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Louise Shelley

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Dr. Louise Shelley is a recent winner of an Andrew Carnegie \$200,000 fellowship, a program that provides support for scholars in the social sciences and humanities.

The Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC). TraCCC is the first center in the United States devoted to understanding the links among terrorism, transnational crime and corruption, and to teach, research, train and help formulate policy on these critical issues. TraCCC works through international research partnerships engaging in fundamental and applied research projects. Research topics include human smuggling and trafficking; nuclear proliferation issues; the links between crime and terrorism; money laundering and other financial crimes; the impact of organized crime and terrorism on legitimate business; and environmental crimes.

Subject Area/Topic: CRIME, CORRUPTION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Highlights: Almost all the security headlines today are examples of “dirty entanglements” -- a concept from physics which holds that when particles interact and then separate, they have chaotic, destabilizing impact far beyond their point of contact. Today almost no terrorism exists apart from linkages to international crime.

Although it constitutes just a few percents of the global economy, it has a chaotic impact, especially in regions of weak states (political entities) and weak legitimate economies. Such weakness, Dr. Shelley explained, gives rise to corruption, which must be placed at the core of our understanding and analysis of crime and terrorism, and is the incubator. We need to understand the business of crime and terrorism, replacing the outmoded concept of the financing of terrorism.

In regard to our focus on “Narco-terrorism”, we have failed to focus on the diverse criminal businesses involved—illicit trade in cigarettes, counterfeit art, diverted commodities, and more. The Charlie Hebdo massacre was funded by income from counterfeit Nikes and reselling diverted cigarettes. Trafficking, which comes about when people are desperate, is another significant source of income.

Human trafficking will be a defining issue of the 21st century, Dr. Shelley predicted. Headlines suggest that trafficking is a North African phenomenon, but, although North African states are very weak, susceptibility is worldwide because there are no viable restraints.