**Press release embargoed until May 24th 0600 GMT+1**

**A World Without Order**

**Beyond Convergence: the rise of organised crime, terror and criminalised states**

**May 24th, 2017, Oslo/Vienna:** *The global criminal economy has flourished: growing four-fold over the last two decades, feeding off burgeoning markets for illicit commodities, narcotics, wildlife products, kidnapping, ransom and extortion, both virtual and real. The profits – recently estimated between USD 6-22 trillion a year - have flowed to drug cartels, cyber-criminals, terrorist groups and to corrupt states. The internet and the international financial system have been co-opted and are complicit in facilitating the interests of plutocratic elites at the expense of the rest of society; in furthering criminal commerce and extreme violence over social order and equitable development. The torrential rise of populism, xenophobia, and global insecurity can be directly linked to this phenomenon.*

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**Beyond Convergence: A World Without Order**, a publication by the US National Defense University, in cooperation with the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, brings together some of the world’s leading thinkers on deviant globalisation, organised crime, corruption, terrorism, insurgency, conflict and illicit financial flows. Together these paint a dystopian picture of a confluence of interests that together undermine the long accepted principles of national and global governance. The evidence is compelling.

**Organised crime is on the rise, and more lucrative than it has ever been before:**

* The WannaCry Ransomware attack has proved that **cybercrime** is a growth industry, with the ability to rebalance the world order. Small states can threaten the world’s traditional great powers. Hostile actors, both criminal and terrorist, benefit from a low-risk, high-return facilitated by a service-industry that provides cheap, full package cyberattack solutions. Through the darkweb, for USD2 any deviant can take down a website; for USD30, they can buy a fraudulent identity, including identifiers, passport numbers, credit cards and PINs.
* **Illicit trade and counterfeit goods** flood markets in the developed and developing world: a market worth USD 250 billion in 2007 (1.95% of global GDP) is estimated at USD 1.3 trillion in 2015. Beyond dollars, substandard and fraudulent medicines, pesticides and fertilizers, illicit tobacco, adulterated food and consumer goods threaten public health and safety.
* Sustainability of land and oceans is tested to extinction levels by **wildlife trafficking, IUU fishing, illicit logging and illegal mining**. Convergence is also being seen between environmental crimes and other serious crimes, according to a recent UNEP-INTERPOL study, including counterfeiting, drug trafficking, cybercrime and financial crime.

**Commodities move transnationally, but local control by warlords and terrorist groups, keeps countries and regions at the brink of crisis.**

* The illicit tobacco trade, estimated at USD650 billion funds Al-Qaeda groups in the trans-Sahara, including Al Mourabitoun, the group that attacked the Norwegian STATOIL facility in Amenas, Algiers in 2013. The same groups engage in kidnapping for ransom, smuggling migrants and cocaine.
* The Taliban in Afghanistan profit from the USD4 billion heroin trade, but also from illegal logging and mining. Al-Shabaab, the Somali militant group, previously took between 38 and USD56 million from taxing the illicit charcoal trade. These groups use the funds to consolidate local control, terrorising residents, extorting businesses and holding hostage the development of their countries in perpetual insecurity.
* The Islamic State represents the complete convergence of a transnational terrorist group resourced on criminal flows in the range of USD2-400 million in 2016, down by two-thirds, through the smuggling of fuel, antiquities, sex trafficking and levying tax on civilians. The challenge they present to international norms, the polarisation of the international system and the Westphalian order is profound.

**Transnational flows are enabled by grand corruption and the erosion of states.**

* In the Americas, criminal groups have embedded themselves in state structures, capturing political processes, state service delivery and local governance through illicit resources. The breakdown of the rule of law in Mexico, Venezuela, Guatemala and El Salvador has resulted in stratospherically high levels of homicides, femicides and criminal violence. The complicity of state officials in this process has lead to the rise of vigilante groups, gang wars and widespread impunity for acts of violence.
* Across Syria, the burgeoning Captagon trade funds conflict actors on both sides, fuelled by demand for the profitable party drug in the Gulf States. In neighbouring countries of Turkey and Jordan, criminal interests combine with state control to undermine the democratic order.
* The Italian mafia challenges state control over public procurement, waste disposal including the dumping of toxic and e-waste, with irreparable risk to the environment.
* The marked rise of strongmen and populists in the Americas, Africa, the Middle East and Europe as a response to insecurity and criminal control. Crackdowns, militarisation and self-declared wars on drugs, immigrants and terrorists have been used to justify hegemonic control over democratic institutions, the over-riding of human rights principles and the undermining of a free press.

**The silent revolution is enabled by illicit financial flows and the international financial system for the benefit of plutocratic elites.**

* The ‘unholy trinity’, the confluence of global business, organised crime and political power has come together to serve the interests of the 1% - whilst progressively stripping of human rights norms, civic freedoms and social safety nets from the most vulnerable.
* Impunity, inequality, economic deprivation and marginalisation push the vulnerable to the brink of survival, triggering a wave of protest movements, insurgent warfare and global mobility at a scale never seen. Here too organised crime profits, as transnational networks facilitate the illicit movement of people across increasingly militarised borders. And terrorist groups feed off the discontent, channelling it into low-budget attacks aimed at civilians and their trust in society.

**The editors of *Beyond Convergence: A World Without Order****,* **and a number of the chapter authors, will be presenting the book on Wednesday 24th May, 2-5pm, at the Thon Opera, Oslo.**

Available for interview upon request are:

**Nils Gilman, Chancellor of Berkley University and author of the bestselling *Deviant Globalisation.***

**Mark Shaw, Director of the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime.**

**Michael Mclaucic, Director of Research, National Defence University, USA.**

**Celina Realuyo, Professor, National Defence University. USA.**

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