

Panel Chair



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In this session we are going to tackle the question of Narco-traffic and International security. It is very clear from the discussion and presentations in the previous session on Public Security and the Problem of Drugs that the international dimension to public security and narco-traffic is a reality relevant to every policeman's, judge's, policymaker's, and politician's job. You cannot separate the international from the local. Globalisation has been mentioned more than once in this symposium, so this session's panel is a continuation of the debates we've had so far.

It is clear that the kind of globalisation that we've witnessed over the past twenty years has benefitted mainstream legal trade, but also has been used by the international criminal organisation - and they have been very clever in taking advantage. The globalisation of finance, the globalisation of law and regulation, and the increased ease of transportation, have all been used by criminal networks worldwide. And this has made the work of the security institutions that much more difficult.

Even more important, I think, is the globalisation of communication, which has had an enormous impact on the efficiency and the transformation of criminal organisations in the way they operate and in



the sophistication of their techniques: financial and legal channels of communication, of course, but also communication in terms of the global transfer of technology and knowhow relating to techniques of terror and violence. There is also a lot of exchange of information with regard to propaganda between criminal organisations, because they realize that they can use the most vulnerable or poorest part of the population for their own purposes.

This is what I would call the politicisation of organized crime. Sometimes the line between organized crime and political insurgency is blurred, and it is difficult to tell the difference. The use of politics is clever. Criminal organisations may engage in grassroots politics, in many cases using propaganda to win the hearts and minds of local communities, and of course, sometimes political leaders, to facilitate their criminal activities. So, with regards to this, what happens in Afghanistan or in Colombia has a direct or indirect impact on the evolution of what happens in suburbs in cities in Europe, in Brazil or elsewhere. I was surprised, for example, to learn that in some gangs in Rio de Janeiro call themselves ‘the Taliban’. I think that this is a very interesting indication of the use of modern communication and this kind of transformation of propaganda tools.