

Neoliberalism, the State, Criminality and the Drug Market of the UK

The National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2018 provides glimpses of the future evolution of the UK drug market in the 21st century. These glimpses illustrate potently that under the hegemony of austere, neoliberal financial markets capitalism transnational organised crime (TOC) is now exercising hegemony over the UK drug market driving its evolution in keeping with its strategic plan.

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/905-national-strategic-assessment-for-soc-2018/file>

The discourse of the war on drugs in its initial formulation was an instrument of geopolitical power and an instrument of power for social control in the North Atlantic. The dismantling of the state apparatus of policing which was part of the dismantling of the State apparatuses under the neoliberal order heightened under the post-2008 austere, neo liberal order of the UK where the use of the war on drugs as an instrument of social control was now gutted resulting in vast expanses of urban and suburban space being simply handed over to organised crime groups to exercise hegemony over. In 2018 this retreat from policing whether as social control or not has spawned and enabled the challenge for hegemony over untouched space by organised crime (OC) under the order of the “county line.” The facilitation of the quest for hegemony over space, thereby challenging the supposed hegemony of the neoliberal State, by TOC and OC groups by the neoliberal State is impacting the very scale, organisation and strategic evolution of TOC and OC groups in the UK. This is potently illustrated in the report by the nature of OC groups in Scotland and Northern Ireland which indicate the deliberate intent of TOC groups to integrate geographic areas into an overarching TOC strategy to maximise profitability through generating a wave of diverse product supply to diverse illicit markets of the UK.

Organised Crime Scotland

The report states that the number of OC groups is decreasing whilst the threats posed are increasing seen in the violence especially in the central belt of Scotland amongst OC groups and the increasing activity in multi illicit drug trafficking predominantly in cocaine, heroin and cannabis. This reality points to the consolidation of OC groups in the drug market under the hegemony of TOC

specifically the Mexican Transnational Trafficking Organisations (MTTOs) in alliance with European TOC especially the Ndrangheta. The operational linkages of Scotland to England, Europe and China is potent proof of the hegemony of TOC groups over the drug economy of Scotland. Further consolidation of organised OC groups will result in the combination of illicit drug trafficking, illicit small arms trafficking and human smuggling with ancillary activities as card scamming. The gun violence between warring OC groups in the east and west of Scotland which is a war for hegemony over trafficking routes illustrates the easy access to illicit guns and the willingness to use them and the violence that precedes the dominance of the TOC and the consolidation of OC groups that follows. Scotland's illicit landscape is then undergoing a process of rapid evolutionary change the nature of which indicates the operational presence of the MTTOs and their European allies in the UK. This rapidly evolving crime landscape raises the question if Scotland is now linked via trafficking pipelines to Ireland and Europe.

Northern Ireland

The report stresses on the organisational linkages between organised crime in Northern Ireland and Ireland where illicit drugs, firearms and smuggled humans move from Ireland to Northern Ireland. But this is just one segment of the reality as Ireland is now a major entry point for cocaine moved via sea vessels and cargo containers from the western hemisphere to Europe including through the Caribbean island chain, the Caribbean basin and Brazil where the product is then moved from Ireland to the UK and Europe. Northern Ireland is a way station in this journey east wards hence the growing number of OC groups in the report involved in the drug trade and more importantly the number of paramilitary groups of all political persuasions involved in the drug trade. The MTTOs and their transnational European organised crime groups allies are deliberately recruiting these paramilitary groups to be affiliates given their training, discipline and experience with trafficking. The Northern Ireland illicit drug markets are being developed simultaneously with the transnational trafficking structures moving product to Scotland, England and Europe. In keeping with the operational strategy of the MTTOs there must be multiple trafficking routes to premier markets and London is the premier market of Europe whilst other markets are undergoing rapid development. Trafficking from Ireland to Northern Ireland to Scotland and England is one route out of a range of possible routes one being Ireland to London

and then there are the opposite flow routes as Rotterdam and Le Havre to London and Ireland. The entire structure is driven by the organisational concept of planned obsolescence as the basis of a fail-safe system. What is obvious in the report is the marriage of illicit drug trafficking, illicit small arms trafficking and human smuggling by OC groups which illustrates the evolution of OC in Northern Ireland in keeping with the strategic model of the MTTOs common to the Western hemisphere.

The report is then indicating the rapid evolution of OC in Scotland and Northern Ireland in 2017 in a policing environment that in no way can respond effectively to the threat posed.

Drugs

From pgs. 54-56 the report presents its threat assessment for illicit drugs which lists key indicators of the operational strategy presently impacting the drug market of the UK. The report indicates that Balkan organised crime dominates the wholesale cocaine markets of the UK. Balkan organised crime can only dominate the cocaine wholesale markets of the UK through their affiliate relationship with the MTTOs and the Ndrangheta for Balkan OC groups cannot dominate cocaine production and its trafficking to Europe hence its dominance of the wholesale market is the result of their affiliate status with those who do: the MTTOs and the Ndrangheta. Balkan OC groups in the UK are moving product that is not theirs to control and sending the proceeds of these sales back to the source. Some may do so on a consignment basis, others will have to make a partial payment and repatriate the outstanding balance and others will have to purchase outright. The primary aim is to control the retail space where the wholesalers recruit gangs to retail the product passed to them and repatriate the proceeds. The MTTOs and the Ndrangheta will have affiliates from a diverse range of groups and ethnicities the preference being for gangs controlling space on the ground for the prime directive is the maximisation of profits. The next marker of note in the report is the marketing of synthetic opioids in UK drug markets which is a deliberate strategy to diversify the supply of opioids thereby reducing the reliance on and market stranglehold of Afghan heroin. The MTTOs pioneered the production of industrial grade methamphetamine which enabled the visualisation of the strategic assets synthetic opioids presented hence the need to be involved in

pioneering this product use. Meth, synthetic opioids, heroin, cocaine and cannabis is then the illicit product mix of the 21st century that offers a variety of products to a spectrum of demand niches thereby maximising demand and profits. The report states that the price of methamphetamine at the retail level is falling in the UK whilst since January 2017 two tonnes of precursor chemicals for the manufacture of amphetamine and methamphetamine were seized. The primary drug of the MTTOs meth is then being rolled out in the UK alongside to the increasing embrace of amphetamine in order to expand the amphetamine market which allows the marketing of meth to piggy back on this market for it is a simple switching of drugs by users.

The strategy of transnational organised crime specifically the MTTOs is then well in train in the UK in 2017 and the most potent indicator of this operational potency is the expansion of the county lines. London is the premier operational centre of the county line strategy where gangland assured of the surety of its supply side arrived at through its affiliate status with the MTTOs has now aggressively moved to increase the expanse of space under its control towards maximising the proceeds of crime and the maximisation of profit. Gangland has now intensified its dominance of expanses of space in the urban core which continues to degrade the quality of daily life of those living in those spaces as criminality explodes under the hegemony of gangland. This explosion of criminality further degrades the human capital of these spaces and heightens the social decay. These spaces then become operational bases for the assault on the neighbourhoods dominated by persons of much higher income and resources especially the business districts of these areas. The expansion from the city to the suburbs to the rural areas is then necessary not only to expand retail space but to expand and integrate new spaces into an operational framework where the county lines become trafficking lines with safe houses, store houses, human store houses, and operational command centres for illicit drugs, small arms and smuggled humans. In the immediate future if not already small manufacturing labs for cocaine where imported coca paste will be processed into cocaine hydrochloride and synthetics will be produced will be added to this operational structure.

The report recognises the tsunami of cocaine exports unleashed upon Europe in the second decade of the 21st century but fails to recognise the diversity of

trafficking methodologies and routes presently utilised to acquire a sustainable tsunami of product swamping Europe. In this diversity of methodologies and routes the premier position of London must be recognised and delineated towards a fit and proper threat assessment. The poly drug market of London is an explosive mix which begets small arms trafficking, human smuggling and expansion of the illicit drug mix with synthetics. The report speaks of the dominance of the southern route utilised to traffick the heroin consumed in the UK but fails to indicate that the southern route upon its arrival in West and Southern Africa enters a drug markets flooded with cocaine from the West on its way to Asia, Europe and the Middle East and the merging of trafficking lines of heroin and cocaine to Europe is rapidly taking place. Nigerian and Moroccan TOC groups for example are now handling poly drug mixtures to Europe and in Europe to which are added human smuggling and small arms trafficking. The violence between trafficking/distributor organisations specialising in either heroin or cocaine is the dying gasps of an operational method that is now faced with extinction as a result of the operational strategy of the MTTOs and the Ndrangheta in Europe. The dominant model in its quest for hegemony is a poly drug, poly product organisation rigorously disciplined, vertically integrated premised on a cellular structure and horizontally integrated towards market domination to attain sustainable profit maximisation.

The new illicit business model described demands a qualitative change to the firearms market of the UK. This model demands trained militias well-armed to enforce discipline and ensure the integrity of the organisation. Militia members are recruited from the State security apparatuses and from gangland. This security imperative is welded to an illicit small arms trafficking enterprise which changes the nature and level of violence in the social order which then spurs an arms race whilst giving cover to the security operations of the TOC groups. The quest for hegemony inevitably spurs drug wars at the organisational level which again intensifies the arms race. The affiliates of the hegemonic TOC groups will then steadily display the drive for increasing weaponisation namely with the preference for 40 calibre hand guns, assault rifles and shotguns. This weaponisation will also indicate that the small arms trafficking enterprise is operationalised towards creating an illicit small arms market. The necessity of a sustainable small arms supply for the protection of the illicit enterprises will then

be married to trafficking to create and supply an expansive small arms market. When combined these two markets impact the social order at its ground level in a most dramatic manner as it drives an explosion of criminality that embraces gun violence specifically rooted in drastic organic changes to gangland.

What is now apparent especially in the aftermath of the financial sector meltdown of 2008 and thereafter is the accelerated surrender of control over expanses of social space under formal State control to TOC, OC and gangland in the UK. The assault of neoliberal financial markets capitalism on the State prior to 2008 that was already dismantling the regulatory and policing agencies of the State was married to the war on terrorism which hastened the demise of social control over specific space types. The war on drugs as social control was no longer a priority of neoliberal discourse expressed by the withdrawal of social control policing in spaces dominated by the underclass, the working class and race minorities. The political agenda was now fixated on the creation of the deep surveillance State in response to the grave threat of Islamic terror as the political mask for the deep deregulation of the financial markets and the willingness to pauperise the majority of the social order in order to rescue the financial oligarchy from their reckless penchant for wrecking the neoliberal economy. The austere neoliberal post 2008 UK discourse then took the rational decision to privatise expansive tracts of social space to transnational organised crime and their organised crime and gangland affiliates. Neo liberal financial markets austere capitalism has been the single most important anabolic steroid applied to criminality in the UK since the feudal era. Vast tracts of urban UK are now under the operational hegemony of organised criminality with no hope of effective policing and other State responses as the austere State cannot effectively mount a strategic response as it is presently emaciated, starved of resources and unwilling to view this reality in its potency. What is real is ensuring the hegemony of the financial oligarchy even if it collapses the economy and having all eyes and resources fixed on the grave terrorist threat where both tasks are mutually irreconcilable. In the vast expanses of space in the social order willingly and discursively surrendered to organised criminality by the neoliberal cultists the absence of the State now means that the State is now depending on organised criminality to police these spaces for the benefit of the State. At the levels of the oligarchy and organised criminality on the ground the State is now in the UK

dependent on oligarchs whose actions transcend law to police space in the interest of the State. The post-modern UK neoliberal capitalist State is an entity that has surrendered its hegemony to criminality, a servant of criminality. The masking task, the task to occlude traditionally the task of the discourse of sovereignty, rule of law and human rights hence liberal democracy is now in tatters which spurs the frantic drive for ever deepening the surveillance state. This then is the expression of biopolitics in crisis assaulted by neoliberalism with no alternative replacement in sight and there will be none for neoliberalism as a discourse is incapable of formulating said replacement. This is a crisis of civilisation with no solution in sight for Brexit is simply a convulsion arising from death's embrace rather than a solution.

Power then continues to hold on to prohibition in the UK for a simple reason the scent of social control which power is addicted to but on the ground in surrendered spaces throughout the UK State power is only a memory that every day grows dimmer. But prohibition has been given a new purpose under neoliberal financial markets capitalism for it enables the entire criminal justice apparatus of the State to be now neoliberalised under the control of the financial oligarchy where criminality serves the investment of cheap quantitative easing money into the neoliberalised criminal justice structure towards the generation of obscene wealth to the benefit of a billionaire globalised oligarchy. Prohibition is today in the UK neoliberalised where TOC and OC illicit profits generated in the UK must be absorbed by the neoliberal financial sector and combined with the licit financial sector at a premium for the service rendered to crime groups. To accomplish this wealth generation, process the neoliberal financial sector must be able to offer these services sustainably in spite of the existing body of laws. They need prohibition to extract a premium and immunity to generate their super profits from this process. They then need political clout to enjoy impunity in spite of law they are then posing THE grave threat to the postmodern UK state not Islamic extremism not TOC and OC. This grave threat is being generated by a licit, legal entity as the synthetic opioid epidemic. As the State shrinks in the UK under the assaults of the neoliberal oligarchy and the power of this oligarchy begins to dwarf the social order the power of TOC and its affiliates will be drafting off the vacuum created by this oligarchy. Eventually the conjuncture will arise between the financial oligarchy and TOC and its affiliates and however it is resolved

humpty dumpty will never be the same again. Such is the post Brexit future of the UK as the colonial-imperial buzzards come home to roost.