



**James Cockayne and Adam Lupel (Eds.)**

**Peace Operations and Organised Crime: Enemies or Allies?**

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*Peace Operations and Organised Crime: Enemies or Allies?* is an important book that addresses a significant although largely unexplored question: the intended and unintended relationships between peace operations and organised crime. Cockayne and Lupel present a theoretical framework alongside contributions from significant figures involved with peacebuilding, security and human rights that address the book's task through a discussion of UN policy and a series of detailed case studies. The result has significant implications for the work of strategists and practitioners and deserves to be brought to the attention of all agencies involved in peace keeping and peacebuilding arrangements.

Cockayne and Lupel provide a framework for understanding the complexities of intervening in conflicts. Their approach moves discussion beyond the often convenient labelling of states as failed, or criminal to consider the impact of illegal activity on peacekeeping and peacebuilding and how in some circumstances organised crime can act as an alternative form of non-state governance. The editors distinguish non-state violence and organised crime by describing an analytical process that sees criminal groups having predatory, parasitic or symbiotic relationships with state governance. Predatory groups stand outside existing structures, parasitic groups are closer to legitimate systems whilst those with a symbiotic relationship can be seen to interact with legitimate structures and may even replicate some of them. Peacekeepers and peacebuilders need to be aware of these distinctions as they plan and implement interventions so that they can guard against the impact of unintended consequences.

The book raises some important questions regarding the implications of framing groups involved in conflict as criminal entities – arguing that ill-considered labelling can have a significant impact on processes of resolving conflict and peacebuilding. Designating a group or even a state as criminal may be convenient from the perspective of the international community. However this can deny the reality of life on the ground and the extent to which groups that are seen as embodying organised crime can also form part of the societal fabric of some localities - making their eradication difficult to achieve and pointing to the relevance of understanding and working with the dynamic they represent.

The book explores this complexity through two thematic discussions and eight case studies. Holt and Boucher consider the UN responses to organised crime in post-conflict settings, arguing for greater cooperation between peace operations and panels of experts. They point out that criminal networks and corruption can fatally undermine efforts to restore peace and security although there is no single UN process specifically designed to address their presence. Andreas's case study of peace operations in Bosnia reaches a challenging conclusion. He finds that whilst 'illicit business' is commonly portrayed in the role of a peacebuilding spoiler, in Bosnia organised crime had a more symbiotic relationship with peacekeeping and played a crucial role in helping local economies to meet the needs of besieged communities. Friesendorf's discussion of fighting organised crime by 'internationals' in Kosovo highlights a failure to coordinate initiatives targeted at illegal activity, undermining



efforts to build domestic security. Reno's exploration of criminality in West African conflict settings raises further significant issues for peacebuilders, not the least of which is the need to balance processes to transform conflict with the interests of actors who have been labelled criminal but whom retain influence and power. Machal's study of peace operations and international crime in Somalia argues that a humanitarian perspective in itself is insufficient in an environment where crime is, in the authors terms, an ingrained artefact of life and that little can be done without the establishment of suitable governance that challenges criminality and avoids compromising existing agreements between UN staff and Somalian stakeholders. Gavigan's study of organised crime in Guatemala argues that a failure to appreciate the impact of peace processes on illicit economies has led to an increase in peacebuilding spoilers. Those intervening in such situations need to develop a comprehensive understanding of political economies associated with illicit power structures so that mediators and negotiators have appropriate contingency plans that can respond to the risk of organised crime undermining peace process. Cockayne's case study of Haiti argues that external interventions may have actually increased the vulnerability of the population to the excesses of organised crime. Felbab-Browns assessment of drugs, wars and crime in Afghanistan argues that inadequate progress in addressing economic, structural and security problems has led to limited success in reducing the production of narcotics. In the authors view eradicating opium crops antagonises the rural population, contributes towards Taliban-led counterinsurgency and that without security, there is little chance of reducing the prevalence of an illicit economy. Williams, in the book's final case study finds that organised crime in Iraq emerged as a major factor following the 2003 coalition invasion. He argues the importance of developing systems which support transparency and accountability as well as restricting opportunities by organised crime syndicates, disparate groups and elements of governance to engage in criminality.

A second thematic study by Muggah and Krause sees existing peacekeeping and peacebuilding methodology which focuses on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration benefiting from learning arising in the fields of criminal justice and public health in order to develop a more coherent strategy to building peace and security. Finally, the editors present a concluding analysis which argues for peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities acting as a platform for elective interventions including judicial and law enforcement strategies. The editors caution against 'quick-fix' strategies. Rather a flexible approach, tailored to the circumstances of a specific conflict is good practice.

This book makes a challenging contribution to peacekeeping and peacebuilding methodology. It successfully treads a delicate line that does not endorse colluding with organised criminal groups - rather the books discussion recognises their existence and influence as a reality in conflict settings. Reflecting on the variety, depth and richness of the volumes case studies reveals broad and transferable themes Firstly, a failure to properly assess the impact of interventions designed to bring about improved security can make the resolution of a complex situation either more intractable or even cause it to deteriorate. This is especially the case in situations where inadequate coordination both between external agencies, and with the local population, is a feature of external interventions. Secondly the influence of organised crime actors is rooted in a pre-conflict phase, and that it is both unrealistic and short-sighted to preclude their engagement by labelling such entities as criminal – not least



because this can lead to their influence being exercised as peacekeeping and peacebuilding spoilers in order to maintain economic and societal status. Thirdly, organised crime groups can perform aspects of the functions normally associated with legitimate governance. Failing to assess the impact of such a role can alienate local populations from the objectives that external interventions seek to bring about. Lastly dealing with organised crime requires a range of methods and strategies. The detail of each conflict setting should determine the type of strategy and range of expertise deployed, rather than any pre-existing and externally constructed agenda of action. Dealing with organised crime is not the same as providing humanitarian interventions and requires different forms of expertise and interventions if the efforts of peacebuilding strategists and practitioners are to have some chance of effectiveness.

The book does not deal with the impact and demands of western / northern hemisphere societies - the greedy consumption of illicit opiates, blood diamonds, and people trafficking – and which provides the market place that much organised crime in poorer society's exists to serve. However this should not undermine the essential importance of the volume. Those involved in planning and providing peacekeeping and peacebuilding need to acknowledge the reality of organised crime and develop ways of working that includes interacting with such entities if this will contribute to improvements in the security and well-being of ordinary people. This book presents invaluable learning and guidance that will help them to do so more effectively.

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