

Organised Crime and Security Threats in Caribbean Small Island Developing States

Original article

Organised Crime and Security Threats in Caribbean Small Island Developing States: A Critical Analysis of US Assumptions and Policies

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Abstract: The prevailing attitude of international legal institutions is that drug trafficking remains a dominant organised crime, which presents a major security threat to all nations, including the US. While US assumptions and policies on organised crime and its control are embodied and codified by international laws which reflect the US war on drugs from the 1970s onwards, there is a dearth of interdisciplinary works which challenge the application of such policies in small island developing states (SIDS). The purpose of this paper is to critically analyse the exportation of organised crime control policies from the US to Caribbean SIDS, in light of the dichotomy which exists between these countries in identifying security threats, and to generate evidence-informed soft policy implications. Through an analysis of empirical research data, combined with the examination of US backed policies and assumptions, it can be concluded that international policies adopted by Caribbean SIDS are inappropriate and not fit for purpose, given the local conditions of organised crime security threats in these countries. Moreover, the research shows that it is the illicit trafficking of firearms from the US to Caribbean SIDS which remains the most challenging issue faced by regional law enforcement officers.

Keywords: drugs – firearms – Caribbean – organised crime – security threats

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1. Introduction

In the present day, international policy responses designed to combat organised crime, are generally constructed around a blueprint that reflects the historical United States (US) war on drugs. This international-norm making template embodies the unchallenged assumption that organised crime at the wider level—including drug trafficking—poses a serious international security threat to all nation states, including Western, developed countries such as the US. These assumptions are embodied and codified by international laws reflecting the US anti-narcotics crusade from the 1970s onwards (Nadelmann, 1993:189-199, Bewley-Taylor, 1999; Woodiwiss, 2005:149-159) and are subsequently absorbed by the international community. It is the scale of the aforementioned threat from organised crime which justifies “the extensive legal and regulatory framework that has been constructed” by the international community (Harvey & Sittlington, 2018: 422). For example, in the context of drug trafficking, the United Nations (UN) Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988 (Vienna Convention), attaches a strong priority to drugs as an international security issue, while mirroring the US own preoccupation with drugs as a national security issue (Joseph, 2001:11). With parties to the Vienna Convention obliged to establish a wide range of drug-related criminal offences under their domestic laws, it is evident that law enforcement decisions concerning the control of illicit drugs, are predicated on the framed US assumption that drug trafficking remains a primary, global security threat.

The international community, including Caribbean small island developing states (SIDS) (UN-OHRLLS, 2011), has embraced US assumptions and policies to address the threat of drug trafficking. For example, the Bahamas was an original signatory to the Vienna Convention, signing on 20 December 1988. Since then, all Caribbean states (including 16 SIDS), have ratified the Vienna Convention, underlining the importance of international anti-drugs laws at the regional level (Griffith, 2000:183). The accession of Caribbean SIDS including Jamaica (the country case study for this research), to the Vienna Convention is a powerful testimony of the obligations these developing states have accepted to tackle drugs trafficking (Smellie, 2004:104). Another example of the international narrative informing the rhetoric of regional law enforcement bodies, is evidenced by a Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) press release, in which the JCF stated that drug trafficking, “poses a significant threat to the country’s stability and security” (JCF, 2017). The press release also emphasised the role of Jamaica, “as a transshipment port to get illicit drugs into North America and Europe”. Alongside Jamaica, other Caribbean developing countries, including the Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic and Haiti, are identified by the US International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) Volume I Drug and Chemical Control (March 2018) as, “Major Illicit Drug Producing and Major Drug-Transit Countries”; therefore presenting as security

threats to the US (INCSR, 2018). The scale of this threat is deemed to justify extensive regulatory responses, notably the allocation of substantial US funding to countries for attempting to combat regional drug trafficking.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the exportation of organised crime control policies from the US to Caribbean SIDS, in light of the dichotomy which exists between these countries in identifying security threats, and to generate evidence-informed soft policy implications for Caribbean SIDS. Using Jamaica as a country case study to highlight the crime issues faced by Caribbean SIDS at the wider level, the paper will show that although US assumptions and policies concerning organised crime and its control are generally embraced by the international community, the same policies adopted by Caribbean SIDS are inappropriate and not fit for purpose, given the peculiarities and local conditions of organised crime security threats in these countries. It is the objective of the authors, that this paper will re-orientate a long standing misreading of the Caribbean reality, for a more accurate one. Specifically, and as this paper will demonstrate, that modern organised crime policies shaped around historical anti-drugs laws are not fit for purpose in the context of combating firearms trafficking in Caribbean SIDS.

The authors argue there exists a greater need for the empirical, qualitative investigation and critical analysis of the exportation of organised crime control policies from the US to Caribbean SIDS. It may be observed that a lack of research in this specific area reflects the general acceptance of the international legal community—scholars and policy makers alike—of US assumptions that drug trafficking is the dominant, antecedent organised crime and thus presents the biggest security threat. The weight of such threat imagery is further amplified, because the international legal community tends to accept that policy assumptions arising from the institutional responses of other countries (notably the US and UK) are correct when applied to those States which are deemed to host the threat (for example, Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago). Although a discussion on post-colonial political history and policing in the Caribbean, and its inextricable link with racist ideologies, is outside the parameters of this article (see for example, Anderson and Killingray 1991, 1992; Agozino, 2004; Bowling, 2010, Lodge et al, 2015), it remains necessary to underline that the research for this paper was carried out in a region of the world that is majority black and which possesses, “a complex and often bloody history that can be traced back a long time” (Agozino et al, 2009: 288). Much like Agozino et al (2009:288), the “legacy of the region’s colonial past—genocide, slavery, the plantation economy and much else” is too complex to be discussed in detail here. However, for the purposes of this article, it must be stated from the outset, that the US war on drugs was a tactical decision by the Nixon Administration to damage the Black community (Lowe, 2016) and conceal anti-democratic and radical tendencies within the American state (Woodiwiss, 2018:33, 42-43). This was revealed in Dan Baum’s 1994 interview with Nixon’s former domestic policy advisor John Ehrlichman (Baum, 2016), who confirmed that:

The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the anti-war left and black people. You understand what I’m saying? We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the

hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.

Indeed, it is this continued preoccupation of the US with the war on drugs that has led to the creation and implementation of organised crime control policies which are not fit for purpose in the context of SIDS, and which remain grounded in imperialist and racist sentiment – yet such policies and assumptions are deemed to be correct because they are framed as responses to threats to the ‘national security interest’ of the US (US Senate Caucus on International Narcotics, Senator Dianne Feinstein, 2012). However, as clarified by Ceresola (2019:52) in his work on the US Government’s framing of corruption, the (incorrect) framing of “public evils has ramifications for laws, legislation, and funding that affects individuals on the ground”.

This paper argues that the US paradigm of organised crime control policy continues to frame drug trafficking as the main problem in the Caribbean, and fails to recognise that in Jamaica—and other SIDS including Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago - the real issue is the illicit trafficking of firearms from the US. Such a misdirection has consequences for “individuals on the ground”, (Ceresola 2019:52), including regional law enforcement officers who feel unable to attend to the most urgent matter of firearms trafficking.

Jamaica is adopted as a country case study for this study, and acts as a template to highlight the general difficulties that all Caribbean SIDS face when obliged to transpose international conventions shaped by US assumptions and policies into their own national, legal frameworks. As will be shown, US-derived international agreements such as the Vienna Convention, do not fall onto a blank slate, but their reception is inevitably shaped by the local conditions, for example typical criminal activity in the country or region. The paper draws on qualitative, empirical research carried out with key actors from law enforcement agencies in Jamaica who also work with officials in other, regional SIDS. As a result, the interviewees were able to contextualise their thoughts in a broader, Caribbean context, therefore making them ideal subjects and additionally widening the significance of this study. Part two, therefore, outlines the data collection methodology in terms of the research gathered from semi-structured interviews. Part three of the paper delivers an overview of the internationalisation of US organised crime control, set against the backdrop of US sentiments in this area. Section three (a) of the paper focuses on US assumptions surrounding the threat of drug trafficking, and how US policies have been embraced by the international community and incorporated into international laws to combat organised crime. Under section three (b), there is a discussion of the acceptance of US assumptions and policies in Jamaica and other Caribbean SIDS, in the context of regional efforts to combat organised crime security threats. Parts four and five, are crucial to the discussion because at this juncture the empirical findings are discussed in relation to two main areas, these being identified problems and suggested re-conceptualisations. In section four (a) of the paper, the discussion will draw on the interview data to challenge the

persistent narrative and threat imagery of drug trafficking as a security threat in Jamaica and other Caribbean SIDS, and how this is used to justify costly and to date, futile maritime drug interdictions funded by the US. Section four (b) will use the empirical findings to shine a spotlight on the fact that in Jamaica and other Caribbean SIDS alike, it is the illicit trade in firearms from the US which constitutes the main security threat, not drug trafficking. The findings therefore suggest that the exportation and development of organised crime control policy from the US to Caribbean SIDS, should be refocused to reflect the substantial issue of illicit firearms trafficking rather than built around outdated anti-narcotics assumptions. Part five of the paper, draws on the interviews to deliver evidence-informed re-conceptualisations of organised crime control in Jamaica—with a view to using these implications as a blueprint for the more appropriate application of relevant legislation in other regional SIDS. These re-conceptualisations include a) providing SIDS with greater powers to influence and decide on crime control policies that are tailored to the need of the individual country; and b) broad capacity development suggestions within the context of local law enforcement and the wider community.

2. Methodology

Data for this interdisciplinary paper comes from a broader study of organised crime at the regional, Caribbean level, and builds on the pre-existing and collaborative interests of the authors in law and history. Empirical data is drawn from in-depth interviews with law enforcement officers, to supplement the analysis of secondary sources including academic literature, news and government reports. The work is further supported by a range of primary sources including international legislation.

Research for the paper was carried out over a period of 10 months from May 2017. The first phase of the research encompassed existing literature searches and archive retrievals and culminated with a trip to Washington DC in September 2017, where data on US organised crime control policies was gathered. The second phase of the research focused on face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with seven participants in Kingston, Jamaica in January 2018. There were four separate sittings with participants in Jamaica, and some of the interview sessions had multiple participants opting to be interviewed together. It should be noted that group interviewing is not unusual in a highly sensitive setting (for example policing organised crime) where socio-cultural solidarity is the norm. All of the interviews conducted for this project lasted approximately one or two hours. The interviews were transcribed and analysed between January and May 2018. All interviews were conducted in English.

The researchers employed homogenous purposive sampling to select the interviewees, meaning that the interviewees shared similar characteristics in terms of their occupational jurisdiction. Some of the participants also possessed similar ideologies within the wider context of combating what they considered to be organised crime in a Caribbean SID such as Jamaica. Expert purposive sampling was used, as it allowed for the interviewees to be selected based on their expertise working in law enforcement agencies concerned with combating organised crime. The criteria used

to select suitable interviewees required them to: work in an authoritative position for a relevant institution; possess specialist knowledge of law enforcement methods and policies designed to combat organised crime in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region; and have the time available to speak freely and participate in the research. The selection criteria were further refined by assessing how appropriate the data provided by the participant was likely to be, both in terms of relevance and depth.

The authors are aware of the limitations of drawing upon data gathered from a small pool of selected interview subjects, including the potential for confirmation bias as it may be that “ambiguous meta-communicative norms in the focus group influence the contributions of other police participants” (Gilbert, 2017:341). However, an objective of the study was to examine the influence of pressures exerted by Western law making on the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of high ranking law enforcement officers in Jamaica who work in the specific area of organised crime control and who have strong links with other countries in the region. As noted by Gilbert (2017), meta-communication (non-verbal cues) between officers reveal to the interviewer otherwise unknown jurisdictional boundaries concerning professional identities. As a result, the interviews are rich, robust and encompass the analysis of “embodied conduct” alongside language (Gilbert, 2017:341). The authors assert that the paper does not employ confirmation bias or “wishful thinking”. Indeed, those who critique it as such, may wish to reflect on how reality may be “constructed” to support the vested interests of policy makers or “claim-makers” (Spector and Kitsuse, 2001; Ceresola, 2019:51). The paper will show, using historical evidence and current data (including the free comments and conversations collected during the interviews), that international policies designed to fight organised crime are generally not fit for purpose in Caribbean SIDS because they do not reflect the real state of the problem.

To conclude this section, the interviewees were guaranteed anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the data and their high ranking positions in law enforcement. Interviewees have been accorded an alphabet letter ranging from A to G for identification. No further element of identification can be attributed to the participants.

3. The Exportation and Internationalisation of US Organised Crime Control Policies and Assumptions

3(a) Drug Trafficking as the Antecedent Organised Crime and Main Security Threat

At the international level, organised crime control in the sense it is understood today has a recent history. Its origins can be traced back to the assumptions and policies of the US—a country which considers itself more advanced in combating organised crime than other countries and whose organised crime control methods are considered “best practice” (Woodiwiss, 2017:224). Indeed, modern day international organised crime control policies find their parentage in the Organized Crime Control Act (OCCA) passed by the US Congress in 1970. The OCCA provided law enforcement and criminal justice agencies with greater powers to combat criminal conspiracies:

asset forfeiture; special grand juries; wider witness immunity provisions for compelling or persuading reluctant witnesses; extended sentences for persons convicted in organised crime cases; and the use of wire-tapping and eavesdropping evidence in federal cases. In the same year as the OCCA, the Nixon administration secured the passing of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Control Act of 1970. The law gave the Department of Justice an array of powers over licit and illicit drugs covering possession, sale and trafficking. Drug offenders faced severe sanctions including life for those engaged in “continuing criminal enterprise” or who qualified as a “dangerous special drug offender” (Trebach, 1982:237). US Treasury funds were made available to enforcement agents for the purposes of hiring informants, paying for incriminating information, and making purchases of contraband substances. Furthermore, agents were given the power to seize on sight any property they thought was contraband or forfeitable, and execute search warrants at any time of the day or night (King, 1972). In effect, the laws passed in 1970 codified the US assumption that drug trafficking posed a serious security threat at the international level, and that prohibition was the most effective way of dealing with the problem. From 1970 onward, the prohibition attempt was closely associated with efforts to export not just US anti-drug efforts, but also general anti-organised crime efforts, thereby signifying the internationalisation of US organised crime control policies and assumptions.

The US actively exported and internationalised its models of organised crime and drug control in the year following the passage of the OCCA. On 14 June 1971, President Richard Nixon summoned State department officials and ambassadors, to a meeting which stressed the need for a tougher stance abroad, in what the Americans were now calling the “war on drugs” (Peters and Wooley, 1971). A summary of this meeting, states that the President considered the, “Ambassadors’ most important diplomatic mission” was to convey to drug producing and transshipment countries, that the US means business, concluding that “stopping the drug traffic is more important than good temporized relations” (Krogh, 1971).

The US continued to assume that drug trafficking was an alien problem with foreign roots when in 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed Executive Order 12435, which established the Commission on Organized Crime (chaired by Judge Irving R Kaufman) and identified foreign-based drug trafficking organisations as posing the biggest security threat to the US (COC, 1983:5). Drug producing and/or transshipment countries which were assumed to present a security threat to the US, found that failing to cooperate with US drug prohibition policies meant subjecting themselves to various sanctions, including the withdrawal of American aid and increases in duties and tariffs. A 1987 US General Accounting Office report (GAO, 1987:34-36), spelt out the sanctions approach in the context of international drug control as follows:

The US international narcotics control program is based on convincing foreign governments to control illicit drugs when additional leverage is necessary and appropriate, the 1984 National Strategy for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking calls for US decisions on foreign aid and other matters to be tied to the willingness of the recipient country to execute a narcotics enforcement program.

In order to ensure compliance with US policies, the report further detailed the necessity to withhold, “50 percent of the economic and military assistance allocated to major illicit drug producing countries”, and that the reduction in aid was automatic unless the President certified to the Congress that a country had “cooperated with the United States” to control the illicit narcotics trade, including “distribution into the United States” (GAO, 1987:34-36).

There is no doubt that US assumptions and policies about drugs and organised crime played a role in the diplomatic processes that led to the inception of the Vienna Convention being adopted. David Stewart, Assistant Legal Advisor to the State Department and a member of the US delegation to the International Conference where the Vienna Convention was adopted, noted that “[t]he US participated actively in the negotiation of the Convention, and many of its provisions reflect legal approaches and devices already found in US law” (Stewart, 1990:387). The widespread acceptance of the Vienna Convention can be seen as a significant stage in the internationalisation of US drug prohibition policies, whereby US sentiments on the subject were absorbed by the UN and the international community. The rhetoric that there is a drugs war which can be fought and won, does not abate and is fuelled by discussions such as those emanating from the UN General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem from 19 to 21 April 2016, in New York. At the session, the UN reaffirmed its commitment to prohibitionist policies in an attempt to combat the global drug problem, when it adopted a Resolution titled, “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem” (UN A/RES/S-30/1:2016). Observers will note the close resemblance of the title to the aims and objectives of the OCCA; namely, that the US means business in its attempt to combat drug trafficking. To summarise, the assumptions and policies of the US concerning drug trafficking (and organised crime at the wider level), have been embraced by the international community and incorporated into international policy making. As will be shown in section three (b), while the Caribbean region has adopted the position of the US concerning organised crime and its control, in reality these assumptions inform flawed policy decisions at the national level. The example of Jamaica as a country case study representative of other Caribbean SIDS demonstrates this (see below).

3(b) US Assumptions and Policies on Organised Crime in the Caribbean

It is the general and predominant belief of international law enforcement agencies that drug trafficking is the dominant form of organised crime which is linked to other serious crimes, including firearms trafficking and financial crime; thereby leveraging it to the most visible of security threats faced by the international community (EMCDDA, 2016). The internationalisation of US assumptions on the subject, suggests that organised crime in the Caribbean is viewed by policy making bodies, including the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as an omnipresent threat to national, regional and international security which undermines the social, economic and political stability of the region (UNODC TOC, 2012). Considered a global security threat, the paradigm of international organised crime control policy making, adopts drug trafficking as the antecedent factor which serves to aggravate many other types of criminal activities which further destabilise and undermine

Caribbean security (INTERPOL, 2016). The UNODC asserts that drug trafficking “issues are apparent within Central America and the Caribbean” (UNODC TOC, 2012:9); arguably an assumption which has been framed by the policy making body in light of claims made by the likes of William Brownfield, formerly Assistant Secretary, US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, who stated in 2014 that drug trafficking in the Caribbean is, “likely to get worse before it gets better” (Brownfield, 2014). These assumptions reinforce the persistent threat mantra associated with Caribbean drug trafficking. Figures released by the UN maintain the rhetoric that the Caribbean is a hub for drug traffickers, and in 2017, the UNODC World Drug Report, confirmed that, “90 per cent of the cocaine intercepted in 2015 was in the Americas”, including in the “transit regions of Central America and the Caribbean” (UNODC WDR, 2017:27).

As evidenced above, international norm making bodies, identify the Caribbean as somehow complicit in the problem of drug trafficking. Following the creation of the Vienna Convention, the 1990s heralded the start of a large movement in terms of law making and enforcement bodies trying to combat drug trafficking and related offences such as money laundering. Indeed, US assumptions were embraced by the regional, Organisation of American States (OAS) General Assembly, when it issued the Declaration and Program of Action of Ixtapa (Mexico) on 2 April 1990 (OAS, 1990), and generally declared drug trafficking a “crime against humanity” (Young, 2013:85). Two months earlier on 15 February 1990, in a presidential guesthouse situated in the Cartagena Bay area of Colombia, US President George H W Bush, President Virgilio Barco Vargas of Colombia, President Jaime Paz Zamora of Bolivia, and President Alan Garcia Perez of Peru (Peters and Wooley, 1990), jointly issued the Declaration of Cartagena which promised an unprecedented, concerted and continuing battle against drug trafficking. By proxy, any counter narcotics efforts carried out by the OAS and its autonomous regional organisation, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, would by extension apply not only to those States traditionally deemed as being located in Central America, but to all 35 Independent Member States of the OAS—including Caribbean SIDS such as Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

Nearly two decades later, it was made clear that drug trafficking remained a Caribbean-grown security threat, when in April 2009, at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, US President Barack Obama addressed a gathering of leaders from OAS countries. President Obama informed them of “a new initiative to invest US\$30 million to strengthen cooperation on security in the Caribbean” (Obama, 2009), which would later be known as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). Reiterating the assumptions of previous US governments, Obama outlined a renewed commitment to reducing illicit drug flows and increasing security in the Caribbean. The CBSI would provide Caribbean countries struggling to “stem the resurgent tide of drug trafficking”, “with technical assistance, equipment and training to combat crime and drug smuggling. This includes setting up detection dog units, improving prisons, providing cargo scanners, polygraphs and interceptor boats, and sharing more information with

local security forces” (Wigglesworth, 2013). In the same year, on 8 October, the General Assembly of the UN Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee hosted a debate on Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and Drug Control. At the debate, Raymond Wolfe, a Jamaican representative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), highlighted that the international drug trade is “inextricably linked to the problem of crime, particularly transnational organised crimes”, and that illicit drugs remained a major concern in the Caribbean; a region which serves as a “bridge between the major producers and consumers of illicit drugs” (UNGA, 2009). The press release for the debate, unconsciously highlighted that countries in the region had embraced US assumptions and policies, when it stated that a “successful fight against drug trafficking and transnational organised crime” was certainly attainable with the implementation of “interlocking national, regional and international strategies rooted in global cooperation” (UNGA, 2009).

On 27 May 2010 the US Attorney General Eric Holder officially launched the CBSI partnership between the US and the Caribbean, as “a new chapter” in US-Caribbean relations (USDOJ, 2010). Holder’s speech at the Inaugural Caribbean-US Security Cooperation Dialogue was delivered three days after Jamaican soldiers and police had fought a protracted and bloody battle in the Tivoli Gardens area of Kingston, with “armed supporters of a fugitive alleged drug lord [Christopher “Dudus” Coke]” who was facing US extradition (Helps, 2010). In the aftermath of the Tivoli siege, Holder expressed renewed US commitment to the Caribbean and vowed to “combat drug trafficking and other criminal activity” in the region. Holder further confirmed the support of the US Department of Justice and the Departments of State, Homeland Security and Defense in ensuring that combating drug trafficking in the Caribbean region would remain a “top priority” (Helps, 2010). By June 2011, US Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, announced to CARICOM Foreign Ministers in Montego Bay, Jamaica, that the US would increase its financial support to the CBSI, with US\$77 million pledged in funding for fiscal year 2011/12. Clinton added that, “the amount represents an increase of more than 70 per cent over the US\$45 million allocated in the first year of implementation in 2010” (Miller, 2011). By the twenty-first Century, the internationalisation of US assumptions and policies on drug trafficking and organised crime which had begun with Nixon was cemented, as the international community embraced a tougher stance on drugs in the Caribbean with the guarantee of substantial US funding for those SIDS attempting to combat the problem. However, as will be shown below using the case study of Jamaica, US attempts to curb drug trafficking (and therefore control organised crime), in the Caribbean have proved largely futile as law enforcement officers recognise that the “pressure on us [from the international community]...to come up with statistics” (A) to satisfy US assumptions on organised crime, means the implementation of flawed policies which “don’t apply to a country like Jamaica” (A).

4. Jamaica: An Instrumental Case Study

This part of the paper draws upon the supplemental research data from interviews with law enforcement officers, to use Jamaica as an instrumental and illustrative case study to highlight the futility of transposing US assumptions and policies concerning organised crime and its control onto

Caribbean SIDS. The free comments, conversations and responses to specific questions, made during the course of the interviews, shape the direction of this section of the work.

Jamaica and its neighbouring SIDS are still developing in the face of specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities (UN-OHRLLS, 2011), yet they receive substantial funding from the US to try and combat organised crime threats, notably drug trafficking. What will become evident from the research under section four (a) is that the specific, regional vulnerabilities peculiar to Jamaica and other Caribbean SIDS, are not reflected in the general US-informed, international policies to combat organised crime as these are shaped around the anti-drug paradigm. The example of futile maritime drug interdictions proves this. Section four (b) of the paper will highlight that the misdirection of funding to combat the perceived problems of drugs in Caribbean SIDS, substantially overshadows a much greater issue for these countries, this being the illicit trafficking of firearms which are manufactured in the US.

4(a) Americanisation of Jamaican Crime Control: Futility of Maritime Drug Interdictions

This paper has shown that since the 1970s, Caribbean SIDS have been framed as a challenge to global security, because of their involvement with the illicit drug trade. By the time of the Vienna Convention in 1988, Jamaica and other Caribbean SIDS, were identified by the US as problematic countries concerning the transshipment of cocaine and the production of marijuana. For example, The Bahamian drug trafficking route (favoured by Jamaicans to move marijuana and cocaine), caused such consternation for the US that in fiscal year 1988, the US GAO reported that, “US-supported anti-drug programs and operations in the Bahamas aimed at reducing the flow of drugs through the Bahamas and into the United States cost about US\$33 million” (GAO, 1990:10), with US\$18 million of that amount going to the US Coastguard to strengthen drug interdiction capacity (GAO, 1990:37). By May 1997, Jamaica had signed a cooperation agreement with the US to suppress maritime drug trafficking—also known as the Shiprider Agreement—which entered into force on March 10, 1998. Other developing nations in the Caribbean also signed Shiprider Agreements with the US toward the end of the nineties, including The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, and Haiti. The Shiprider Agreements were seen as a “solution” to regional instability and in a passage from his 1996 paper on the Agreements—the rhetoric of which, bears a striking similarity to the Nixon-era narrative of the war on drugs—the controversial Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs during the Reagan Administration, Elliott Abrams, stated that, “reliance on a foreign power may be the most sensible form of nationalism”, (1996:86) for Caribbean SIDS and urged them to recognise that “the only major power that cares deeply about the Caribbean is the one that has a border there” (1996:99). Such a statement frames the Shiprider Agreements and other similar policies, as being created to protect the interests of Caribbean SIDS, when in fact, the Agreements were constructed to protect and strengthen US national security against the purported drug trafficking threat posed by the Caribbean Basin (1996:87)—in accordance with Nixon’s policies from the 1970s (see parts one and three above).

In the wake of the Shiprider Agreements and under the auspices of programmes such as the CBSI, the US continues to allocate substantial funds for maritime drug interdiction operations in the region. In 2017, the US INCSR reported that, “[l]arger “go-fast” and sport fishing vessels transport marijuana from Jamaica both to the Bahamas and through the Bahamas into Florida” (INCSR, 2017:100). Later that year, boats worth US\$500 million were donated to Jamaica by the US. At the time, then opposition leader Andrew Holness (later elected Prime Minister of Jamaica) commented that the expenditure was wasteful and funding would be better spent on “practical areas that will have a more direct impact on the country’s crime problem” (Gleaner, 2017a). In particular, the support provided to bolster and strengthen the Jamaica Defence Force Coast Guard in their pursuit of maritime drug trafficking, is both costly to the US and ties the hands of its Jamaica recipients to a drug control template designed by the US, but which is not fit for purpose in Jamaica.

The sentiment of Holness, concerning the futility of maritime anti-narcotics funding, was a view echoed by all interviewees. Moreover, the presence of such views in the common discourse of Jamaican law enforcement officers, underlines commonly held values which are rooted in their deep dissatisfaction of the American way of combating organised crime including drug trafficking in the Caribbean. US driven maritime counter-narcotics efforts in and around the waters of Jamaica and regional SIDS are largely redundant for a number of reasons. First, as stated by one interviewee, law enforcement bodies in Caribbean SIDS, “are given boats. The boats don’t come with a service plan, they are expensive to maintain and run, so once the first few months are over we can’t afford to keep them out at sea” (B). The point made by this particular interviewee was echoed by all participants, and is indicative of an issue which surrounds aid funding in general, at the wider global level; that those who donate the funding are “typically not accountable to their intended beneficiaries” (Easterly and Pfitze, 2008). Ergo, in the context of combatting drug trafficking in the Caribbean, a substantial amount of US money is allocated for use by SIDS to carry out maritime narcotics interdictions. However, because of the lack of checks and balances and general dialogue between the US and the end user, it follows that maritime infrastructure is delivered with “no follow ups” (B) and actually “causes a problem rather than helps solve anything” (B). It is a fact that in Jamaica and the wider region, US aid funding is wasted on maritime drug interdictions which are deemed as futile by relevant law enforcement authorities.

While maritime drug interdictions feature heavily in the general rhetoric of US and international anti-drugs policies, the interviewees were quick to point out the general hopelessness of attempting to patrol a Caribbean island which can be accessed as a “360 port” (G), without the correct infrastructure and support in place. According to one interviewee, “the fact is, we don’t have the capacity to intersect the boats coming into our ports. Our ports are porous” (F), and furthermore, “the marine police do not monitor it properly” (G). These law enforcement sentiments strengthen the argument that US funding for maritime drug interdictions in the region is futile, especially in countries where infrastructure is lacking.

To conclude this section, the momentum behind initiatives such as the CBSI is driven by the US assumption that high-seas drug trafficking in the Caribbean remains a security threat to the US and

wider international community. Conversely, the interviewees were quick to point out that in the present day, “[e]vidence doesn’t support the drug problem” (B) in the region, which continues to be hugely overestimated by the international community. Rather, the true nature of the transnational drug problem in Jamaica is historical and “[p]eople remember the 80s and 90s, when you got on the wrong side of a Jamaican drug dealer” (B). It is the “fear of returning to a violent past” (B) associated with drug trafficking, which in turn helps to perpetuate a cycle of futile funding; therefore overshadowing the greater issue of firearms trafficking. The information gleaned from the interviewees is evidence of the fact that US money is currently being channelled in the wrong direction, a point which section (b) below elaborates on in more detail.

4(b) Illicit Firearms Trafficking Constitutes the Main Security Threat

This section of the article is not intended to offer a detailed account of firearms trafficking in the Caribbean (a broad topic which has been covered by a range of scholars and practitioners including Agozino et al, 2009; Wells et al 2010; Baines, 2014). It should be noted however that, “[t]he weaponisation of civil society in the Caribbean is connected to the market in illicit drugs” (Agozino et al, 2009:294), and could arguably have been (and continues to be), intensified by international efforts to curb regional drug trafficking. Harriott (2002) has documented alarming gun homicide rates in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Trinidad and Tobago, from the 1980s through to the present day, with the escalation of gun homicides most notable since the start of the twenty first Century. For example, in 2008 the gun homicide rate in Jamaica was 55 per 100,000 persons (population 2.7 million) and in 2007, Trinidad and Tobago’s rate was 26 per 100,000 (population 1.3 million) (Agozino et al, 2009:290). The data gathered by Harriott and Agozino et al, is evidence that the continued, futile war on drugs masks a far more pressing issue.

The purpose of this section, is to identify and highlight the reality of the current situation concerning organised crime in the Caribbean. This will be achieved by drawing on insights from senior law enforcement officers, to re-orientate the long-standing, international misreading that at the local level drugs trafficking is the main concern of Caribbean SIDS, when the reality is that the “pistolisation” or “weaponisation”, (Agozino et al, 2009) in these states is acutely aggravated by firearms trafficking from the US and therefore the main concern of local law enforcement officers is gun homicide.

Supplemental interview data emphasises that there is a collective of knowledge from experienced, high-ranking law enforcement officers and policy advisors, who agree that the war on drugs in the Caribbean, is a guise to shift the lens from the main issue of illicit firearms trafficking from the US to regional SIDS. In the context of Jamaica, but referencing the Caribbean generally, the interviewees freely expressed this notion: “People will say we have a drug problem in Jamaica. We have a gun problem” (C). “A major security threat for Jamaica is firearm trafficking” (F). All the interviewees agreed that the biggest threat to the collective security of Caribbean SIDS (participants mentioned Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic), is not drug trafficking, but the illicit trafficking of firearms from the US, and that solutions for these problems are not one and the

same. The interview data therefore differs from similar, seminal, works published in the past decade, for example Bowling (2005, 2006, 2008) and Agozino et al (2009), where 160 law-enforcement type officers were interviewed on the broad topic of policing and security in the Caribbean, with the authors asserting that their interviewees tended to think, “a robust response to drug trafficking would reduce the problem of guns” (Agozino et al, 2009:296).

More than a decade since Bowling conducted the interviews for his papers, our research shows that in 2019, participants agree that, “a major security threat for Jamaica is firearm trafficking [from the US]” (E), and that it presents the biggest challenge for law makers and enforcers in the region. Furthermore, the interviews conducted for this research highlight a fundamental dichotomy between the observations of regional and US law enforcement officers, over what constitutes a security threat in their respective countries. The interviews show that Jamaican law enforcement officials are extremely concerned about the proliferation of US manufactured firearms which are trafficked from the shores “of the only major power that cares deeply about the Caribbean” (Abrams, 1996:86). The officers view firearms trafficking as the main threat to collective regional security and do not feel that responses to drugs and guns are synonymous: “The guns are a different story really [to the drugs] because that’s a problem for Jamaica. A lot of firearms arrive from the US” (B). However, the US lens of organised crime control remains focused on drugs and more recently, the lotto scam (an advance-fee fraud targeted at elderly US holiday makers staying in and around the Montego Bay area of Jamaica) (Young, 2014).

During each interview, the authors of this paper began to see the emergence of a variant to the fixed US rhetoric that drug trafficking is a foreign problem to be located and combated in other countries, including Jamaica, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, and The Bahamas. Jamaican law enforcement officials were frustrated about the lack of assistance from the US in terms of curbing its own home-grown security threat, this being the manufacturing of firearms. It was repeatedly stated by the interviewees that, “[t]he bottom line is the guns come from the US to Jamaica. But when the JCF or law enforcement are looking for assistance back in the US it’s very slow in coming” (B). Another interviewee stated that as far back as 2007 he had attended the newly established International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in San Salvador, El Salvador (one of many US government established ILEAs around the world which serve a broad range of foreign policy and law enforcement purposes for the US and for the world), and at the Academy he had:

[R]aised the same issue with the police, with representatives from the US and I highlighted that as a third world developing country in the region, we suffer from this influx of weapons from the US which is creating a significant challenge for us [in Jamaica and the Caribbean] as law enforcement (E).

The “significant challenge” (E) was afforded global media coverage on 18 January 2018, when a State of Emergency in the St James area of Montego Bay was declared by Prime Minister Holness. The announcement was issued following a spate of gun-related murders and crimes at the

beginning of the New Year. The prevalent crime issue in Jamaica is not the unquantifiable amount of drugs thought to pass through the country, but the firearms which are flooding in from the US. The recent State of Emergency in Jamaica, serves to underline the double standards which embody US law enforcement efforts abroad, whereby gun crime in Jamaica is viewed as a Jamaican problem which is disconnected from the US, while the latter concerns itself with listing Caribbean countries including, The Bahamas, Haiti and Jamaica as major drug producing or transit countries (INCSR, 2017). However, such blacklists chime with general US policy rhetoric that, “what might be tolerated in distant lands....is far less acceptable in our front-yard” (Abrams, 1996:87). The frustration around these double standards is strongly reflected in conversations with the interviewees:

There are so many contradictions (C, D, E).

I highlighted [to US law enforcement] the example that if narcotics are found on one of our aircrafts leaving Jamaica to the US, there’s a penalty imposed (E).

The US want a lot but they are not willing to give a lot. The [Jamaican] police will seize a gun and they will try and trace it back through the serial number but they keep running into brick walls because guns can be bought very easily and simply in the US. The record keeping in the US isn’t great (B).

That firearms which are manufactured in the US and illegally trafficked to Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago, are driving and perpetuating a culture of gun crime in the region, is the reality (and not the assumption) of the organised crime problem in the Caribbean. One interviewee (C) indicated that the reluctance of the US to take responsibility for the gun problem in Jamaica and other Caribbean SIDS, may stem from the economic boom and remarkable growth that the US firearms and ammunitions industry is currently enjoying. The same interview participant added the disquieting comment that the, “US are not going to take on the responsibility of security of another nation. It’s [firearms are] just another export product. The guns are coming also for the policemen” (C).

Those seizures of firearms which are newsworthy enough to warrant press attention are useful examples which demonstrate that shipments of firearms frequently leave US air and sea ports bound for ports in Jamaica. On 13 November 2017, US law enforcement officers at Miami International Airport seized 119 assorted firearms and 267 assorted rounds of ammunition which were hidden in grocery boxes and ready for shipment to St James, Montego Bay (Gleaner, 2017b). In October 2017, “a major gun haul at a container terminal in Kingston” unearthed “19 guns, including six rifles” and rounds of ammunition which had been hidden in two freezers (Gleaner, 2017c). While the interception of illicit firearms can only be a good thing for law enforcement agencies, the issue remains that Jamaica and other Caribbean SIDS are in essence “360 degree ports” (G) which are impossible to fully patrol in an effective and cost efficient manner. However,

while local newspaper reports serve a purpose in aggrandising the aims of US law enforcement in Jamaica, the interviewees remain sceptical about showboating these successes and are pragmatic about the significance of them:

The pat on the back seizures are highly publicised (B).

Because of this big shipment, the big seizure, we have proof guns are coming from the US. Not in ones or twos, in big shipments (B).

The interdictions that have been happening, happen on the lower level (F).

While drug trafficking remains a blight in the history of US-Caribbean relations, the security implication of the US failure to stem the flow of illicit firearms into Jamaica is a much more immediate and makes Jamaica's so called drug problem look largely insignificant. Certainly, it is felt by Jamaican law enforcers that, "the threat for us is the importation of firearms from the United States, which is significant, this year we have had over 1600 murders" (E) (January 2018). The Jamaica Constabulary Force Periodic Serious Crimes Review Weekly Jan 01 to July 15, 2017 and comparative six months for the years from 2014-2017 shows that there has been a steady and troubling increase in firearm related crimes including murder over a four year period. The number of recorded fatal shootings has risen from 84 deaths in 2014 to 102 in 2017. The recorded number of seized firearms has also witnessed a trend in growth, with 360 firearms and 6452 rounds of ammunition recovered in 2014, compared to 454 firearms 7874 rounds of ammunition recovered in 2017. Worryingly the seizures of pistols within the firearms category saw the biggest increase with 289 pistols recovered in the six month period of 2017, compared to 2019 for the same period in 2014 (JCF Crime Statistics, 2017); reinforcing the views of Agozino et al (2009) that the pistolisation of some Caribbean societies is being normalised.

Pistols are the firearm of choice in Jamaica and individuals upload video clips of their favourite brands to You Tube—these include models manufactured by Beretta, Ruger, Sig Sauer, Taurus and Heckler & Koch—all of which are manufactured in the US. Newspaper and police reports also show that the brands of firearms recovered in Jamaica are mainly manufactured in the US before being trafficked—a fact which was confirmed by the interview participants. That illicit firearms are being trafficked from the US (producing country) to consuming countries in the Caribbean is indisputable, with our interviewees reporting gun seizures in Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana; each seizure triggering frame-making headlines in the regional media (Jamaica Observer 2016; Herrera 2016; Starbroek News, 2016), which feed into the international legal community's perceptions of stereotypes and racial ideologies (Foreman et al, 2016; Abraham and Appiah, 2006), and subsequent international legal responses. Notably, the UNODC in 2015 reported that 45 percent of seized firearms moving through Trinidad and Tobago were destined for Jamaica (UNODC, 2015). Additionally, CBSI funded projects in Jamaica highlight the continuing "major US policy goal" of providing CBSI funding to, "advance Jamaica's transformation into a more secure,

democratic and prosperous partner [to the US]" (INCSR, 2016). However, such initiatives neglect to address the real security threat that the US poses to Jamaica and the wider region, in terms of the firearms which end up on the streets of Jamaica and other SIDS. The authors therefore conclude this section by asserting that the US should acknowledge its role as an enabler of firearms trafficking.

5. Re-Conceptualising Organised Crime Control in Jamaica and Small Island Developing States

The work so far has analysed the transposition of US driven, Western organised crime control policies, from developed countries to Jamaica and Caribbean SIDS at the wider level. The paper has challenged the validity of the general assumption that drug trafficking is an encompassing problem for Jamaica and Caribbean SIDS, and has unearthed that the most pressing problem faced by regional law enforcement officers, is the trafficking of firearms from the US.

Part five of the paper seeks to add to the existing body of knowledge on organised crime and its control in Jamaica and neighbouring SIDS, by moving beyond the current legal stalemate, which is the incongruity of applying US policy assumptions in countries where the proliferation of illicit firearms, is the most challenging, contemporary issue for law enforcement. The work suggests that organised crime control policies in the context of Caribbean SIDS, need to be re-conceptualised, to better reflect the local conditions of SIDS. The re-conceptualisations outlined below are evidence-based soft policy implications which are grounded in the interview data. The novelty and originality of the re-conceptualisations stems from the subjective experiences of law enforcement officers and policy makers currently working in Jamaica (with peer connections in the wider region), and the intentions of the authors to highlight the meanings and motives behind the dilemmas faced by law enforcement in Jamaica and beyond.

5(a) Enhancing SIDS Participation in International Policy Making

It has been shown that the current status quo in terms of international organised crime control policy making is based on incorrect assumptions and influenced by the economic might of the US, and does not represent the concerns of regional SIDS. As stated by (B) "the US standard is not attainable for SIDS". This results in the implementation of flawed international policies at the local level, evidenced by the case study of Jamaica. The research suggests the need for a paradigm shift in terms of the weighting given to the voices of SIDS within the international community—specifically at those negotiations where UN Conventions are decided and where American leverage means that regional responses to organised crime are constrained by the US priority of drug trafficking (A, B, C) and the "difficult conditions attached to US funding" (C).

The disparity between Caribbean SIDS and the US, in terms of influencing and creating organised crime control policies in the region was recognised by the interviewees, who were aware of practices whereby, "we [Caribbean SIDS] enter the arena with asymmetry. Sometimes we sign by

force, not by choice. We are forced” (D). The interviewees were also keenly aware of the fact that the “UN takes a keen look at countries who don’t sign up” (D) to Conventions, and felt that the scrutiny directed at Jamaica and other regional SIDS by the international law making organisation and the US was unfair. UN scrutiny of SIDS is further bolstered by the support from sympathetic organisations such as the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime which has recently set up a project titled UNTOC Watch, which “aims to support the UN to respond more effectively and systematically to threats posed by organized crime” (GI); the soft law making body that is the Financial Action Task Force and its regional body the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force which obliges members to adopt and implement the 1988 Vienna Convention; and the Organization of American States which is a UN regional agency and works closely with the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission to promote best practice in the area of combating drug trafficking and money laundering (US DOJ, 2016). Scrutiny from Western organisations directed at Caribbean SIDS highlights that in the current day, as pertinently noted by Agozino et al, “the technologies of domination” in the Caribbean and the policies they promote (2009:302), remain geared towards drug-interdictions and imperialistic sentiment—rather than being tailored to country specificities.

The intense frustration of a country being required to work with laws which are not fit for purpose, was strongly identified by interviewee (D):

Developed countries are at a stage of development with the physical structure, mind-set, etc., so that they develop these conventions. The arrogance comes in where it is expected that third world developing countries are the same—that we can just sign and ratify.

The research highlights the imbalance and double standards between SIDS and developed, rich, Western countries in international law making. Developed countries are high-income countries and usually identified as Member Countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; of which there are 35, including the US, UK, Canada, Australia and Switzerland (OECD, 2018). While a discussion of the meanings attributed to the term Western countries, is outside the remit of this paper’s discussion, it is important to note that some of those Western countries considered to be the richest, also wield the most power in terms of international law making, including directing the shape of conventions, for example the Vienna Convention. Certainly, in the context of this research, it was pointed out by the interviewees that economic coercion is used as a tool of statecraft, whereby the US economic leverage means that the threat of sanctions over countries such as Jamaica is used, “to disrupt economic exchange with the target state, unless the target acquiesces to an articulated demand” (Drezner, 2001:3). It is evident that hard power and financial assistance from the US to Jamaica constrains Jamaican law enforcement responses to organised crime. This is also true of other Caribbean SIDS which are in receipt of funds drawn from programmes such as the CBSI. One interviewee stated that funding from the US to combat organised crime comes with “their [the US’] own memorandum’ and if countries do not sign up to agreements “there are ramifications” (C) (for example, trade sanctions

and conditional ties).

It is this coercion, which informs the resentment felt by regional law enforcement officers working in Caribbean SIDS, who are “force[d], not by choice” (D) to work with policies which are derived from US assumptions on organised crime and its control. According to Nye and as has been shown throughout this paper, “hard power, the ability to coerce, grows out of a country’s military and economic might” and it is this coercion through the imposition of assumptions and norms by the US on Caribbean SIDS, which has led to the current state of the problems outlined in this paper, including the “attitudes of distrust” towards US law enforcement and international policies (Nye, 2004:256-257). The reality of coercion, and interference by the US in Jamaica’s affairs is most evident in the context of the Tivoli siege, which concluded in the arrest and extradition of Christopher Michael (Dudus) Coke, with one interviewee remarking that the, “US dictated the terms of the siege and then they withdrew. As a third world country we are penalised by the US” (D). The Tivoli siege, remains a tragic example of counter-productive results transpiring from US assumptions and Western policy direction; 31 Jamaicans were caught in the crossfire and killed by firearms made in the US and obtained illegally (by Coke supporters) or legally (in the hands of the military and law enforcement) (Helps, 2010).

For Caribbean SIDS to possess enhanced capacity in international norm making, the interviewees for this paper tentatively suggested that CARICOM countries unite to challenge the concrete, rigid solutions presented by the US and international community. This re-conceptualisation of the part that Caribbean SIDS play in international law making, was agreed on by interviewees (D), (E) and (F) who stated, “CARICOM as one voice can make the overture [for change] to the UN directly or the US”—although they were aware that such a re-conceptualisation would be a challenge for an organisation which is deemed by local commentators to be a “feel-good” project of limited scope” (Johnston, 2013). While an in-depth discussion on the formation, structure (and failings) of CARICOM is beyond the scope of this paper’s focus, it should be noted that since it was established on 4 July 1973, CARICOM, is viewed by the interviewees as failing to harness its full potential in terms of regional influence at the international level.

While this paper has already suggested that Caribbean SIDS should unify their combined power under the auspices of CARICOM, the authors are realistic in accepting that US interference in the affairs of Caribbean SIDS is not about to diminish, as long as these countries remain indebted to the US. The authors are pragmatic in suggesting the US should also embrace change, and adopt a “soft power” position if it is not to be entirely discredited by regional law enforcement authorities. This re-conceptualisation would first require the US to prioritise illicit firearms trafficking as a problem starting in the US. Second, the US would need to consult with CARICOM states to draft and share soft policy implications tailored to the local conditions of Caribbean SIDS including Jamaica. According to Nye (2004:256), “[s]oft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments...Soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced”. For the US to gain credibility in terms of combating

organised crime in the Caribbean, it needs to recognise the potential of Caribbean SIDS and law enforcement as allies and equals.

Ultimately, SIDS need to be a part of in-depth and fruitful dialogues which better inform the policy making decisions which affect them as developing countries. It is not enough for such countries to be invited to talks, if the result is that policy is dictated by member countries with pre-established organised crime control agendas; ones which we have shown are inappropriate for developing island states.

5(b) Capacity Building in Law enforcement and the Wider Community

Capacity Building: Law Enforcement

It has been shown under part three, that organised crime control strategies were constructed by government officials from developed nations. These nations, notably the US and other highly industrialised democracies formed the original G7, which first met in 1975. In the following decades, these countries chose to address problems that included drug trafficking and organised crime. Most member countries had large police arsenals available to them for fighting organised crime and some already had national law enforcement structures in place for that purpose. For example, the UK had its National Criminal Intelligence Service and National Crime Squad and France had L'Unite de Coordination et de Recherche Anti-Mafia (Scherer, 2009:95). The US, of course, had the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration and other well-resourced agencies such as Customs—all capable of making tough responses to organised crime. As Scherer demonstrated, rich, developed nations influenced the thinking of influential international institutions such as the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the OAS. Moreover, as has been shown under part three of this article, the US played a pivotal role in drafting the Vienna Convention and influencing international anti-narcotics assumptions and policies.

In ensuring the commitment of States to its conventions, the UN has often stressed the importance of capacity building in law enforcement structures and criminal justice systems at the national level. Notably, in 1994, the UN Report of the Secretary General (published following the World Ministerial Conference on Organised Transnational Crime) made the following point:

Effective international cooperation often depends on the capacity of the criminal justice system of a given country. Raising the level of knowledge, expertise and professionalism of a criminal justice system requires resources that many countries lack. Technical assistance is then the only way of ensuring that that structural difficulties are overcome (UNGA Report A/RES/49/159, 1994).

However, speaking three decades later the interviewees emphasised that the US was not

committed to law enforcement capacity building in Jamaica and the wider region. According to (B), “[p]oliceman arrive, there is a quick turnover and they have not contributed to capacity building”. Furthermore, interviewees were quick to add that it is a fear of “returning to a violent past” (B) fuelled by the drug trade, which has overshadowed the much greater issue of firearms trafficking in the region. It is this fear, also, which perpetuates the prioritisation of US anti-drug efforts in the Caribbean. While interviewees (A) and (B) agreed that officers from the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the US Drug Enforcement Agency are generally “here for a longer time [more than three months]” than those American officers tasked with dismantling the lotto scam they re-emphasised that on the whole, the US is not committed to law enforcement capacity building in Jamaica in the context of combatting firearms trafficking effectively. The consequence of such a blinkered approach, is that those issues which are peculiar and local to Jamaica (eg illicit firearms trafficking), are ignored by the US, despite the fact that the illicit trade in US-manufactured firearms presents a major security threat for Jamaica and neighbouring SIDS. The negative impact on law enforcement capacity building in Jamaica, in light of US priorities on organised crime was highlighted by interviewee (B): “The Drug Enforcement Agency are specifically tasked with crimes which impact on the US and not committed to capacity building in the Jamaica Constabulary Force”.

In light of the comments made by the interviewees, the paper recommends that the US commits funding to supporting Jamaican law enforcement in its investigative abilities to combat the most pressing local and regional problem of illicit firearms, something which is currently lacking: “What they are not doing though, is giving the JCF the investigative ability to look at the problem as in the investigation” (B). The continued application of general US assumptions and policies (grounded in drug prohibition), to the local and regional problem of firearms trafficking in Caribbean SIDS, will ultimately restrict the evolution of appropriate organised crime control laws at the national and regional levels and continues to justify an escalating war on organised crime (Young, 2017). Due to the fact that “the branch is under resourced” (E), “the [US] money would be better spent on improving the standard of investigative abilities of the JCF” (A), by training local officers in all aspects of criminal investigation and associated policing activities—thereby enhancing local counter organised crime capabilities, and creating law enforcement autonomy. It is important that countries like Jamaica, have the freedom to design and implement legal solutions which tally with the local conditions of organised crime. For Caribbean SIDS generally, this means tackling illicit firearms trafficking as the priority.

Capacity Building: Wider Community

While the US commitment to law enforcement capacity building is clearly lacking, the interviewees also underlined the lack of capacity building within the wider community, in the context of the futile maritime drug interdictions. Interviewees underlined that maritime vessels purchased with US money to ensure Jamaica’s commitment to the war on drugs are a waste of resources because of a lack of trained, local, maritime mechanics to maintain them. The suggestion that US money would be better spent on developing the capacity to train a specific workforce in Jamaica to build

and maintain law enforcement vessels, was something that all the interviewees concurred with. The creation of apprenticeships in maritime engineering and boatbuilding would help to grow a skilled and local workforce and stimulate the economy. Currently, vessels are shipped back to the US to be maintained by external contractors. While physical equipment may be purchased for Jamaica, the interview subjects were vocal about the fact that, “the US is not committed to capacity building” within the wider community (B), and has a “narrow view on how to deal with it [the drug problem]” (A)—again highlighting the futility of the maritime drug interdictions. Again, such views underline the fact that in 2018, Caribbean SIDS remain tied to a US anti-drug agenda applied to all forms of organised crime; one which focuses on ensuring SIDS remain compliant with American demands if they are to continue to receive aid funding. The 1994 Report of the Secretary General stressed that a “fundamental purpose of international cooperation is to contribute to the creation of self-reliant capacities in developing countries” (UNGA Report A/RES/49/159, 1994). The views of those interviewed for this project suggest that despite billions spent through CBSI and other initiatives there had been little contribution towards the creation of self-reliant capacities in Jamaica.

If countries like Jamaica are to develop the self-reliant capacities favoured by the UN in order to ensure international cooperation on organised crime, it should be noted that these countries are also indebted countries. Jamaica and other Caribbean SIDS have reduced tariff revenues in response to trade liberalisation set by international lending institutions most notably the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The economist Ha-Joon Chang argues that trade liberalisation in poorer countries such as Jamaica and other SIDS creates “lower levels of business activity and higher unemployment” and that this ultimately contributes to “severe cuts in spending, often eating into vital areas like education, health and physical infrastructure, damaging long-term growth” (Chang, 2007:69). With Jamaica experiencing vital budget cuts of \$31 billion in spending for 2018/19 (Hall, 2018), it is recommended that the US redirects money to contribute to capacity building in the wider community (eg boat building apprenticeships). Such a commitment by the US, would demonstrate a commitment to Jamaica, in terms of ensuring that US policies and assumptions on organised crime can be facilitative by encouraging economic growth which can promote autonomy within a country such as Jamaica, and in the state services it provides, including law enforcement (Lewis, 1996:104).

6. Conclusion

Jamaica and other SIDS have been required to follow a drug and organised crime control template that was created by the US and other developed nations; one which is not fit for the purposes of small developing countries—as evidenced by the interviewees. The paper has explored, at the wider level, the general notion of the failure of exporting US derived organised crime control policies to SIDS. With reference to Jamaica as a country case study, the authors of this paper reject the ill-informed orthodoxy that the template for international organised crime and drug control policy, (which was initially set by the US Organized Crime Control Act and the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Control Act and first internationalised by the Vienna Convention), can be applied to all

countries, regardless of differences in socio-economic and political development.

The research for this paper shows that the Americanisation of organised crime and drug control policies is evident in the diktat meted out to Jamaican law enforcement officers by American officials who continue to believe in the war on drugs. This paper has argued that following US assumptions and the international policies which they influence, is not in the interests of Caribbean SIDS. In fact, the research conducted for this paper, suggests that problems regarding organised crime have not diminished in spite of adherence to US backed policies and agendas. It is notable that in 1998, the UN set a goal of eliminating the illicit drugs problem by 2008 and pledged that by 2008, the world would be “drug free” (Arlacchi, 2008). Of course, such a quixotic goal has not been achieved, and instead, it is this futile mission which informs the general Americanisation of international law enforcement efforts to combat a myriad of organised crime issues—including firearms trafficking.

In 1931, H B Chamberlin of the Chicago Crime Commission, made the connection between unworkable laws and successful organised crime explicit. He wrote that:

Organised crime is today a great, unmanageable threatening fact in the lives of our communities. It is not enough to ask whether the machinery of law enforcement is good, we must go further, call in question the wisdom of the laws themselves and discover whether or not some of our experiments are not as menacing in their effect as criminal activities. It may be found that some of the very best intentions of our idealists have supplied the pavement for the hell of organized crime (668).

In the context of organised crime control in SIDS such as Jamaica, Chamberlin’s sentiments are still relevant nearly a century later. The research for this paper, has shown that “the wisdom of laws” and conventions in terms of organised crime control must be questioned in order to ensure that they are not futile in their effect and do not perpetuate “the hell of organized crime” (Chamberlin, 1931:668), in countries, such as Jamaica, where the US organised crime control template is inappropriate.

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