times of conflict or in the absence of a positive state presence,⁸ where multiple porous borders and disdain for the often predatory and/or corrupt state have led to smuggling routes that have often endured for generations. These historic routes, in turn, engender the accompanying “cultures of contraband”⁹ —particularly in border regions— that often lead to violence and the acceptance of illicit smuggling activities as a legitimate livelihood. For example, one of the primary routes to move cocaine across Honduras and into El Salvador for onward movement to Mexico is controlled by the *Cartel de Taxis*, named for the town of Taxis, where some of its leaders come from. Its operational territory along the Honduran border includes the once famous “*ruta del queso*” or “cheese route” used to smuggle Honduran cheese into El Salvador at the turn of the 20th century, a smuggling route that has endured for one hundred years.¹⁰

Within specific geographic spaces, usually controlled by non-state armed actors producers or extractors of illicit commodities rely first on “local fixers,” often traditional local elites or outsiders with significant business holdings in local areas, to supply the criminal state or non-state armed actor with connections to the market and financial networks needed to extract and sell the commodity out of the area of production.¹¹ For example, in Sierra Leone the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) relied on Lebanese diamond traders near their zones of control and authorized by Charles Taylor in neighboring Liberia, to collect and pay for the diamonds that were mined.¹² Demonstrating the enduring nature of these networks, the structure of this relationship between local miners and Lebanese diaspora diamond smuggling networks was described by Graham Greene in his book The Heart of the Matter, published in 1948.¹³

These local fixers knew the terrain and how to operate in conditions that would have been extremely hostile to outsiders, but knew little beyond the world they inhabit. So they, in turn, had to rely on “super fixers” to move the diamonds to the international market. As will be examined below, Taylor had a small core of trusted super fixers who could move in the broader world, operate bank accounts and seek out connections, but who did not have the capacity to actually provide and move the products he wanted.

For this they rely on international “shadow facilitators” who can move weapons and commodities, launder money, and obtain the fraudulent international documents such as End User Certificates, passports, business registrations, shipping licenses and other needed papers..

Many of the local social networks, are surprisingly fungible *and* durable because they offer services critical to any incoming regime and because they are usually non-ideological in their network building. Driven largely by economic imperatives, the groups have proven skillful at adapting to new political realities and exploiting them. They flourish even in times of violence because they offer services that are essential in moving the commodities to market and

ensuring in return that the regime (or non-state actors) acquires the resources to enrich itself and maintain its government (or non-state) hold on power in specific regions. These geographic regions necessarily include the “honey pot” regions, or regions in which illicit goods like cocaine or heroin can be produced or commodities like diamonds and timber can be extracted. That honey pot is crucial for financing the ongoing conflict and for geographic control.¹⁴

Although usually not broadly known outside of their local areas of operation, the internal balance of political power often shifts when a state or armed group loses control of their local fixer networks or when the networks challenge the state for power. These networks are often made up of diaspora communities who remain at least somewhat separate from the local population and maintain strong ties to their homeland. While they often cannot aspire to direct political power in the countries where they live, they often, because of their external contacts, control key import-export sectors of the economy and have a range of contacts that are coveted and necessary to the regime.¹⁵

For example in Liberia many of the most powerful businessmen, particularly from the Lebanese diaspora, who were supportive of the traditional political elites from the earlier regimes worked for Samuel Doe after his 1981 coup, despite his regime's execution of many of the traditional political leaders.¹⁶ From Doe, they migrated to the Taylor structure in the early 1990s, once it was clear that he was going to be the most powerful force in the civil war and post-civil war era. Taylor kept the businessmen's loyalty until, in their rational cost-benefit analysis, they concluded that a change in government would benefit their own interests.

This adaptability of the transnational networks is one of the reasons why post-conflict expectations of deep social and economic changes are often left unmet. Post conflict regimes, particularly if controlled by forces that were traditionally non-state armed actors, frequently have little governance experience and seldom have the knowledge or experience to operate without the help of these networks, or simply find it easier to rely on them than to antagonize them.

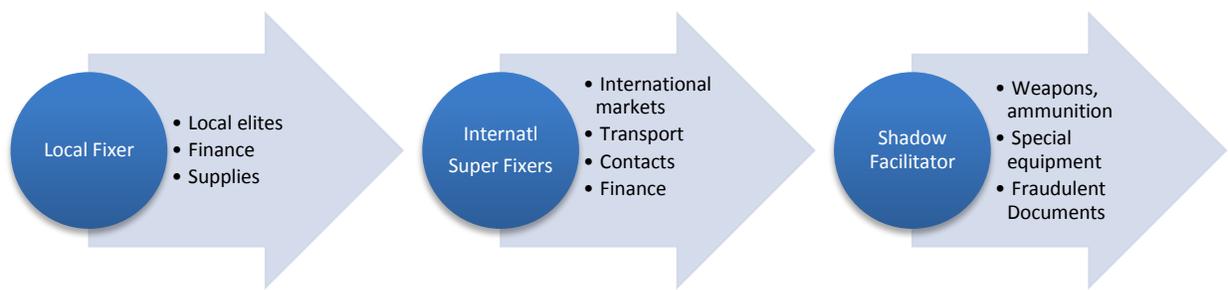
The U.S.-led occupation of Haiti in 1994 to restore President Jean-Bertrand Aristide provides a clear example. The occupying forces contracted almost exclusively with the families and networks that funded Aristide's initial ouster because they had the port, fuel and housing facilities that the United States needed for its forces. With the new regimes hamstrung by their dependence on the old network, the promised economic reforms never materialized.¹⁷

But local elites do not survive in isolation. Rather they are—or become—part of a complex web of relationships that reach both backward (to the armed actor) and forward (to the international market). While local fixers can make themselves indispensable to the new regime and know how things operate internally in the region during or after conflict, they often lack the expertise to supply the honey pot controller, either a criminalized state or non-state armed actor, with the more specialized services required.

While a local node of the network may know how to deliver rice or oil in adverse conditions or how to navigate the world of local militias, the same node may not know how to acquire a shipment of AK-47 assault rifles. Those who can provide those rifles from the international market and who are adept at breaking embargos or moving through the “gray market” arms bazaars want to sell the weapons but often do not know the lay of the local land and political structures.

It is in this niche that one finds a small group of super fixers (figure2) who operate as intermediaries among these different groups, across multiple countries, at a handsome profit. These individuals—through family ties, successful smaller ventures in the past, personal charm, or a combination of these attributes—have ties to numerous elites across the region and to suppliers from the outside world. In the case of Liberia, many of these individuals were identified and can be traced. While this small group knows how to access local power brokers and how to make contacts in certain difficult markets, they may not themselves have access to the specialized markets of weapons, helicopters, and the necessary paperwork or banking facilities to make deals happen.

Figure 2. The “fixer” chain



A separate but sometimes overlapping ring of actors I refer to as shadow facilitators then comes into play to acquire the specialized equipment and paperwork on the world's gray or black market, create or activate shell companies, and make the logistical arrangements to sell the commodity on the international market. The paperwork includes end-user certificates, which allow a government to appear to legally purchase weapons that may end up elsewhere; front companies to handle freight loading and delivery; offshore bank accounts to make the money untraceable; falsified flight routes to justify the time in the air; and air operations certificates showing that aircraft are certified airworthy.

Few of these facilitators work exclusively in illegal activities. Of particular interest was Viktor Bout, a Russian weapons merchant convicted in November 2011 on multiple counts of attempting to supply a designated terrorist entity with weapons to kill American troops. Yet in previous years his air services were used by an array of governments and institutions even as they denounced his illicit activities. These included the U.S. government in Iraq, the U.K. government for aid work in Africa, and the UN for its peacekeepers and World Food Program operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and elsewhere.¹⁸

Bout is also noteworthy because his contacts spanned such a wide array of conflicts. Not only did he supply warlords and criminal states with illicit arms shipments, but also terrorist networks from the Taliban in Afghanistan to the FARC in Colombia, and Moamar Gaddafi in Libya to Hezbollah in Lebanon.¹⁹

In sub-Saharan Africa he relied on several super-fixers, depending on his geographic location. One of those relationships will be described below. In United Arab Emirates, other local fixers and super fixers helped him establish a presence in the free trade zone, repair facilities for his aircraft and housing for his crews.

The Taylor Liberian Fixer Networks

Charles Taylor of Liberia, currently standing trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague for crimes against humanity, offers a useful example of the symbiotic relationship among armed groups, a criminalized state and those in the fixer chain.²⁰

Several individuals had overlapping roles in different parts of the fixer chain. Among them were local fixer Gus Kouwenhoven; super fixer Sanjivan Ruprah; and shadow facilitator Viktor Bout operating along the lines in the model outlined above.

All have been named by the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission as responsible for economic crimes.²¹ They have also been named in various UN Panel of Experts reports and placed on the United Nations Security Council travel ban and asset forfeiture lists for being “threats to regional peace.”²² Because of the extensive documentation available on this network, it offers one of the most comprehensive looks at how the fixer chain works.

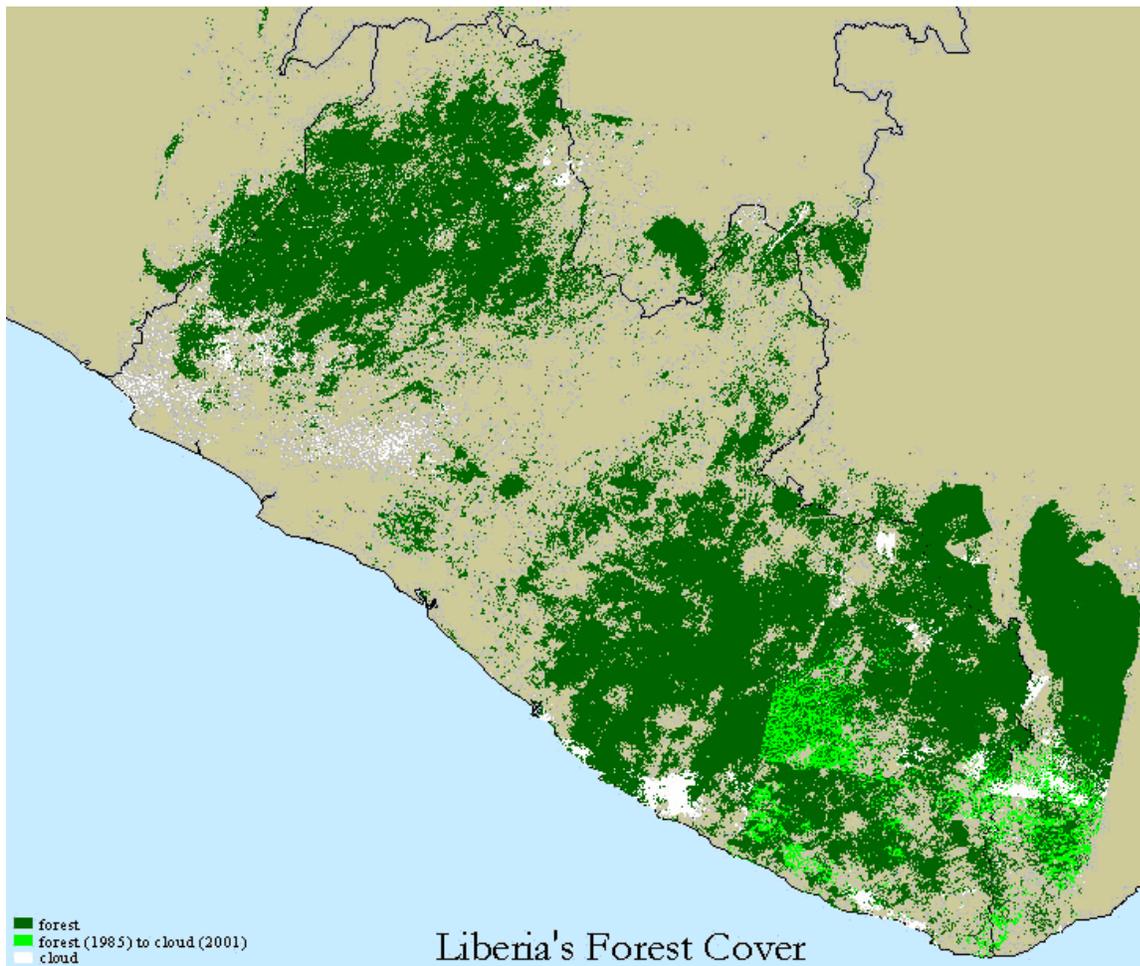
As a rebel warlord, Taylor gained control over forested territory along the country’s borders and used commodities to fund his insurgents, the NPFL, against the Liberian state (1989–1997). After he became president in 1997, and managing a remarkably efficient resource-extraction system, he continued to use revenue from commodity sales and bribes in exchange for concession allocations to fund his war against subsequent insurgencies against his rule (1997–2003).

From December 1989 to 1997, Taylor waged a brutal and destructive war against the Liberian government and other warlords. In 1991 he helped to establish and train the RUF, a rebel group and proxy army in neighboring Sierra Leone. From the start he largely funded and pursued the wars through a desire to control the region's lucrative natural resources, including timber, diamonds, iron ore, and rubber, though his two main sources of income were diamonds and timber.



Taylor always relied on illegally extracting and selling commodities to fund his armed efforts, and viewed control of natural resources as a means of funding "Greater Liberia," a territory he saw encompassing the bauxite region in neighboring Guinea and the diamond fields of neighboring Sierra Leone.²³

Within a year of launching the insurgency, Taylor controlled most of the vital economic regions of Liberia and was taking in millions of dollars to buy weapons and pay his troops.²⁴ In 1996 the U.S. government estimated that from 1990 to 1994 Taylor had "upwards of \$75 million a year passing through his hands," largely through selling timber and other commodities.²⁵



Map 2: Liberia's forest cover. The most lucrative diamond mining region overlaps with the forest region along the northwestern border with Sierra Leone.

Even after winning elections in 1997 Taylor was, in effect, not president of a country but was controlling what Robert Cooper has called the "pre-modern state," meaning territory where

... chaos is the norm and war is a way of life. Insofar as there is a government, it operates in a way similar to an organized crime syndicate. The pre-modern state may be too weak even to secure its home territory, let alone pose a threat internationally, but it can provide a base for non-state actors who may represent a danger in the post-modern world ... notably drug, crime and terrorist syndicates.²⁶

This “pre-modern state” did not preclude the development of sophisticated illicit networks. Indeed one could argue that the absence of functioning state institutions greatly empowered these networks because almost the entire basis of control depended on them.

The extensive financial, military, and political networks that Taylor established before and during his time as president were impressive. His network for acquiring weapons ranged from the Balkans to Central America, from Bulgaria to the Islamic Republic of Iran. His inner circle of financial advisers, local fixers, international facilitators, sanction busters, and weapons purchasers included American, Belgian, Dutch, Israeli, Lebanese, Libyan, Russian, Senegalese, and South African citizens. His access to these international criminal networks greatly increased the resources with which to prolong the carnage that his troops and his allies could inflict on the region.²⁷

Taylor, as Doe before him, relied on the same essential economic groups partly, as William Reno states, because "they were so integrally connected to the exercise of violence." These groups had been both privileged in their economic operations and cut out of the political power structure. This "selective access to rights to profits," which Taylor could arbitrarily revoke if he felt like doing so, kept the franchise operators constantly beholden to Taylor.²⁸

Beginning in the early 20th century, Lebanese businessmen became the region's primary diamond buyers from the alluvial mining regions, largely because they were willing to run the risk of living in the bush and transporting their valuable cargo to diamond markets, primarily in Antwerp, Belgium. They also knew how to move in the world of trade and finance, skills that few Liberians had at the time. Most of the mining activity took place in Sierra Leone, but as the war there gained momentum the financial center of power for the trade shifted to Monrovia.

The Lebanese family and clan structure in West Africa has endured in part because its members work hard to retain ties to their homeland and in part because, as outsiders to both the local indigenous cultures and the elite Liberian-American culture²⁹, they banded together for the creation of reliable business networks. Much of this revolves around import and export of commodities. For example, in Liberia diaspora businessmen handled the importation of petroleum products, rice, vehicles, and chicken, as well as the diamond trade and much of the timber industry.

Lansana Gberie noted, in one study of the Lebanese diaspora in West Africa, their role:

*The Lebanese in West Africa, even those born there, remained and continue to remain intensely aware of events in Lebanon ... in Lebanon they are referred to as 'Africans'. Their loyalty, however, remains with the Middle East, and many have made regular contributions to factions in that region's never-ending conflicts.*³⁰

Gus Kouwenhoven, a Dutch national, operated a logging company known as TIMCO on land controlled by Taylor's NPFL insurgents during Liberia's civil war, from which Taylor's forces profited directly. This put him in the category of local fixer and local elite.³¹ Although not a member of the Lebanese diaspora, Kouwenhoven was part of the broader though small community of long-time foreign residents who had carved out different economic niches in the chaos of the nation's civil wars. When Taylor became president, Kouwenhoven, who also owned the Hotel Africa in Monrovia, was given a privileged position in Taylor's financial circle.

On July 28, 1999, Kouwenhoven established the Liberian Forest Development Company in Monrovia, which was owned by two other companies, OTC and Royal Timber Corporation (RTC). While OTC's owners were listed as three Indonesian–Chinese businessmen, RTC's owners were listed as Kouwenhoven and Taylor.³² Robert Taylor, the president's brother, as head of the Forest Development Authority in 1999 granted the company a logging concession of a little over 3 million acres, the largest concession by far in Liberia. OTC tripled Liberia's timber exports from 1999 to 2000 and committed numerous violations by cutting undersize trees and by clear cutting.³³

Taylor did not hide his interest in OTC, publicly dubbing the company his "pepperbush," a local expression meaning something that is dear to one's heart and profitable.³⁴ Liberians joked that OTC stood for "Only Taylor Chops," because of the fierceness with which he defended the timber company and attacked those who questioned its operations.

The OTC concession was illegal because it was not approved by the Liberian legislature as required by law. When the concession was called into question, Taylor simply had the legislature pass the Strategic Commodities Act of 2000, which granted him the sole power to give and maintain concessions over all the nation's natural resources.³⁵

This is a central point in the relationships between local fixers and the government or insurgent warlord where they operate, whether state or non-state: while providing that governing body with economic benefit, the fixer gets privileged access that enhances his own economic standing. It is a symbiotic relationship.

The way the OTC concession was granted shows an additional benefit of dealing with a criminalized state that is not subject to the rule of law or to normal checks and balances among the different branches of government. Operators received the concession and began to operate with no fear of legal sanction, even though the concession was against Liberian law. When it became politically necessary to legitimize it, Taylor simply wrote a new law—certain to be

passed by a legislature he controlled—in such a way as to legalize virtually anything he did with any commodity on behalf of the Liberian state.

Various investigations by the UN, nongovernmental organizations, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have established that OTC and other logging companies both paid and fed Taylor's militias and former combatants and helped Liberia evade UN sanctions. These militias, hired as security forces for logging companies, were often commanded by notorious NPFL commanders and many of their members were charged with serious human rights abuses.³⁶

These crosscurrents illustrate the costs for local businessmen in dealing with a criminal state. While reaping the benefits of such a system, they are also subject to its demands, which can change and become more excessive over time. There is no legal recourse.

Kouwenhoven during his subsequent trial in Holland described Taylor's escalating demands for OTC to pay more cash and provide other services.

I did have contact with Taylor about OTC matters. ... If he needed anything he would call me...Most of the time it had to do with financial requests. After we had concluded the OTC agreements and he was prepared to give concessions to OTC to make it a profitable company, we were asked to make an advance payment of \$5,000,000 for future taxes.... So he would make all kinds of requests. Apart from that he asked us to send a number of tractors to his farm, or he said that he wanted a road, that he needed electricity and he would ask me if I could advance the money. He also simply asked for payments.

He called for me and told me that it was understood that the Liberian government and OTC had an official tax relationship. The regular government budget was not sufficient and they would ask businessmen for financial aid. He would receive 50% of royalties I received from OTC.³⁷

Kouwenhoven later explained to a Dutch newspaper that:

The president is like the top God. If it turns out that he needs money at the end of the year to pay his civil servants he just calls at various businesses and asks them for an advance on next year's tax. And in that way you help pay the civil servants' salaries. This is not a 'Kouwenhoven system'—everyone is involved in it.³⁸

Despite this increase in demands for cash and services by Taylor, Kouwenhoven remained directly active in the weapons-for-commodities pipelines. While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission documented at least eight weapons shipments—six by ship and two by air—it is the air shipments that most clearly show how local fixers such as Kouwenhoven, with Taylor's approval, reached out to transnational super fixers such as Sanjivan Ruprah, who in turn tapped into the world of shadow facilitators.

Ruprah, a Kenyan of Indian descent, was one of the people documented as directly receiving payments for weapons from Borneo Jaya Pte Ltd., OTC's parent company.³⁹ Ruprah, who continues to operate, is a well-known super fixer in Sub-Saharan Africa and has surfaced repeatedly in criminal investigations across Africa.⁴⁰

Ruprah had worked with several private military companies and mining interests in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and was married to the sister of a leader of one of that country's main Rwandan-backed military factions. Described as an "arms broker" in numerous UN reports⁴¹, Ruprah had also directed the Kenyan office of Branch Energy, a company that in the early 1990s negotiated to obtain control of the diamond-mining rights of Sierra Leone. Branch Energy, through Ruprah, also introduced Executive Outcomes to the government of Sierra Leone, which used them to fight the RUF because its own forces were in such disarray. Executive Outcomes, made up largely of white, former special forces operatives from South Africa and Zimbabwe, pioneered the idea of hiring themselves out as mercenaries in exchange for extensive concessions in natural resources such as diamonds and timber.⁴²

Ruprah, by his own admission, met Taylor in the mid-1990s in Burkina Faso, before Taylor was president. He was seen more frequently in Monrovia from 1999, often staying at Kouwenhoven's Hotel Africa, where Taylor housed his privileged guests. Recognizing how valuable his services were (or could be), in 1999 Taylor issued Ruprah a diplomatic passport under the name of Samir M. Nasr. He also gave him the title of Deputy Commissioner of Maritime Affairs.

When Taylor was in desperate need of weapons and scrambling to acquire them from a variety of external sources, he, through Kouwenhoven, asked Ruprah for help, particularly in obtaining attack helicopters.⁴³

Through his business dealings in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ruprah had made a connection that put him in touch with the next circle—the shadow facilitators.

His contact was Viktor Bout, who was already active in Angola, the DRC, Rwanda, South Africa and elsewhere. Dubbed the "Merchant of Death" by a senior British official following the discovery that Bout was arming multiple sides of several conflicts in Africa, Bout had made his mark by building an unrivaled air fleet that could deliver not only huge amounts of weapons but also sophisticated weapons systems and combat helicopters to armed groups. From the mid-1990s until his arrest in Thailand in 2008, Bout, a former Soviet intelligence officer, armed groups in Africa, Afghanistan, Colombia, and elsewhere.⁴⁴

Ruprah introduced Bout into Taylor's inner circle, a move that fundamentally altered the supply of weapons to both Liberia and to the RUF in Sierra Leone by giving both groups access to move sophisticated weapons, in greater volume and at lower cost, than they had previously had. One of the favors Ruprah and Taylor offered Bout was the chance to register several dozen of his rogue aircraft in Liberia.

Ruprah had taken advantage of operating in a criminal state and used his access to Taylor to be named the Liberian government's Global Civil Aviation Agent Worldwide to further Bout's goals. This position gave Ruprah access to the aircraft and possible control of it.⁴⁵ "I was asked by an associate of Viktor's to get involved in the Aviation registry of Liberia as both Viktor and him wanted to restructure the same and they felt there could be financial gain from the same," he has stated.⁴⁶

Bout was seeking to use the Liberian registry to hide his aircraft because the registry, in reality run from Kent, England, allowed aircraft owners to obtain online an internationally valid airworthiness certificate without having the aircraft inspected and without disclosing their name.⁴⁷

Within months mutually beneficial transactions were flowing. As the UN Panel of Experts reported, on August 26, 1999, OTC's parent company paid \$500,000 for weapons deliveries to Taylor. The money was paid to San Air, a Bout company operating in the Sharjah, United Arab Emirates "through Sanjivan Ruprah."⁴⁸ In this circular pipeline, the timber flowed out and the cash flowed in, then the cash flowed out as the weapons flowed in.

The personal relationship between Ruprah and Bout, and then the two with Taylor, was a crucial part of the network that was built on a level of personal trust as well as mutual financial interests. One of the things repeatedly said about Bout's operations was how he personally closed the deal with the heads of state or warlords who he dealt with.

The benefits, like the goods and profits, flowed in a circular manner. Taylor, operating a criminal state, could offer more than just cash benefits to national and international facilitators. The local fixer could acquire premium concessions, control of a port, and official protection in a violent and uncertain context. He, in turn, could bring in a super fixer who, besides cash and official protection, could acquire a diplomatic passport, which allowed him to travel around the world without being searched or detained.

The super fixer could then use his access to both Taylor and the international facilitator to bring a beneficial relationship to all involved. Finally, the international facilitator could enter a lucrative market and access an aircraft registry that allowed him to hide his aircraft from scrutiny for several years. Indeed so vital was Bout to Taylor that he dubbed the arms merchant another of his pepper trees—untouchable. "Taylor would say that Bout was the root of his pepper tree, and without the root the tree dies," said one Taylor confidant.⁴⁹

Ramiro, the FARC and the Bolivarian Revolution

On March 1, 2008, Colombian military and police forces launched a lightning strike into neighboring Ecuador, targeting a senior command post of the FARC guerrillas⁵⁰ just inside Ecuadoran territory. While the attack caused a significant diplomatic rupture between Ecuador and its Bolivarian allies and Colombia, it achieved its main objective, killing Raúl Reyes⁵¹, the FARC's second in command and international spokesman. In addition to killing Reyes, the raid

yielded an unexpected dividend – several hundred gigabytes of data stored on computers and flash drives. The contents were an historic archive of FARC internal and international communications going back almost a decade, offering unprecedented insight into the internal workings of the secretive group. Interpol, given access to the hard drives, verified they had not been tampered with by Colombian officials.

The documents outline the support the FARC has received from the Chávez government in Venezuela, including financing, joint business operations and the establishment of political front groups to defend the FARC internationally. They also show the FARC gave several hundred thousand dollars to the presidential campaign of Ecuadoran president Rafael Correa and had direct dealings with senior members of Correa’s national security cabinet. The archives also divulge the FARC’s dealings with members of Evo Morales’ government in Bolivia, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, and various other non-state armed actors in Latin America and Europe.⁵²

Also found among the documents in the cache were e-mails among different FARC commanders about the help they were receiving in acquiring sophisticated weapons from an individual identified as "Ramiro" in El Salvador, identified by Salvadoran, Colombian intelligence and U.S. officials as the nom de guerre of José Luis Merino.⁵³

Merino was a senior commander of the Communist Party (PC) during El Salvador’s civil war (1980-1992). The PC was the smallest of the five organizations that made up the Marxist-led Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (*Frente Farabundo Martí Para la Liberación Nacional-FMLN*). While the other four factions of the FMLN demobilized after the war, a significant cadre of the PC did not, maintaining arms caches, safe houses and relationships with non-state armed groups around the world to this day.⁵⁴

As one report on the documents noted,

*The (FARC) documents also show that the FARC has an international support network stretching from Madrid to Mexico City, Buenos Aires to Berne. Merino, the documents suggest, is a key link in that international chain, the FARC’s man in El Salvador, and one of the architects of an arms deal that includes everything from sniper rifles to ground-to-air missiles.*⁵⁵

It is this network where one can again see the vital role played by the fixer chain in moving illicit weapons to a designated terrorist non-state group deeply involved in global cocaine trafficking.

Merino’s PC is now the dominant faction of the FMLN coalition. The FMLN-backed candidate Mauricio Funes, won the presidency in 2010. The former guerrilla group’s electoral triumph, the first since the signing of historic peace accords in 1992 that ended the 12-year conflict, was widely viewed as a key milestone in national reconciliation.

Merino, a former urban commando trained in Moscow, had maintained a low public profile during the campaign, but emerged as a key power broker in the new government. His leadership position is derived largely from being the point man for receiving and distributing subsidized gasoline shipments from Venezuela's Hugo Chávez. The sale of the gasoline, given by Venezuela at a steeply discounted price then resold at party-owned gas stations, is a major source of income for the FMLN.

While Merino has steadfastly refused to discuss the issue of weapons sales to the FARC, Funes said he had spoken to Merino about the e-mails and had been assured Merino had no involvement in weapons sales to the FARC.⁵⁶

During the war Merino commanded an elite urban commando unit that carried out several spectacular hits, including the 1989 assassination of attorney general Roberto García Alvarado. The assassination was carried out by men on a motorcycle who strapped an explosive to the roof of García's car, killing him while the assassins sped away unhurt.⁵⁷ The Salvadoran Truth Commission, which investigated the worst human rights abuses of the civil war as part of the peace agreements, did not name Merino but concluded the assassination was carried out by the armed branch of the PC.⁵⁸

The spectacular rise in crime immediately after the war, particularly kidnappings, led to deep concern. A major investigation of post-conflict armed groups in 1994 found that the "illegal armed groups" operating after the war had "morphed" into more sophisticated, complex organizations than had existed during the war, and that, as self-financing entities they had a strong economic component, as well as political aspect, to their operations.⁵⁹

This PC group commanded by Merino is suspected of carrying out several high-profile kidnappings at the time, including the 1995 abduction of 14-year-old Saul Suster, the son of a prominent businessman and politician. Suster was kept in a tiny underground water tank for almost a year before being freed in exchange for \$150,000.⁶⁰ While Merino, who was widely reported to have planned the operation, was never charged with the crime Raul Granillo, a former senior commander of the PC and Merino aid, along with one of his PC former lieutenants, were convicted of the crime. Granillo escaped arrest and remains at large.⁶¹

The relationship between Merino and the FARC appears to have spanned many years, going back to the 1980s when the PC was in charge of the FMLN's international relations and Merino regularly met with the FARC as members of the broad international Marxist revolutionary front.⁶²

After the war the relationship appears to have revolved around mutually beneficial economic arrangements, many of them illegal. Glimpses of the broader network involved in these activities can be seen in the Reyes documents, although in many cases the final results of the discussion are not known. While the overall results of the efficiency of the network are

inconclusive, the documents clearly show the role of the FARC fixers interacting with Merino, the super fixer able to reach into the outside world. In this case the identity of the shadow facilitator or facilitators is not clear, but Merino was reaching out to others to carry out the deal, in one case at least, to a group of Australians with significant access to sophisticated weapons and means of transporting them.

In one 2003 e-mail, Reyes suggests the FMLN and FARC carry out a joint kidnapping for \$10 million to \$20 million in Panama to raise money for the FMLN's 2004 electoral campaign, although there is no record of such a kidnapping having occurred. The profits, the e-mail said, would be "split down the middle."

A 2004 missive describes a meeting of the FARC leadership with "Ramiro" and a Belgian associate in Caracas, Venezuela to discuss the FARC and FMLN obtaining Venezuelan government contracts, through front companies, to operate waste disposal and tourism industries. Interestingly, Merino then acquired a major interest in a major waste disposal company, Capsa, which operates in 52 Salvadoran municipalities.⁶³

In another e-mail, Reyes recounts a 2005 meeting with "Ramiro" who reportedly boasted that he had gained full control of the FMLN and was reorienting the party toward "the real conquest of power."

But the e-mail that caused the most concern in El Salvador is from September 6, 2007, written by Iván Rios, a member of the FARC secretariat, to other secretariat members. In it he lays out the multiple negotiations under way for new FARC weapons, including the highly coveted surface-to-air missiles:

- 1) Yesterday I met two Australians who were brought here by Tino, thanks to the contact made by Ramiro (Salvador). We have been talking to them (the Australians) since last year.*
- 2) They offer very favorable prices for everything we need: rifles, PKM machine guns, Russian Dragunovs with scopes for snipers, multiple grenade launchers, different munitions...RPGs (rocket propelled grenades), .50 machine guns, and the missiles. All are made in Russia and China.*
- 3) For transportation, they have a ship, with all its documents in order, and the cargo comes in containers. The crew is Filipino and does not know the contents, with the exception of the captain and first mate. They only need a secure port to land at.*
- 4) They gave us a list of prices from last month, including transportation. They offer refurbished Chinese AKs that appear as used, but in reality are new, and were not distributed to the Chinese army, which developed a new line of weapons, for \$175. AK 101 and 102, completely new, for \$350. Dragunovs, new with scopes, \$1,200. RPG launchers for \$3,000 y grenades for \$80. They say they have a thermobaric grenade that destroys everything in closed spaces (like the bombs the gringos use against Al Qaeda*

(sic) hideouts) for \$800. Chinese missiles (which they say are the most up-to-date at this time) with a 97 percent effective rate, \$93,000, and 15,000 for the launchers. They say it is very easy to use, and they guarantee the training. If one of these missiles were identified inside Colombia it would cause them a lot of problems, but if, on the side they include old Russian SA-7 (shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles) it would serve to confuse, mislead or at least give the impression that the guerrillas have weapons of different types, not just Chinese. The ammunition for AKs is 21 cents a round, but if we buy more than 3 million rounds, the price drops to 9 cents a unit.

4) (sic) They promised to give us an exact price on other material. Two months ago they sent me a price list (very favorable, for example, a used .50 machine gun for \$400, new for \$3,000), but I didn't take the list to the meeting place.

5) They do the purchasing without the need of a down payment, but when the merchandise is on the ship, they want 50 percent. When it is delivered they collect the other 50 percent. The money moves through a bank in the Pacific, in an independent country where they can move money without any questions being asked. Once the cargo is shipped it can take one month, or a month and a half to arrive in Venezuela. They said we could have a representative, it doesn't matter what nationality, on board the ship while it sails to its final destination.⁶⁴

The above missive clearly lays out the different roles of the fixer community. The FARC leaders contact a trusted colleague who brings in extra-regional actors who have access to the desired product as well as ways of moving the payment through international channels. As the final paragraph shows, the expected destination was to be to an allied nation where few questions would be asked.

Subsequent e-mails on November 12 and November 23 indicate that the Australians arrived in Venezuela to consummate the deal and Ríos said a person identified as "El Cojo" (The Cripple) was in charge of paying the first quota and logistics for whatever was to be delivered.

While the end result of what was delivered is unknown, as we will see, this network appears to be part regional pipeline moving illicit products, connecting parts of the PC to the FARC and elements of the former Sandinista intelligence structure in Nicaragua that remain active. Daniel Ortega, the leader of the triumphant Sandinista revolution in 1979, was re-elected president of Nicaragua in 2006 and again in 2011.

Since at least the early 1990s Ortega has maintained a cordial relationship with the FARC leadership. The alliance was first formed in the 1970s, when Ortega led the Sandinista revolution that succeeded in taking power in Nicaragua in 1979. Throughout his first presidency (1979-1990) Ortega was at the center of revolutionary movements active throughout Latin America, including the FARC, in part because Nicaragua was the one state besides Cuba in the hemisphere where a Marxist revolution triumphed.

In 1998, Ortega, as the head of the Sandinista party, awarded the Augusto Sandino medal, his party's highest honor, to Manuel Marulanda, the commander-in-chief of the FARC, while visiting FARC headquarters in Colombia. Various e-mails in the Reyes documents are addressed to Ortega directly and indicate that, at least until he returned to the presidency, he maintained regular contact with the FARC leadership.⁶⁵

In 2000 Ortega attended an international convention in Libya, organized by Gaddafi for "political parties, revolutionary movements, liberation movements and progressive forces."⁶⁶

This meeting was significant because senior leaders of the FARC were also in attendance. The timing is important because it was at a time when the FARC was seriously beginning to look to purchase surface-to-air missiles in order to have more effective defenses against the U.S.-supplied helicopters that were beginning to arrive in Colombia for the police and military as part of Plan Colombia.⁶⁷

A Sept. 4, 2000 e-mail from Reyes' computer, addressed to Gaddafi and signed by Reyes, offered a bold alliance and laid out the strategy:

Comrade Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, Great Leader of the World Mathaba, receive our revolutionary and Bolivarian greeting. We want to express our gratitude for the invitation that you gave us to visit your country and the hospitality you showed our delegation during the recent Summit of Heads of State, Governments, Parties and Organizations of the World Mathaba. We want to let you know that the FARC continues its struggle for the conquest of political power to govern Colombia...As a member of the (FARC) high command I have been asked by the commander in chief to request from you a loan of 100 million dollar, repayable in five years. Our strategic objectives and circumstances of our war oblige us to seek weapons with greater range to resist our enemy's advances. One of our primary needs is the purchase of surface-to-air missiles to repel and shoot down the combat aircraft. Our strategy is to take power through the revolutionary armed struggle. (emphasis added)⁶⁸

Apparently Gaddafi was not immediately responsive to the request, and so the FARC tried to follow up on the request, this time through Daniel Ortega. In a Feb. 22, 2003 note "From the Mountains of Colombia," that was hand-delivered to Ortega, Reyes requested help:

Dear compañero Daniel, this is to send you my warm and effusive revolutionary greeting, and that of commander Manuel Marulanda. We also are writing to see if you have any information on the request we made to our Libyan comrades, which was made in writing in the name of the secretariat of the FARC, and which I signed. The Libyans said they would answer us, but we have not yet received any information...While we were in Libya they explained to us that the political responsibility for carrying out Libya's policies in the

region were in the hands of Daniel Ortega. For that reason, we are approaching you, in hopes of obtaining an answer.

I also want to reaffirm to you that the primary priority of the FARC, in order to achieve greater success in its military operations against enemy troops, in order to take political power in Colombia, is acquiring anti-aircraft capabilities, in order to counteract the efficiency of the Colombian and U.S. aircraft against our troops.⁶⁹

It is not clear what the result of the discussions were. According to documents obtained by La Prensa, Nicaragua's most important newspaper, the key envoy between Ortega and the FARC is Luis Cabrera, the Nicaraguan ambassador in Cuba. Cabrera is a nationalized Argentine who has maintained a long friendship with Ortega, dating back to the Sandinista revolution.

Citing other documents from Reyes' computer, the newspaper said FARC leaders had met numerous times with Cabrera, who promised the rebels any help within Nicaragua's ability. He even offered to let the FARC establish a link on the Sandinista website in order to make it easier for people to get in touch with the organization. Reyes wrote to the FARC representatives in Havana not to forget to "visit the Nicaraguan ambassador with great frequency. Take him documents and express our appreciation for the stimulating statements of *comandante* Ortega."⁷⁰

In 2008, following the bombing of the Reyes camp, Ortega granted political asylum to Nubia Calderón, a leader of the FARC's International Commission, who was wounded in the attack. In addition, FARC emissary Alberto Bermúdez was issued a Nicaraguan identity card by a member of Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council. Bermúdez, known as "*El Cojo*," is believed by Salvadoran and Colombian authorities to be the person mentioned above who received the FARC weapons shipment arranged by Merino.⁷¹

In this case, the lines among the different types of fixers are harder to draw, as is the case in most chains, where roles are seldom as clearly delineated as they are conceptually.

While the identities of all the players in this case are not known, the model is useful to understand the overall structure. Merino, with his international contacts, falls into the super fixer category, while the FARC leadership falls more into the local fixer category. The shadow facilitators are not well known, although it is clear from Reyes documents that Chávez in Venezuela has played that role with the FARC and in hosting Merino's meetings with the Australian providers and offering his services in setting up businesses and other opportunities that gave the FARC a broader international reach. Nicaragua's Ortega also played a key role as a shadow facilitator, empowering both the PC and the FARC to carry out business through Ramiro's structure.

Conclusions

In order for transnational criminal pipelines and networks to function, different parts of the network need to communicate with each other and be able to supply mutually beneficial services and commodities to each other. The fixers, or links, between different parts of the network, provide this vital service.

Local fixers, often members of the local elites and/or entrenched diaspora communities, help move the illicit product from production in conflict zones, criminalized states or territories not governed by the state, to the internal market. Super fixers, those with broader international connections, can then move the product to the international market and provide some financial services. However, they rely on shadow facilitators to acquire the more complex and sophisticated equipment, often weapons or high technology components, that are not readily accessible through normal market channels.

The shadow facilitators usually deal with more than one criminal or terrorist network, providing rare and valuable services to multiple actors who may even be in conflict with each other. As the Viktor Bout case shows, if one provides good enough services that are highly specialized, one can arm multiple sides of the same conflict and greatly increase one's profits in the process.

Because shadow facilitators' international contacts and structures are so specialized, difficult to replace and operate for multiple groups, targeting them by law enforcement and intelligence communities should be a high priority. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), in particular, has focused on this group. The high profile cases of the Viktor Bout and Monzer al-Kassar,⁷² two of the world's most elusive and powerful brokers in recent decades, show that operations can be undertaken and prosecuted successfully.

The impact in both cases was significant. Viktor Bout's arrest crippled and grounded an air fleet that was supplying weapons, across Africa, including Somalia, and seeking inroads into Latin America. The cost of replacing items outside that network was possible but costly both financially and in time. Almost four years after his arrest (he was convicted in November 2011)⁷³ no one has successfully put the pieces of the enterprise back together. In the Al-Kassar case, the network also collapsed. In both cases, there are indications that other individuals have picked up pieces of the network, but in neither case has capacity emerged to offer anything like the full range of services these two super facilitators did.

However, much of the conventional strategy for combating Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) relies on conceiving of illicit networks as hierarchical organizations with a strong top-down structure. Rather than focusing on the links (individuals providing specific services) mutual usefulness to each other of different small, relatively flat networks that overlap and rely on many of the same specialists, the focus remains on kingpins.

In addition, the focus is almost exclusively on non-state actors rather than also focusing on the role criminalized states also play in empowering these networks, particularly in the world of shadow facilitators.

A more node or fixer-centric understanding of TOC and terrorist networks can help identify and disrupt key elements of the pipelines that often deal with more than one group simultaneously. This means, as was clearly visible in the case of Viktor Bout, that targeting one shadow facilitator disrupted multiple supply chains in which he played a key role. While not eliminating the networks, such targeting makes them far less efficient, disrupts trusted relationships by forcing new actors to meet and interact and raises the cost of the TOCs for doing business. Targeting fixers is not a silver bullet but is one of the most efficient methods for weakening and disrupting illicit networks.

¹ Shadow facilitators" were first used as a term of art by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to describe those individuals deemed to be controlling central points of interaction among drug traffickers and other criminal organizations, such as weapons merchants. See: Michael Braun, "Drug Trafficking and Middle Eastern Terrorist Groups: A Growing Nexus" Presented to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, DC, July 25, 2008.

² For a more extensive look at how this chain operated in the Liberian timber and diamond trades see: Douglas Farah, "Transnational Crime, Social Networks and Forests: Using natural resources to finance conflicts and post conflict violence," *Forests, Fragility and Conflict: Overview and Case Studies*, Program for Forests, World Bank, June 2011, pp. 67-112.

³ Michael Braun, op cit.

⁴ The self-declared Bolivarian states are led by Venezuela under president Hugo Chávez, and include Bolivia under Evo Morales, Ecuador with Rafael Correa, Nicaragua under Daniel Ortega, and several small Caribbean states. This bloc endorses a concept of Socialism for the 21st Century and strongly anti-U.S. positions, while working hard to build a long-term alliance with Iran, China and Russia to replace U.S. influence.

⁵ For a more comprehensive look at the concept of criminalized states see: Douglas Farah, "Terrorist-Criminal Pipelines and Criminalized States: Emerging Alliances," *PRISM Journal*, National Defense University, *PRISM* 2, No. 3, pp. 15-32.

⁶ Douglas Farah, "The Criminal-Terrorist Nexus and its Pipelines." NEFA Foundation. Presentation delivered to U.S. Special Operations Command, Tampa, FL, January 14, 2008. Farah 2008.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The description of "positive" and "negative" sovereignty are drawn from Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, Cambridge University Press, 1990. Jackson defines negative sovereignty as freedom from outside interference, the ability of a sovereign state to act independently, both in its external relations and internally, towards its people. Positive sovereignty is the acquisition and enjoyment of capacities, not merely immunities. In Jackson's definition, it presupposes "capabilities which enable governments to be their own masters" (p. 29). The absence of either type of sovereignty can lead to the collapse of or absence of state control.

⁹ For an examination of the “cultures of contraband” and their implications in the region see: Rebecca B. Galemba, “Cultures of Contraband: Contesting the Illegality at the Mexico-Guatemala Border,” Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University Department of Anthropology, May 2009.

¹⁰ Sergio Arauz, Óscar Martínez, and Efren Lemus, “El Cartel de Taxis,” *El Faro*, May 16, 2011, accessed at: <http://www.elfaro.net/es/201105/noticias/4079/>.

¹¹ Richard Snyder and Ravi Bhavnani, “Diamonds, Blood and Taxes: A Revenue-Centered Framework for Explaining Political Order” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (4): 563–97, 2005.

¹² This description of the diamond for weapons trade is drawn largely from the author's field work in Sierra Leone and Liberia as a correspondent for the *Washington Post*, and the investigations contained in: Douglas Farah, *Blood From Stones: The Secret Financial Network of Terror*, Broadway Books, New York, 2004

¹³ Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter*, Penguin Classics, republished 2004.

¹⁴ See William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Reno 1999, pp. 221–223, for a look at how accidents, luck, and an individual's learning ability all help shape how the armed actor or warlord responds to internal and external factors.

¹⁵ See Snyder and Bhavnani 2005 for a description of how the Lebanese diaspora community in Sierra Leone was both favored in diamond mining and marginalized socially for the regime's benefit and how the balance of coercive power eventually shifted in favor of Lebanese merchants.

¹⁶ Reno 1999, p. 82.

¹⁷ See Douglas Farah, “Haitian Elite Set to Profit From U.S. Presence.” *The Washington Post*, September 24, 1994, p. A4.

¹⁸ Douglas Farah and Stephen Braun, *Merchant of Death: Money, Guns, Planes and the Man Who Makes War Possible*, J. Wiley and Sons, New York, 2007.

¹⁹ Farah and Braun 2007.

²⁰ The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established to try those most responsible for crimes against humanity committed in relation to the war in that country, but not for crimes committed in Liberia. Given Taylor's role in arming and supplying the rebel RUF in Sierra Leone, he was indicted by the court.

²¹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia. 2009. *Title III: Economic Crimes and the Conflict, Exploitation and Abuse*. Vol. 3 of Final Report. Monrovia, pp. 6–9.

²² See UN Security Council 2005a and 2005b. Kouwenhoven was arrested in Holland and convicted in June 2006 on charges of supplying weapons to the Taylor government via OTC in 2000–2003 and sentenced to 8 years in prison. An appeals court overturned the conviction in March 2008. See Agence France-Presse 2008. The Supreme Court, in turn, overturned the appeals court ruling and ordered a new trial, which began in December 2010. See <http://allafrica.com/stories/201012230695.html>.

²³ For a comprehensive look at how Taylor used commodities to fund his insurrection and presidency see: Arthur G. Blundell, “The Financial Flows that Fuel War,” *Forests, Fragility and Conflict: Overview and Case Studies*, Program for Forests, World Bank, June 2011, pp. 113-156.

²⁴ Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*. New York: New York University Press, 1999, p. 90.

²⁵ William Twadell, “Foreign Support for Liberian Factions.” Testimony before the International Relations Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC, June 26, 1996.

²⁶ Robert Cooper, “The Post-Modern State.” In *Re-Ordering the World*, ed. Mark Leonard, 11–20. London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002, p. 18.

²⁷ Coalition for International Justice, *Following Taylor's Money: A Path of War and Destruction*. Washington, DC., 2005.

²⁸ Reno 1999, p. 98.

²⁹ The term Americo-Liberian refers to the former American slaves who settled in Liberia. Most did not originally come from that region in Africa, and they were culturally and linguistically distinct from the native groups already

living in what became Liberia. The Americo-Liberians dominated political and cultural life in the nation. For a closer examination see: Ellis, op. cit.

³⁰ Lansana Gberie, "War and Peace in Sierra Leone: Diamonds, Corruption and the Lebanese Connection." Occasional Paper No. 6. Ottawa: Partnership Africa Canada, Diamond and Human Security Project, 2003.

³¹ Global Witness. *Logging Off: How the Liberian Timber Industry Fuels Liberia's Humanitarian Disaster and Threatens Sierra Leone*. London, 2002, p. 17.

³² Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2009, p. 13.

³³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2009.

³⁴ *The Perspective*.. "Nobody Plays With Taylor's Peppercorn," June 27, 2001, Monrovia, Liberia.

³⁵ Global Witness 2002, p. 17.

³⁶ The most comprehensive documentation of both the human rights abuses and weapons trafficking can be found at Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2009, p. 19; Global Witness 2002; and Douglas Farah, "Liberian Leader Again Finds Means to Hang On: Taylor Exploits Timber to Keep Power," *The Washington Post*, June 4, 2002, p. A01.

³⁷ Republic of Liberia, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Volume 3, Appendices, Title III, Economic Crimes and the Conflict: Exploitation and Abuse, 2009, p. 18.

³⁸ Marian Husken and Harry Lensink, "All This Misery Stems from One Source." *Vrij Nederland*, March 10, 2007.

³⁹ United Nations Security Council. UN Security Council, "Report of the Panel of Experts on Liberia Submitted in Accordance with Resolution 1343 (2001)." UNSC S/2001/1015, October 26. New York, 2001.

⁴⁰ Farah and Braun 2007, p. 156.

⁴¹ The most relevant report is: United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Panel of Experts Pursuant to Resolution 1343 (2001), Paragraph 19, Concerning Liberia," S/2001/1015, p. 92 forward.

⁴² Farah and Braun 2007, pp. 155–159.

⁴³ United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Panel of Experts Pursuant to Resolution 1343 (2001), Paragraph 19, Concerning Liberia," S/2001/1015, p. 92 forward.

⁴⁴ Farah and Braun 2007. In November 2010 Bout was extradited to the United States to stand trial for allegedly planning to sell weapons to a designated terrorist organization. See McGreal 2010.

⁴⁵ United Nations Security Council "Report of the Panel of Experts Appointed Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000), Paragraph 19, in relation to Sierra Leone." S/2000/1195, December 20. New York..

⁴⁶ Ruprah email to author for Farah and Braun 2007, p. 159.

⁴⁷ Farah and Braun 2007, p. 159; UN Security Council 2000a, paras. 142–143.

⁴⁸ UN Security Council 2001, para. 349.

⁴⁹ Farah and Braun 2007, p. 162.

⁵⁰ The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia -- FARC*) are the oldest insurgent group in the Western Hemisphere. Founded in 1964 as an offshoot of Liberal Party militias, the FARC is now considered by U.S. and Colombian officials to be one of the largest drug trafficking organizations in the world. The FARC was designated a terrorist entity by the United States in 1997, a designation ratified by the European Union in 2001. See: FARC Terrorist Indicted for 2003 Grenade Attack on Americans in Colombia," Department of

Justice Press Release, September 7, 2004. accessed at:

http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2004/September/04_crm_599.htm; Official Journal of the European Union, Council Decision of Dec. 21, 2005, accessed at: http://europa.eu.int/eurlex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l_340/l_34020051223en00640066.pdf.

For a more detailed look at the history of the FARC see: Douglas Farah, "The FARC in Transition: The Fatal Weakening of the Western Hemisphere's Oldest Guerrilla Movement," NEFA Foundation, July 2, 2008, accessible at: <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefafarc0708.pdf>. For a look at the details of the raid and a complete analysis of the documentation found in the computers of Raúl Reyes see: "The FARC Files: Venezuela, Ecuador and the Secret Archives of 'Raúl Reyes,'" An IISS Strategic Dossier, International Institute for Strategic Studies, May 2011.

⁵¹ Reyes' real name was Luís Edgar Devia Silva, but he was known throughout his long militancy in the FARC as Reyes. He was the first member of the FARC's general secretariat to be killed in a combat operation after more than four decades of combat.

⁵² "The FARC Files: Venezuela, Ecuador and the Secret Archives of 'Raúl Reyes,'" op. cit. The Colombian government gave IISS, a respected London-based security think tank, complete access to the Reyes files, which they then catalogued, organized and printed. The quotations and references to these documents comes from this work.

⁵³ José de Córdoba, "Chávez Ally May Have Aided Colombian Guerrillas: Emails Seem to Tie Figure to a Weapons Deal," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 28, 2008.

⁵⁴ Author interviews with current and former PC members, San Salvador, September 2011.

⁵⁵ José de Córdoba, "The Man Behind the Man," *Poder 360 Magazine*, April 17, 2010.

⁵⁶ De Córdoba, "Chávez Ally May Have Aided Colombian Guerrillas: Emails Seem to Tie Figure to a Weapons Deal," op cit.

⁵⁷ For details of Merino's alleged ties, see: José de Córdoba, "The Man Behind the Man," *Poder 360 Magazine*, April 2009; Douglas Farah, "The FARC's International Relations: A Network of Deception, NEFA Foundation, September 22, 2008; José de Córdoba, "Chávez Ally May Have Aided Colombian Guerrillas: Emails Seem to Tie Figure to a Weapons Deal," op. cit.

⁵⁸ Belisario Betancur et al, "From Madness to Hope: The 12-year War in El Salvador," Report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador, March 15, 1993, accessed January 26, 2011 at: <http://www.usip.org/files/file/ElSalvador-Report.pdf>

⁵⁹ The investigation was carried out by a special commission formed in 1992, composed of the nation's human rights ombudsman, a representative of the United Nations Secretary General, and two representatives of the Salvadoran government. The commission was formed by a political agreement among all the major parties due to a resurgence in political violence after the signing of the historic peace accords. See: "Informe del Grupo Conjunto Para la Investigación de Grupos Armados Ilegales con Motivación Política en El Salvador," El Salvador, July 28, 1994, accessed November 2, 2011 at: <http://www.uca.edu.sv/publica/idhuca/grupo.html>

⁶⁰ For a more complete look at Merino and the role of the Communist party, both with the FARC and with criminal activities, see: Jose de Cordoba, "Chavez Ally May Have Aided Colombian Guerrillas: Emails Seem to Tie El Salvador Figure to a Weapons Deal," op cit.

⁶¹ Juan O. Tamayo, "Left-Right Distrust Festers in a 'Pacified' El Salvador, *Miami Herald*, November 12, 1997.

⁶² Author interviews with current and former FMLN leaders in San Salvador, El Salvador, September 2011.

⁶³ José de Córdoba, "The Man Behind the Man," op. cit.

⁶⁴ The Reyes documents cited are in possession of the author.

⁶⁵ Following Ortega's disputed electoral triumph in November 2011 the FARC published a congratulatory communiqué lauding Ortega and recalling their historically close relationship. "In this moment of triumph how can we fail to recall that memorable scene in Caguán when you gave the Augusto Cesar Sandino medal to our unforgettable leader Manuel Marulanda. We have always carried pride in our chests for that deep honor which speaks to us of the broad vision of a man who considers himself to be a spiritual son of Bolivar." Accessed at the Anncol website November 18, 2011:

http://anncol.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=695:saludo-a-daniel-ortega&catid=71:movies&Itemid=589

⁶⁶ José de Córdoba, "Ortega's Old Friendships are Liabilities as Election Nears," *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 19, 2001.

⁶⁷ Plan Colombia is a multi-billion dollar program through which the United States has funded the expansion, retraining and arming of the Colombian national police and military. Begun in 1999,, at the end of the Clinton administration, it has continued with bipartisan Congressional support, through the Bush years.

⁶⁸ Letter to Gaddafi, in possession of NEFA Foundation. It can also be seen here: Octavio Enriquez, "Ortega, Puente Entre Gaddafi y las FARC," La Prensa, June 27, 2008.

⁶⁹ Letter to Daniel Ortega, in possession of the NEFA Foundation. It can also be seen here: Octavio Enriquez, "Ortega, Puente Entre Gaddafi y las FARC," La Prensa, June 27, 2008.

⁷⁰ Octavio Enriquez, "Contacto Está en La Habana," La Prensa, June 28, 2008 viewed at: http://laprensa.com.ni/archivo/2008/junio/28/noticias/nacionales/268624_print.shtml In addition to this support, La Prensa reported that a well-known Nicaraguan painter, Genaro Lugo, helped a senior FARC official identified as Alberto Bermudez, obtain Nicaraguan identity papers, something Luga admitted to doing. This is interesting because the incident was described in Reyes papers. See:

http://www.laprensa.com.ni/archivo/2008/junio/29/noticias/nacionales/268787_print.shtml

⁷¹ United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008: Nicaragua*, April 30, 2009, accessed at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/49fac6b5c.html> and author interviews.

⁷² For a look at the story of Monser al-Kassar's long career as a shadow facilitator and weapons dealer, as well as his arrest and conviction, see: Patrick Radden Keefe, "The Trafficker: The Decades-long battle to catch an international arms broker," *The New Yorker*, February 8, 2010.

⁷³ Noah Rosenberg, "Guilty Verdict in Russian Arms Trial," *New York Times*, November 2, 2011.