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Zaur Borov

Stephen R. Bowers

Liberty University, srbowers2@liberty.edu

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Illegal Weapons Traffic in Eastern Europe



Zaur Borov
Stephen Bowers

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Executive Summary

The primary focus of this study is on illegal weapons trade in Romania and the Caucasus region of the former USSR.

Illegal weapons traffic in these regions is linked with both organized crime and terrorist activities.

The main source of weapons for conflicts in the Caucasus region is corruption in Russian military circles.

One well-known Arab terrorist organization, the so-called Muslim Brothers, has active connections in Romania.

There is a incipient growing of trade with components, products and substances used in the manufacturing of mass destruction weapons (chemical, biological and nuclear).

Free trade conventions between the CIS states facilitate illegal weapons transactions in the former USSR.

In Eastern Europe there has been a steady increase of trade in components, products and substances used in the manufacturing chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Many of the most recent Russian weapons, such as the B-94, have gone directly from the factory to the Caucasus arms bazaars. Chechen troops had the B-94 before it was issued to Russian soldiers.

Weapons Trade in the Caucasus

After September 11, 2001 it became more difficult to express precisely what is meant by the term "weapons". That event forced a reexamination of the traditional definition of weapons and, with it, a new concept of what constitutes a weapon. What we do know is that illegal commerce in weapons, by whatever definition, is widespread throughout Eastern Europe and the former USSR. The conventional illegal arms trade in the Caucasus is one of the most significant in the post-Communist world. The airports of the Caucasus are also among the most vulnerable in the world and may, at some future date, constitute an equally threatening factor in this new environment. The appearance of the computer, something else which can also be used a weapon, elevates the technological level of the threat growing from this region.

There are some basic assumptions about weapons traffic in this region. First, the Caucasus have always been armed. This was true even during Soviet times when a totalitarian government conducted constant surveillance. It has simply always been like this, though at times less so. The Caucasus and arms are concepts which have always been together. In Soviet times, up until the fall of the Soviet Union, the center of the arms trade has been in the Caucasus. Weapons there were specific. Those sold at the bazaar in Nazrani were older, mostly arms from the time of the Civil War. The "Mauser" pistol enjoyed the greatest popularity. There were no modern weapons such as automatics.

Weapon Merchants: As one would expect, almost all of the weapons in the Caucasus are of Soviet or Russian origin. There are simply no foreign weapons in the Caucasus. Russian authorities are conducting an extensive anti-terrorism campaign in the region and often claim that foreign weapons are being used. One of the most frequent illustrations of this assertion has come from Russian generals who display walkie-talkies made by "Kenwood". The presence of such instruments, they claim, proves that foreign weapons have been introduced thus elevating the crisis to one they describe as "international terrorism". Such Western items are sold routinely in stores in Moscow because there are practically no walkie-talkies of Russian origin. Thus, it is important to note that weapons are mainly of Soviet or Russian origin.

There are several reasons for Russian domination of the arms trade. The first is that the main source for weapons in the Caucasus has been either the Soviet or the Russian army. Second, arms were further redistributed in the Caucasus from one hand to another, among "our own". This is how the arms trade in the Northern Caucasus began. These structures are the original sources of weapons. The first such large source, from which it was possible to obtain weapons, was the Chechen Republic. In 1991, when federal authorities left Chechnya they abandoned a large arsenal of weapons. There were many troops in Chechnya and the arsenals had everything, from automatic weapons to nuclear warheads. Really, someone warned of this or someone foresaw this situation and removed nuclear weapons from the Caucasus before 1991. They were taken from Chechnya and from Nalchik and no such weapons remain in the Caucasus. But what remained, including

the training L-33 airplanes remained in Chechnya and became the property of local authorities.

Russian Armaments. In the post-Soviet era, a great need for weapons emerged. As conflicts began in Southern Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Ossetian-Ingush, arms flooded into the Caucasus. For many people this created an impression of illegality as a matter of routine. The President of the Chechen Republic, Dzhokhar Dudayev, didn't transfer a single gun or automatic to Abkhazia or other regional hotspots. All of the weapons were purchased in the arms markets for cash and transported by small AN-2 airplanes to Abkhazia. Weapons were purchased at Russian military bases in Russia proper or in Abkhazia and then transported into the conflict zone. As a result of this traffic, in Abkhazia there are now approximately 100 armored vehicles, about 200 artillery units, an entire squadron of L-39 military aircraft, numerous military boats, and a wide assortment of small arms. While conflict in Abkhazia began with little more than hunting rifles and the level of military technology steadily became more complex and deadly.

Arms entered Southern Ossetia in exactly the same way. Ossetian servicemen in the Russian army were one of the main sources of weapons - the Ossetians constituted a large percentage of the generals and colonels who were serving in the army and they transferred weapons from their sectors into Southern Ossetia. Moreover, the weapons purchased in Chechnya were bought on Russian bases.

There is also an active arms trade in the Gall region of Georgia where many entrepreneurs have grown wealthy selling weapons to Abkhazians. These same individuals sell weapons in Southern Ossetia and throughout the Northern Caucasus. A large portion of the weapons which arrived in Karachayev-Circassia were new, still packed in boxes from the factories, and came in large numbers directly out of the base supply centers.

The main source of weapons for the conflict is corruption in Russian military circles. This arms buildup could never have taken place had not senior Russian military officials realized that there was considerable profit to be made from the sale of weapons to combatants everywhere, including those places in which Russian soldiers were the targets

In general, one may assume that if a conflict began in the North Caucasus, the weapons would appear immediately. There was never a long-term shortage of weapons in this region. The Transcaucasian region played a large role in providing the North Caucasus with weapons. The deputy commander of the Transcaucasian region was General Sufyan Depayev. Depayev is Balkar with many connections in the illegal weapons market who sold arms to both sides in any conflict. He provided them to both the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis, as he had to the Georgians and Abkhazians. After retirement from the army, Depayev became the chairman of the commission for the rehabilitation of the Balkar people.

Depayev's influence over the region's weapons traffic became apparent early in the Georgian conflict. In 1992, a group of fifty unidentified men seized 600 loads of ammunition from a Russian Army depot in Tbilisi. Russian authorities pointed to the fact that an operation of such a scale could not have been carried out without significant official protection and support. While criminal charges were never made, it was apparent that they saw Depayev as the principal figure in the theft.

At the beginning of the Chechen conflict, Chechen officials found that the opposition forces led by Dzhokhar Dudayev had sold a large amount of weapons on the illegal market. This created a significant shortage in Chechnya so officials began to stockpile weapons of all types. The first anti-tank equipment came from the Baltic states but Chechen authorities soon found a new source for an even greater variety of weapons. They simply bought them from the opposing side and at an exceptionally low price. Moreover, the Chechens used this situation to develop an effective theme for psychological operations. In 1995, while buying arms from the Russians, they filmed the entire transaction and circulated it on Russian television. While there had long been rumors that Russian generals were selling weapons to their enemies, few people had actually believed this. The film constituted an important and devastating piece of evidence that this unpopular military campaign was being undermined by Russia's own military establishment.

The special services announcement that they had confiscated weapons in the Caucasus and that they are stopping the influx of weapons is simply ludicrous. It is difficult to believe but in the city of Nalchik a sniper rifle called a "Tiger" can be purchased for 12,000 rubles and, considering the total corruption of everyone and everything, for 1,500 rubles (\$50) one can get a license for keeping arms in the Russian Federation. This is yet another source for the export of weapons to the Caucasus. Another well-known weapons, the SVD sniper rifle, is also available for most buyers. Practically all Caucasians are now, in one way or another, trying to buy weapons that are sold in hunting stores. Several points. First, these are hunting rifles that can be modified into military weapons. They simply received new passports. One of the examples of these "Tigers" is the hunting carbine "Seyga" which can be converted into a modernized Kalashnikov. It has a component that can be ground down, making the hunting rifle fire just like a regular Kalashnikov. Besides this there are plenty of different special services and, also taking into account the ubiquitous criminal and terrorist elements, plenty of people that are licensed to carry arms.



Any normal colonel could sit and talk about how weapons shuffle from one army to another. A black or a grey market. There is even a legal market through which illegal items pass. It is probably not difficult to remember several scandals when hundreds of armored vehicles from Russia ended up in Armenia, either according to the Tashkent agreement or, as reported in the media, purchased in some Moscow Bazaar by the Armenians.

Foreign Weapons. As far as foreign arms are concerned, they were like museum exhibits. In Abkhazia Kalashnikovs of Romanian origin appeared. There were many of them. After a month the owners of this automatic all tried to relinquish it. It is cheap but less in demand. Not strangely, arms also come from Central Asia. The governments of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan are also actively involved in the arms trade. Weapons come from the Ukraine. In this scheme the legal, civilized arms trade in Russia became even more civilized. That is, Russia began commercial sales, with an end-user certificate and a check of where they were going. But the black market still remained.

What is to be done? How is it possible to open an arms dealership on every corner. Serious research needs to be done and information on the Caucasus needs to be considered in this plan. Apropos of this some kind of monitoring needs to set up in the Caucasus. I am disturbed by the fact that the arms trade has begin to change qualitatively. Automatics and tanks are no longer needed. Now people are beginning to go for the latest weapons. For example the B-94, the latest work of the Russian army, has not yet entered the ranks of the Russian soldiers but is already there in Chechnya, held by the Chechen opposition. This is an indicator of how the latest weapons can go from construction straight to the Caucasus.

Do terrorists in the Northern Caucasus use the latest weapons? Is it possible that in the Caucasus they have biological or nuclear weapons? I don't think that they have these right now in the Caucasus or terrorist organizations capable of carrying out an attack like the one in New York with such extensive preparation and planning. But we have Basayev's raids on Budenovsk and Pervomaiskoye, which I consider to be two tiered. It is possible to look on it as guerrilla warfare, that is, if Basayev had seized Budenovsk this would have at least been a military action. But there was also a terrorist aspect. They seized the hospital and took innocent people hostage. Both of these raids showed that unprecedented cases are possible in the Caucasus. I would say that this is a vulnerable region in many ways. For example, I believe that the most important point that needs to be guarded by the entire world is the dam outside the city of Krasnodar. If something there collapses, Krasnodar will be wiped out. Still, this dam is very carelessly guarded.

The question always remains "who financed this?" It is not likely Chechnya or Russia. But there are many counterfeit dollars of Iraqi origin in Chechnya and in the Caucasus, Russia and other countries of the CIS. Somewhere in Iraq or the Near East, I don't want to pin it down, they have arranged the production of excellent counterfeited American dollars. The majority of the weapons the Chechens have purchased from the other side were done so with counterfeit dollars.

Nevertheless, weapons were on the move and it happened that during conflicts in Chechnya, during military activities, Chechnya was, for several months, in need of weapons, only to later have such an automatic supply that they again began to export them, again contiguous territories began to buy arms from Chechnya. All of this unfolded within a very interesting framework. Sovereignty offers not only a political meeting but also other political activities. One of the tendencies of sovereignty in the former Soviet republics is that they, becoming large, independent states, decided to carry on their own arms production. In principle this production was set in the Caucasus. In Abkhazia, for example they tried to establish a factory for the production of certain types of weapons. They made superior grenades. Their grenades. The same thing was tried in two other regions of the Caucasus. Their were attempts to produce pistols in Armenia and Chechnya called "Porsyus". The pistols were unsuccessful and they were rarely use. In the Caucasus they were used more as something exotic, and therefore in such trivialities that it is best not to spend any time in it.

Of course the production of some kinds of weapons had to carried out and thus Georgia enters the scene. In Georgia there was a factory for the production of weapons. During the Abkhazian conflict the Georgians established a structure for shells. All of these weapons were used in conflicts and in open military clashes.

One of the most significant and telling events about weapons traffic did not occur in the Caucasus but in Moscow and Volgodonsk when powerful explosions destroyed large buildings. I don't know who planned this but I don't believe that the Karachayevets could have done it. The singularity of this terrorist act resides in its unique use of human psychology. The fact is that all of the Russian special services, with the exception of demolitions, didn't know that there could be such an explosive. In each case the explosive was associated with TNT. This is of course to the shame of the Russian special services but they themselves told the media that the Moscow explosion was carried out openly, in cars that had obviously false invoices, on one of which was written "sugar". It is most interesting that no bribes were taken, what is taken for "sugar". To such a degree that all of this was something ordinary. So much so that there were numerous witnesses and no one knew what was happening.

This is why I began by saying that I didn't know what could now be called weapons. If in this car there were a single cartridge or a single stick of TNT then it is always possible that the car could be detained. But all of these explosives were carried openly and all of the representatives of the special services (GAIs and policemen) didn't know that they were explosives. This psychological factor has been used strongly in the Caucasus. This is one method in which weapons were changed in terrorist acts.

Feasibility of Instituting Controls. The Caucasus are something unique and through them there are only four roads. Actually there are only three since one is divided into two parts. These are the Derbentskaya railroad, the military Sukhumskaya road, and the military Georgian road, in addition to a small concentration of Transcaucasians. So to block three roads is theoretically possible. It is easier to block them than 100 roads. But although posts exist there are no roadblocks at any point in these roads.

The most dangerous terrorist region has been the Mineralnaya Voda region. According to several assumptions tactics have changed in the Minvod region. This is nearly the regional center of a large territory in which we can include Kabardino-Balkariya, Karachayev-Circassia, even Northern Ossetia and the Stavropol krai. The Minvod region is a strong transportation junction. The largest airport and train station are there. The majority of the terrorist acts took place there. Anything that could be attacked was. They seized busses, helicopters, and airplanes. It is there that Basayev captured an airplane and flew to Turkey. This was still before the Chechen conflict. Few knew that during the Coup attempt Shamil Basayev was located there. He bought grenades and went to defend the white house.

When these terrorist attacks were being carried out the issue came up of how to close the channels and access. The first thing that they thought of was to cut off access in this region. Blockades were set up throughout the Caucasus, every 50 kilometers. These were not GAI posts but ones of actual concrete. At every post you were stopped. These were in every region where there were conflicts and even in ones where there weren't any.

This did not become an obstacle for the distribution of arms. The army, from whom the weapons were purchased, transported them through the blockades. To put it roughly, no one drives to Krasnodar to purchase weapons since the Russian army is everywhere.

Arms have begun to migrate. When the presidential election began in Karachevo-Circassia a unique situation occurred. The closest region from which it was easy to get weapons was Abkhazia. Karachayev-Circassia had its own border with Abkhazia - mountains and passes. Of course weapons began to enter from Abkhazia. From all accounts the arms dealers have no ethnic or political platforms for their trade.

Weapons Trade in Romania

After 1989 the Romanian weapon industry and weapon sales plummeted dramatically. The main reason of this recession was the change of official Romanian policy in relationship with the traditional trade partners. Most of these partners were countries sanctioned by the international community and the western states whose benevolence the Romanian Government seeks now. As a direct consequence of signing the international agreements of arm control and export the Government prohibited the Romanian weapon exports to countries under embargo or involved in conflicts. This led to a 90% decrease in the weapon production compared to 1989.

The fact that the Romanian weapon industry is not competitive on the international market is another factor that contributed to the decay of the Romanian weapon trade.

The current situation of the Romanian weapon industry is difficult, and the state authorities try to anchor this industry by implementing reorganization, restructuring and conversion programs. The two large producers of military equipment, weapons and technology in Romania – Regia Arsenalul Armatei and RATMIL – incorporate twenty-three plants and two research institutes. Beside these, there are sixty-five state-owned companies administered by the State Ownership Fund that have military facilities. Regia Arsenalul Armatei is subordinated to the Minister of Defense and RATMIL is subordinated to the Minister of Industry. Because the Ministers of Defense and of the Interior pursue the goal upgrading the Armed Forces weapons and technology to NATO standards and because the modernization of the Romanian weapon industry is still just a project for which the authorities look for financing, the only chance of survival this industry has remains the export of weapons in the “hot” areas of the world, export that should avoid breaking the international agreements.

Directia de Protectie si Securitate Militara¹ (counterintelligence) and Directia de Investigatii Economice² (within the Minister of Interior) are responsible for checking that the weapon business are in compliance with the international agreements and the weapon shipments do not reach countries in conflict or countries that support terrorism. These institutions have to know everything about the local exporters, the importers and their intentions. Unofficially, Serviciul de Informatii Externe³ is also mandated to check the

¹ Department of Military Protection and Security

² Department of Economic Investigations

³ External Intelligence Service

importers, the final destination of the weapon shipments being sometimes checked in the field by the military attachés of Directia de Informatii Militare⁴, based on the agreement of the authorities in the importing country.

Basically these services are in the position to know whether or not a Romanian weapon export breaks an international agreement, even in the event that the Government endorses such an illegal export on political or economic grounds.

Types of Arms Found in Romania

- Automated pistols: Glock. This type of pistol is very versatile, has 17 cartridges, and it is very hard to detect because the cover and other parts are made in ceramic.
- Assault carbins: AK-47, Heckler&Koch
- Machine guns: Armalite
- Grenade throwers: AG 7 or RPG 7
- Rockets: Stinger, SAM. Most of these rockets were brought from Afghanistan. They home-in using the thermal print for the target.
- Ammunition: the most impressive ammunition found was made of Teflon
- Explosive: Semtex. This explosive can be used in the manufacturing of letter-bombs that explode when bent, or exposed to X-rays or heat. These types of bombs usually have a photoelectric trigger and are disguised in envelopes of a 7-8 mm height, weighting 50-80 grams. Semtex can be disguised in luggage. This kind of bomb is usually detonated by a regular fuse or by remote control. Semtex can be disguised in explosive belts hidden in textile fibers. This method used mostly by Kurds. This explosive can also be used for barometrical bombs for hijacking planes.
- Targeting systems: laser spotting devices
- Stun-guns



Destructive Impact of Semtex

Weapons Trade and Organized Crime

The Italian Mob. Since 1989, the Romanian authorities have identified and then deported a number of foreign citizens that were involved in subversive activities. Important members of the international organized crime have been declared undesired, being denied the right to enter the Romanian territory again because they put in danger the national security. Behind all these people – representing links of a mob-like structure – there are hidden interests that target the Romanian political and economical environments. In other words, organizations such as PKK, Cosa Nostra, The Red Japanese Army, The Muslim Brothers

⁴ Department of Military Intelligence

etc., have extended their ramifications in Romania. The Romanian secret services try to keep this situation under control.

Although these mobs function based on very strict rules and codes and operate under cover, the Romanian secret services have discovered some of their vulnerabilities.

The Italian Marco Candio di Lerhia, born in 1957, was declared undesired on the Romanian territory for a period of 5 years. This person was a member of Cosa Nostra and there was information that the purpose of his visit to Romania was to recruit Romanians for his organization.

The Italian mob organization – Camorra Napolitana has also similar interests in our country. An important member of Camorra, Antonio di Gabrielle, age 43, was identified and declared undesired by the Romanian authorities. Di Gabrielle was part of the “Alfieri” clan – the extremist-terrorist fraction of Camorra. He established in Romania in 1993 hiding from the Italian authorities that were searching for him under charges of financial and banking offenses, and extremely violent crimes. His mission was to organize a network of companies meant to money laundering the funds of the clan. The amounts were deposited in different Western banks and their sources were mainly drug and arms traffic and kidnapping. In order to reach his goals, the Italian has evaded taxes, swindled his business partners and tried to corrupt public employees. Di Gabrielle assiduously searched for by the Interpol because he had paved his way with a big number of murders.

Romeo Alfio, a member of the Sicilian family Mussi de Ficurina, led by Paolo di Mauro – aka “The Professor”, has been extradited from Romania. Romeo Alfio had an impressive background, being the coordinator of an international drug and arms traffic network. His partners in Germany had important connections in the Balkans, especially in Roia. During the press conference related to his extradition, the Romanian police presented Alfio as being part of the mafia family Laudani, well known for their murders, thefts, robberies, and forceful defrauds in the Catania province.

Interpol has issued a general search warrant for Marzio Bartesaghi, age 38, after the Court in Como sentenced him in 1995 to 10 years and 8 months of prison. The fugitive escaped from Italy. He was wanted for drug, and military arms and ammunition traffic. Bartesaghi was arrested in downtown Bucharest by officers of the Anti Organized Crime Brigade of the Minister of Interior. The officers found him and after an extended watch, managed to arrest him. Baresaghi declared he was hiding in the apartment of one of his friends, in downtown Bucharest. He was deported in Italy based on a police investigation that established the illegal aspects of its activities.

The Chinese Mob. The classical formula of organization that the Chinese mob uses is known by Europeans by the name of “Triad”. The word comes from English and makes reference to the sacred triangle that unites the sky, the earth and the man in a holistic and

unitary entity. Etymologically, the Chinese term is better translated by "The Heavenly Brotherhood".

The "Silence Law" that is resumed by the Italian Mafia through "Omerta" is illustrated by the Chinese triads through a Taoist proverb: "When alive don't go to authorities, when dead don't go to hell"

The Chinese started to emigrate in Romania on a large scale during the very first months of 1990. Between 1990-1997 approximately 70,000 Chinese citizens entered the Romanian territory, most of them explaining the reasons of their trips through personal, business and sometimes cultural interests. Currently there are 3000 companies with Chinese participation.

Mariei Yanamora Galvez, entered Romania using false documents and declaring himself a German citizen. In fact her name was Ekita Yukyko, 48 years, a Japanese citizen and a member of many important mobs in the Country of the Rising Sun. Yukyko was deported from Romania with a Tarom air flight going from Bucharest to Bangkok and during the flight she was taken over by the Japanese secret services, which arrested her.

In October 1997 she was involved in hijacking a Japan Airlines airplane on the Tokyo-Dacca route. Under the threats that Yukyko and the Japanese terrorist group waged, the Japanese government accepted to give them a big amount of money and agreed to release six members of the Red Japanese Army terrorist organization that were detained at the time in Japanese prisons.

The Gypsy Mob. Over the last years many leaders of the Bucharest interlope world were attracted in operations that resemble those of the Italian mob: car theft and traffic, prostitution, human traffic, art traffic, drugs and arms traffic.

The younger members of the Gypsy Mob are influenced by the methods employed by the Eastern European Mobs such us the Ukrainian, Chechen and Serbian mobs. Among the members of the gypsy mob that embrace these methods are the Gemeni brothers, the Corsicani brothers, the Belgieni clan, the Tobosari clan, etc.

These Gypsy clans have one or more important representatives in the Bucharestian organized crime named by the press the state authorities – the gypsy mob. There are also forces of the interlope world belonging to the older generation: Duduianu, Stoaca, Cracanatu, Capatina, Camatari brothers, Raducanu brothers, Pian represent names of such gypsy clans.

Among the most important figures of these clans one can name Gigi Boeru, Fane Spoitoru, Oane al lui Ciuca, Bobi al lui Ghioala, Pian, Udile, Ghorghe Craiu, Ragalie, or Papuasu (the last two are well-known pimps).

The Romanian Mob. According to the experts, since 1989 the pole of international organized crime has moved in Eastern Europe, Romania becoming one of the main targets of the international mobs. Constanta has become a favorite port for the Kurdish, Ukrainian and Turkish criminals due to its very attractive geographical position, as a nexus of the drug and arms routes.

This area is controlled by the Saceanu clan, made of Ismail Iasar (aka Saceanu) and his son, Sedan Iasar. The area between Neptun-Olimp and Vama Veche is controlled by Beinur Nuredin under the protection of Nicu Gheara.

In the fall of 1999, when Saceanu's men attacked with swords the bodyguards of a Kurdish mob-member, Fatih Kesser, in front of the "Classis" restaurant, the latter answered with gun shoots.

Weapons Trade and Terrorist Organizations

The Arab terrorist organization – The Muslim Brothers – has connections in Romania. In May last year, an important member of this group was discovered in Romania and declared undesired for a period of 3 years. Ahmed Eltayeb Mohed, age 30, entered Romania in 1989 declaring that he wanted to attend the "Carol Davilla" University of Medical and Pharmacy Science. He started a company – Fawar – that served as a disguise for his activities. During his stay, his main mission was to recruit members for the Muslim Brothers with the purpose of establishing a strong branch of this organization in Romania, which was to be the launching place of a series of assassinations and violent actions.

The Kurdish terrorist organization – PKK⁵ – is also well represented in Romania. Davut Yavuz, age 35 was declared undesired for a period of 5 years. Yavuz is a Turkish citizen of a Kurdish descent that was involved in publishing and distributing a number of newspapers of the organization. Besides that he was involved in raising funds to finance the actions of the organization. Yavuz was considered a very dangerous person and he was deported for being involved in activities that endangered the national security. Another member of PKK, Diribas Ramzan, age 37 was declared undesired for a period of 5 years as well. He established a number of companies that he used for money laundering and financing the activities of PKK. He was presenting himself as Director of the Association of Kurdish Merchants in Romania, a bogus organization unknown to the Romanian authorities. Moreover, he coordinated the ideological and paramilitary training of the Kurds. These were trained on a farm in the Balta Alba village where the Prahova County branch of the Service for Foreigners discovered two groups of foreigners that were illegally accommodated.

⁵ The Party of the Kurdish Workers

Upon the arrest of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, the Turkish investigators have obtained information according to which PKK had training camps in a number of countries including Romania. Romanian authorities, upon the verification of the activities of some Turkish citizens of a Kurd descent drew the conclusion that there was a PKK training camp in Bucharest that was used to train terrorists whose mission were to spread terror in Turkey and in the Occident, if not in Romania as well.

The Romanian police found at different addresses in the Capital grenades, pyrotechnical blasting fuse (detonator?), detonators with pyrotechnical ignitions, detonating fuses, explosive plastic substances (Semtex), potassium permanganate, in other words, all its needed in order to make bombs.

These bombs were to be detonated by remote control using special clocks and cellular phones.

The trainees were recruited in Turkey among ethnic Kurds aged 18-21. They were coming to Romania legally claiming themselves to be tourists or businesspeople. Upon their arrival they were taken into the custody of "professors" – Kurdish PKK people working undercover in Romania as foreign investors.

After a short transit stage, the recruits went through 7-10 days of military training during which the future terrorists were taught almost everything about bombs and explosives. Among the evidences captured by the police there was a manual in Kurdish that was a real terrorist course with theoretical exposés and technical drawings.

The four arrested people (Ali Erdem, Ramazam Kizil, Murat Bulut and Sait Sonmez) had false passports. Erdem and Kizil had three other false passports with their pictures but different names.

The Turkish police arrested the alleged authors of the bombings at Mavi Carsi (13 victims) and the alleged author of the bombing at "Carousel" shop (Turkey, Istanbul) that led to the death of a driver. Two of the arrested people are charged with placing the explosive and the third is charged with panning the attack that killed 13 people. About this latter one, the chief of the Turkish police says "his name is Akin Yavas (age 39) and he illegally returned to Turkey after he was trained in Romania in using bombs".

According AFP, the Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan declared during an interrogatory at the prison on the Imrali Island that Romania, Iran and Iugoslavia supported PKK. During this investigation the Kurdish leader made surprising statements that he met the famous terrorist Carlos the Jackal and that PKK used Cyprus as a relay country for drug traffic. "we have a training camp in Romania where the PKK members are trained ideologically (politically)" said the Kurd leader without making any reference to the period of time during which his organization benefited from these facilities.

The tensions generated by the arrest of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan have propagated in Romania, adding to the series of four paid assassinations committed against Turks of Kurdinsh descent and giving a new dimension to the terrorist phenomena in our country.

Thus, during the investigation on the arson of two cars - a BMW 735 with the license plate 34-MO-084 and a Cielo with the license plate GR-02-AKB, both belonging to Turkish businessmen - the police noticed a Dacia 1310 with the license plate B-94-LID that looked suspicious. The car was passing through the area (Grigore Alexandrescu Street, near the building of the Turkish-Balkan Association) at the time of the crime. The police succeeded to arrest the driver, a Kurd who stored in his apartment a real arsenal. The investigations revealed that the car belonged to Idikurt Gulabi, age 28, from the Turkish province of Elazig.

Police searched his apartment situated on 21-A Constantin Brancusi Street and found twenty-three 7.65mm bullets, five 9mm cartridges and a 7.62mm bullet. Moreover, there is a possibility that after the ballistic expertise the police would find enough evidences to link Gulabi with the series of paid assassinations that took place over a two-month period in Bucharest.

Turk Sahin Muzafer accompanied by another Turk of a Kurdish descent who was a German resident arrived in Arad, in a business trip.

Later, in the "Corona" restaurant in Arad, three Tukrish citizens of a Kurdish descent approached Shin Muzafer. They ordered Muzafer to surrender his money, the passport and the car keys in order to be used by PKK. The talks were led by Suleyman Bilen, aka Ylmaz, who was there along with his lieutenant, Kara Hasem. Following Muzafer's refuse, they threatened him to kidnap and molest his wife, in Germany. Two days after, Ylmaz, Kara Hasem and 12 other people kidnapped Muzafer in front of his house in Arad. They stole his BMW as well. The kidnapers stopped in a parking place 10 Km away from Bucharest, where Sahin Muzafer was taken over by other two Turks who had arrived there in a black Opel Vectra with the license plate B-01-MXG that belonged to Kara Hasem. Muzafer was kept in captivity in an unknown apartment. Meanwhile, in Arad, the owner of the "Kardsler" company was contacted repeatedly by different persons that were asking for DM 12.000 and the registration of Muzafer's car.

The Kurds were perfectly organized, each of them using a code name in order to conceal their identity. The police issued a general search warrant for the leader of the group, known as Ylmaz..

It is worthwhile to mention that after the beginning of investigations a killer was sent to Arad in order to eliminate the persons that testified against the leaders of the clan. This killer escaped the police that was only able to capture his gun, a 9mm Makrov pistol with silencer.

Engin Cakmak, age 34, leader of a Kurdish terrorist group affiliated with PKK, was arrested. The Interpol had been looking for him since 1996. The Kurd took refuge in Romania after he led an armed group of six persons that assassinated two Turk businessmen. Engin crossed the Romanian border and requested political asylum. Although his request was rejected he continued to stay on the Romanian territory and moved to Botosani, a small city in eastern Romania. Turkey requested the extradition of the Kurd.

A special case was that of the Bilal Ballioglu, Turk, president of the Romanian Foundation of Islamic Services. He worked for two years (1995-1997) as professor for the International High School of Computer Science in Constanta and he used his position to propagate ideas and theses considered to be very dangerous for the Romanian national security including extremist and fundamentalist Muslim doctrines that required the Muslims to start the Holy War – Jihad.

Domestic By-products of Weapons Trade

A revenge in underworld transformed in an unprecedented scandal which included important names from police, justice and politics. The cause was a robbery -foreign currency and jewels - of a total value of \$500,000.

The owner of this goods, Mihai Bucurenciu accused of this robbery Cornel Dinicu, Valentin Răducanu and Claudiu Musat, former performance sportsmen .

Bucurenciu's lawyer , Bogdan Vlad, declared that the robbery took place in front of Mihai Stanculescu's residence.

In the underworld of Bucharest began a real war. Valentin Răducanu, one of those accused by Bucurenciu and Costi Dobre –driver at Prosecutor's Office at the Court House of Sector 4 – were kidnapped, sequestered and tortured. Valentin Raducanu had been involved in a scandal at the « Calyse » discotheque where he was caught in possession of hand grenades and other arms.

The two gangs assembled commando troops, some of them formed by sportsmen from « Regie⁶» supporters of those sequestered, and the other formed by enforcers hired by Bucurenciu, including the Ilie brothers, known as "Geamanu Brothers." Armed with machine guns, hand grenades and driving expensive cars, the members of the two groups began to hunt for each other in the capital but also in the countryside.

Cornel Dinicu of Mizil, Parliamentary advisor, and Ciprian George Stoica of Ploiesti ,

⁶ "Regie" is the name of a student neighborhood in Bucharest

former vice-champion at Rowing , were accused of breaking the Arms and Ammunition Law.

The police officers found in the Mercedes that was driven by George Ciprian Stoica a Uzi-like sub-machine gun branded "Scorpion," with 12 ammo in the round, which had the serial number ground off.

Apparently the whole affair was masterminded by "Geamanu Brothers," who attempted to integrate the discotheques from "Regie" into their zone of influence, turning them into important sources of income.

" Geamanu Brothers," were put under many criminal charges, the investigations still pending in different stages under the jurisdiction of either civil or military prosecutors. One of the charges brought to Marian Ilie was illegal possession of a 9 mm "Carl Walter," of a magazine with six cartridges, and of an infantry petard (all of them in working condition).

Connections in Moldova and Transdnistria

In Moldova, the existence of the shadow economy and poverty caused an increase of criminality, generalized at the scale of the whole society .

The weak legislation and the low salaries encouraged the development of some economic activities out of the state control.

The desperate economic situation of Moldova caused a solid organization of mafiot groups who control the entire economic and politic life. Thus, appeared a significant number of bloody revenge actions among the leaders of the interlope world. The Minister of Domestic Affairs makes desperate efforts to keep the situation under control, but 12,000 poorly equipped police officers cannot fight against over 6,000 well-armed criminals.

According to some Western experts, in Moldova, the mob controls 90% of the national economy. The money of shadow economy come especially from tobacco, petrol and alcohol smuggling and from arm and traffic with people. About 5,000 persons belong to the criminal community and over 6,000 citizens possess arms illegally.

Although the investigators have the real names of the members of organized crime, police prefers to disclose only the nicknames of those who control the shadow economy.

Manhaz, a Georgian citizen, came in Moldova in 1997. He organized a group which is implicated in arms and drugs traffic. "Manhaz" was arrested in Chisinau, in 1998. He was carrying a pistol, many cartridges, three 3 grams of opium, 7 grams of marijuana and Moldovan, Ukrainian and Georgian identity cards .

The anti-aircraft missiles are not only used in attacks against flying targets –planes, helicopters – but also as explosive charges for bomb attempts. In Moldova there were 8 attempts that targeted the buildings, the corporate headquarters or the houses of some businessmen who didn't yield to blackmail, to enforcers or who didn't contribute to the "Obsceak" funds. The explosives come from Transnistria, more precisely, from the warehouses of the Operative Troops of the Russian Army. At Colbasna, there is a huge amount of arms that belonged to the former 14th Russian Army. These arms are now under the control of the separatist paramilitary forces who sell them to criminal groups around the world. There is strong evidence that some bombings in Russia used explosives from Transdniestria.

The free circulation of persons between Romania and Moldova and the absence of the formal borders with Transdniestria were factors that attracted the Russian mob (Obsceak) in Moldova. All organized crime in Moldova as well as many business people are forced to pay contributions to the "Obsceak" fund, a sort of bank of the mob that collects dirty money. Big criminal organizations on the territory of the former Soviet Union joined this venture.

There are free trade conventions between the CIS states which eliminate taxes on transited goods. This facilitates the illegal transactions in the former Soviet empire. The most active is the Chechen mob that is famous for its pragmatism. There are no means of controlling the activity of this transnational mob. The Chechen mob infiltrated Romania through Moldovan citizens that come to our country as students or entrepreneurs. Most of the criminals receive help and support from Transdniestria.

In Transdniestria, there are many criminal organizations and even secret services from different countries involved in the arm traffic with the arms and ammunition of the Russian troops. The arm traffic from Transdniestria to Romania consists not only of pistols and guns but also of automatic rifles, plastic explosive and Stinger missiles. Although traditionally these arms only transited in Romania in their way to conflict areas such as those in Yugoslavia, lately, more and more of these arms are sold in stores over the Romanian territory.

The Anti Organized Crime Brigade of the Romanian police knows arm traffickers constantly assault the Romanian border with Moldova. During pursuits of smugglers, Police patrols found many abandoned arms but they were seldom able to identify the smugglers themselves.

The border police found a 7,92 mm "Steyr 95" pistol hidden under a seat in one of the couches of the Moscow-Bucharest train. The owner abandoned the arm there and vanished when he saw the border police was thoroughly controlling the passengers. The owner of arm could not have been found. On CIS territory, the clandestine arm market is very accessible: a pistol can be purchased for about 20 dollars. The cheapest arm market is in Tiraspol, where 500 dollars can buy a tank, and a few thousand lei can buy a gun.

The Arm and Ammunition Department of the of the Iasi County Police captured 34 arms, 846 pieces of ammunition, 108,7 kilograms of explosive material, 2373,4 kilograms of toxic substances. This information proves the street gangs in Romania organize themselves based on the model of Western mobs. Iasi County became one of the most active markets for arms traffic. The traffickers use this frontier county in order to enter Romania due to its proximity to Transdnistria – the main supplier of arms on the black market.

Besides money laundry, enforcement and “protection”, the transnational Russian mob tries to subordinate Romanian criminal groups and to gain control over the street crime. This is just a step away from obtaining the control over the whole economic activity subordinating the entire politic structures of Romania.

The Agreement from Wassenaar in 1996 regarding the conventional arms and other agreements on military exports, required Romania to cease the arm exports to illegal markets or to traditional partners who were under ONU, EU or NATO sanctions. As a result, armament production in Romania decreased dramatically.

The official markets lost by Romania were bluntly monopolized by the big producers of armament.

Romania tries to keep the old customers who are not subject to international sanctions and in the past were provided with military products by the members of the Warsaw Treaty. These traditional customers depend on East-European exporters and China for renewing their armament, at least until they change their military standards and purchase policy. On this market segment, Romania is at a harsh war with the former allies, especially with Russia. The number and size of arms orders received by the Minister of Defense hardly cover 25-30% of the production capacity in the Arms Industry. The situation is further worsened by the fact that the Minister of Defense turned from a powerful arms exporter into an importer of military products for the Romanian armed forces.

Since the export licensing procedure is so strict and thorough, no arms transaction should have any problem. However, in the last years there were cases of exports that seemed suspect because of the unusually high degree of confidentiality required by the transaction. There were a few cases in which Romania tried to export arms in some countries that were under international embargo. The reason was to preserve traditional markets that would have been otherwise lost to competition and help the national arms industry to survive. All these cases surfaced in the media and turned into huge scandals.

The sensibility of this subject made the Office of Controlling the Special Product Exports⁷ to avoid to publicly release the name the countries in which Romania had interdiction to deliver armament.

⁷ Rom. Oficiul pentru Controlul Exporturilor de Produse Speciale (OCIEPS)

The NATO-EU Department of the Foreign Affairs Minister is part of a joint inter-minister committee in charge with preventing arms deliveries in countries under international embargo. They have been very cautious in their public statements and avoided to talk about the circumstances of the attempts previously mentioned.

Romania cannot export arms in countries such as: Serbia, Bosnia, North Korea, Cuba, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Afghanistan, Sudan, Rwanda, Somalia, Zaire etc, due to the obligations assumed by the Romanian government in international agreements on military exports.

Obviously, a country under international embargo will try to import armament through the intermediation of third-party friendly countries. The Romanian responsibility over an arms export ends when the government of the importer's country provides an End User Certificate, which represents a commitment that the Romanian armament will not be re-exported. The fact that this is not always the case was proven by the controls made by Romanian authorities in some of the beneficiary countries.

Traffic

The dismemberment of the Soviet Union and later, of Yugoslavia, the political and military instability of the newly formed states in Europe, the recent and continuous conflicts in Eastern Europe, are only a few of the factors that contributed to the proliferation of the arms traffic in the Balkans. Romania has not been spared of the presence of arm dealers on its territory or in the proximity of its borders. However, their number is still small.

Most of the pistols smuggled in the country surface as pieces of evidence during the investigations of murders committed or intended to be committed on the Romanian territory. In about all paid assassinations (hits), the hit-man uses a smuggled gun because the serial number of such a gun is not listed in the police records and therefore, even if the gun is found after the murder is committed, it can hardly help the investigators to identify the murderer.

The Military Unit (MU)⁸ 0962 is in charge with monitoring the illegal activities in all areas of the society. MU 0962 has identified over 150 organized crime groups that control illegal businesses. Most of these groups fight against each other in order to establish and takeover areas of influence that sometimes extend to the highest decision levels in the administration.

There is a incipient growing of trade with components, products and substances used in the manufacturing of mass destruction weapons (chemical, biological and nuclear).

⁸ Rom. Unitatea Militara (UM)

One example is the activity of the Israeli company "Romania Emtam" that attempted to export in Israel over 3.000 fire throwers for automated arms that had been illegally manufactured in Romania. In order to obtain the export license, the fire throwers had been factory-labeled as "lathe extensions".

Another example is a case in which the experts of MU 0962 arrested five persons that tried to place a kilogram of enriched uranium 238 in exchange for 1 billion lei⁹. Dason Liubov and Anatolie Cojocarui brought the uranium in Romania from Moldova. The uranium had been stolen from Russian nuclear silos that had to be dismantled. Toader Ciuhan of Falticeni and Nelu and Ileana Bobeica were members of the Romanian end of this international traffic chain. At the moment they were caught in flagrant, the uranium was packed in a metal container covered in rubber. There was information according to which the group had good perspectives to sell other 10 kilograms of uranium coming from the same source.

A Romanian weapon shipment to Yemen reached Rwanda through intermediaries. This country was under international embargo since February 12, 1997.

According to international evaluations Yemen is a military unstable country and a heaven of terrorist or paramilitary groups because of the training facilities provided by the government.

The authorities in Kigali requested the Romanian Defense Minister and Romtehnica¹⁰ to ship 76 tons of weapons, more precisely, 12.7 mm machine-guns, 7.62 mm AKM automated handguns, and an important quantity of magazines.

The order was split into two shipments that left Romania on April 11 and April 16, 1997 with "Acvila Air", a Bucharest-based air cargo company.

Based on the written agreement number 70178 of April 10, 1997, "Acvila Air" rented an AN 124 aircraft and a Ukrainian crew from the Ukrainian agent of Antonov Company.

The aircraft received permission to land at Kigali from the director of Rwanda Air Authority, Mr. John Ntaganda Semafara as it results from the authorization number 160601/381 from April 10, 1997 granted to the request number 100900 formulated by "Acvila Air".

The biggest illegal arms deal was revealed after the arrest of the Israeli citizen Shimon Naor. Shimon Naor was arrested in Baneasa forest after a thorough operative surveillance conducted by a joint staff from different secret services. This arrest led to a

⁹ Leu (pl. Lei) is the Romanian national currency.

¹⁰ Romtehnica is one of the few companies in Romania licensed to trade arms.

series of other arrests of key figures in one of the most dangerous mobs, the mob of international arms traffic.

The transnational mob networks involved in smuggling alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, diamonds and trafficking people, arms and nuclear substances are led by KGB networks whose foreign residents have been reactivated and recycled.

Naor's contact man in the East is Ion Busuioc who is a head of the Russian mafia in Moldova. Ivan Grigorevici Busuioc aka Ion Busuioc is a Moldovan citizen, born in 1953. As a former KGB officer he was in charge with the foreign trade.

Busuioc introduced himself as an agent of "Loratel", an oil trading company, registered in Cyprus. He contacted many Romanian companies in his quality of agent of the Moscow company "Kanakaner Investment and Commerce Corp" led by Valeriy Shevelev, trying to sell military products. At the end of 1998, Busuioc contacted Stanojevic Milutinovic Dragan, the Bucharest agent of the Cypriote companies "Hastock Ltd" and "Loratel Trading Ltd." Soon afterwards he started to use the Bucharest office of these companies. Along with Dragan, Busuioc intermediated deals with arms from the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS). Busuioc is a shareholder in the Cyprus branch of "Armitex Company Inc" from Panama. He also represents "Armimpex Hightech Ltd." and "Saltech Ltd." from Cyprus.

Busuioc contacted Shimon Naor and offer the later a number of military products from CIS. In 1999, the transactions between the two extended. Thus, they collaborated in contracting and completing arms transactions with countries under international embargo. In some cases they tried to persuade Romanian companies to act as intermediaries, by using false end-user certificates provided by Shimon Naor. The potential involvement of Romanian companies in such transactions could have affected the international image of Romania.

The last business initiated by the two targeted a temporary import in Romania of 20,000 122 mm projectiles from the Czech Republic. This import was to be done by "Deliza Ltd." from Cyprus, a company of the Ukrainian citizen Vladimir Mihailovici Mazin whose Bucharest representative was Ivan Grigorevici Busuioc. Busuioc intended to export the projectiles from Romania to Ethiopia through the Israeli company "LR Avionics," represented by Shimon Naor. The whole deal was based on a false End User Certificate for Nigeria. Romanian authorities blocked the whole deal.

The Transnational Organized Crime Network of Former KGB Agents

Ivan Grigorevici Busuioc is known as an important member of a transnational organized crime network, specializing in arms traffic. This network is coordinated by Russian citizens who have contacts in many European and African states. The majority of

network's Russian members are former KGB officers. The purpose of this network is to obtain high level of profits from trading CIS and East European arms in international areas of conflict. In order to attain their goal, the members of the network need economic and military intelligence information from the countries they operate within. This information is usually obtained by corrupting and blackmailing the dignitaries of these countries.

The following list presents the most important members of the network and their contacts in Romania.

Ivan Turcanu is a Russian citizen and president of "Armitex Company Inc" registered in Panama. This company has a branch in Cyprus, which is run by Ivan Grigorevici Busuioc, Vladimir Siminiuc, Costica Laptas and Dragos Fodor. Apparently, Turcanu is the coordinator of the network. He is a lawyer and he operates mainly from Moscow. Turcanu is also an agent of "Armimpex Hightech Ltd" and "Saltech Ltd" of Cyprus.

Vladimir Mihailovici Mazin is a Ukrainian citizen and manager of "Ukrspetsexport" company from Kiev and of "Kolnet Ltd" and "Deliza" companies in Cyprus.

Vladimir Siminiuc is a citizen of Moldova and, from 1998, a Romanian citizen as well. Former officer in the Moldovan army, Siminiuc is currently a businessman and the main shareholder of "Willing" – company in the Russian Federation. He is very close to General Alexandr Lebed, the former commander of the 14th Army based in Transdnistria. Siminiuc is also a representative of "Armimpex Hightech Ltd." and "Saltech Ltd."

Stanojevic Milutinovic Dragan is the Bucharest representative of the Cypriote companies "Hastock Ltd." and "Loratel Trading Ltd." He works in Bucharest along with his son–Stanojevic Aleksandar aka Sasha. "Loratel" company is used as a cover by the network for the bank transfers involved by the businesses they conduct.

Costica Laptas is a shareholder of "Armitex Company Inc", and a representative of "Armimpex Hightech Ltd" and "Saltech Ltd". Laptas connected Busuioc and Siminiuc with Shimon Naor.

The cigarette smuggling business is directly connected the illegal arm traffic. It is well know that "Air Sofia" - a company involved in the Naor case – has been involved in such illegal activities for a long time. US State Department officially condemned this company for it's involvement in transporting missiles to North Korea and Iran.

Romanian military products were sold at lower prices than those of similar products sold on the world arms market. Naor's commission was 50 times greater than the amount cashed by the Romanian manufacturers.

Brothers Mike and Ellie Nassar arrived in Romania following the requests made at the Romanian Embassy in Beirut by a well known arms dealer. The dealer asked the Romanian embassy to put him in touch with a Romanian arms provider. He had a list of infantry and artillery arms and ammunition specific to the armies of the Warsaw Treaty that he wanted to acquire. The Romanian military attaché informed the Military Intelligence Department¹¹ and the latter further submitted the request to Romtehnica. The Nassar brother began the export of arms, acting as agents for the Lebanese dealer. Their operations were monitored by a number of foreign intelligence agencies, including Mossad.

During a big operation of disarming the rebels, the peace-keeping troops in Kosovo (KFOR) discovered a military arsenal in Drenita area. The arsenal belonged to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The arsenal consisted of Romanian, Russian, Chinese and American arms, including 500,000 cartridges, 20,000 grenades, 150 anti-tank rockets, 15 mortars, bomb-shells and automatic weapons. There is no evidence that Romania delivered the arms directly to the rebels, and in fact, this probably didn't happen.

Until 1996, the Romanian government had a pro-Serbian attitude and had not allowed any arms exports intended for the enemies of the Serbs. After 1996 when conflict in Kosovo started, the Romanian Government aligned to the Western policy of condemning Milosevici's intervention in Kosovo. Some of the Western powers supplied the Albanian rebels with arms saying that they have helped the Albanians to defend themselves against the Serb aggression.

Most of the support came in from Albania who has never been under international military embargo. Therefore, all of the arms shipments coming from Tirana were perfectly legal.

Since the Romanian arms trade was in decline, potential shipments to Albania represented an opportunity and the Romanian arms trading companies were able to legally export arms to Tirana.

It is well known that the Albanian government supported the Albanians in Kosovo by sending them arms and that the Western powers closed their eyes to this break of international law on the grounds that the Albanian rebels were aggressed by Milosevici. Therefore, there is a possibility that the Romanian arms exported in Albania got in the hands of KLA. In this case, Albania, as the official importer, bears the full responsibility.

¹¹ Directia Informativa a Armatei

Appendix: Police Records

Frontier Traffic. At the Romanian-Moldovian frontier at Sculeni- Prut, the police stopped two heavy trucks belonging to a Slovakian transport company. The trucks had the registration plates GAA - 0389 and KN – 7972 and were driven by the Slovakian citizens Radvansky Gabriel and Horvath Roman.

The goods they were transporting were accompanied by an invoice issued by SC Răut SRL, a company from Bălți, Moldova. The goods were sent to Marilyn Sales Corporation, New York, USA. The police found that the goods listed on the invoice were, in fact, hydro-acoustic buoys, devices used for aerial and under water detection.

The contract between Răut SRL, from Bălți, and Marilyn Sales Company, New York, stipulated the transport should have arrived in France, and then in India as final destination. There were evidences that four similar transports of this kind had already been sent.

The contract mentions that the exporter was also the manufacturer of the products, which is impossible because Moldova does not have such technology. The most likely producer is Russia and probably the buyer is one of the countries under embargo, such as Pakistan, Iraq, Libya, Sudan or even India.

Transdnistria is a huge armament market and many secret services take advantage of that. The Romanian criminal organizations are present on that market too, trying to arm themselves with pistols, rifles, machine guns and even rocket launchers.

On 15th of May 1998 the truck driven by Robert Buzasi, a Slovakian citizen, was stopped for a frontier control. When the container compartment was unsealed, the Romanian frontier guards found eighteen 7.62 machine-guns used on armored amphibian transporters. In the truck, aside from the 18 machine-guns, the police found spare parts and accessories.

This year, Romanian customs officers found two military pistols, ten air guns, three hunting shotguns, a machine gun, 99 war cartridges, 96 hunting cartridges and 83 gas cartridges. Last year, the customs officers confiscated 9 pistols, 10 hunting shotguns of various calibers and several thousands of cartridges with bullets or pellets.

In Arad County, at Turnu check-point, the guards found a 1974 Carpati pistol, and twenty-two 7.65 mm bullets in an Alfa-Romeo driven by the Turkish citizen Tanriverdi Omer. The gun and the ammunition were packed in a plastic bag and hidden behind the car battery.

The Turkish man presented a Belgian passport which had previously been reported stolen by Belgium Embassy. The Turk declared that he used the Belgian passport in order to avoid visa problems in the Schengen area.

He said that he had bought the gun and the passport from a stranger in a gas station, some 50 km away from Zagreb. He had purchased them for DM 100.

Petrică Rusu, age 28, of Dorobantu village, Constanta County and Gheorge Cristache age 50, of Valea Rimnicului, Buzău County, tried to sell an atomic pile in exchange for \$10,000. The pile was probably made in the former USSR and contained 189 grams of enriched uranium and with a radioactivity 70 times bigger than in natural radioactivity.

The atomic pile could have been used in the manufacturing of a home-made explosive device. The two people were irradiated because the container in which they kept pile had no protection against radioactivity.

Two Moldovan arm dealers were arrested in Bucharest, on the Ferdinand Boulevard, at the intersection with Avrig St.

Sergii Badea, age 25, confessed he had been involved in arms traffic. He had a semi-automatic 9 mm Makarov pistol. The gun was equipped with a silencer and stored 9 bullets.

Valeriu Gonta, age 26 is also a Moldovan citizen. He was to sell his gun to a Chinese citizen for 1,500 dollars.

The last murders or attempts of murder in Bucharest made use of 9 mm pistols. In almost all cases police had information that the criminals were paid hit-men from Moldova and Ukraine.

An employee at "Dezrobirea - Romned" SA company, in Constantza informed the Police that he found two rockets, one of 20 mm caliber and one of 55mm, 16 hand grenades in a car shipment of scrap iron which came from "Marosca" company in Slatina. The scrap iron was to be taken over and recycled by "Eurofer" company in Constantza.

Thefts of Ammunition and Arms. Ten defensive grenades and seven hundred 7.62 mm war cartridges were stolen from an ammunition warehouse of the Military Unit 01404 in Timisoara. The thieves remained unidentified.

A soldier of MU 01545 of Apata, Brasov County stole 15 pistols, 1000 cartridges, 3 military binoculars and 3 offensive grenades. He sold them in the Brasov Rail Station area at various prices, up to DM 1,000.

The buyers were Dan Feldioreanu, Marius Dinică, Mihai Mesu, Mocsel Geza, Ghită Iacob, Neculai Bors, Valentin Teslaru, Cătălin Horhocia. All these were part of the underworld and had criminal records.

Soldier Gerd Wibiral, age 26, of MU 01109 in Timisoara, was the guard on duty when he was attacked by unidentified persons who beat him up and stole his gun and ammo. He was brought to the County Hospital in Timisoara in a severe condition. This happened three months after the attack at Military Unit 014004 despite following that event, 3 soldiers were arrested for unfulfilling their duties.

In a trashcan on the platform of Slatina Rail Station a janitor found 2 grenades. The Officer Simion Dumitru in charge with Unit's Public Relations ruled out the possibility that these grenades had been stolen from MU 01517.

Bacau Criminal Police confiscated 82 cartridges and a military parachute from Marius Curucli, age 28, former worker for the army. He stole a part of the ammunition from the very military unit in Timisoara in which he had accomplished his military service, 9 years before.

An ammunition and explosive warehouse of MU 01172 Caransebes was broken in. The thieves took a box with 20 offensive grenades and a box with 800 7.62 mm cartridges. The lock of the warehouse was cut and the seal broken.

A special case of arms theft is that of Sgt. Viorel Albu in the SRI Anti-Terrorist Brigade in Bucharest. Later in his career, Albu was transferred to SRI Rîmnicu Vilcea.

He developed some depressive and paranoid-obsessive symptoms that led him to decide to kill his wife. He broke in the ammunition warehouse and stole 2 defensive grenades type F-1 and 10 heads type UZRGM then, carrying the grenades in his pockets, he left the base to meet his wife.

During that meeting he detonated the grenades. Unfortunately, the explosion wounded two other people: Adrian and Vasile Militaru – father and son, both policemen. The intended suicide turned into bloodshed but luckily, nobody lost his life.

Illegal Possession of Arms and Ammunition. The police officers of the Arms, Explosives and Toxic Substances Division of the Bihor County Police searched two of the residences of Attila Baroczi, one in Marghita and one in Oradea. Baroczi, age 20 was charged with illegal possession of forty-seven 5.6 mm cartridges and a gun with the serial number 0991 along with 6 cartridges with pellets for hunting.

The Bihor County Police discovered some arms and ammunition in the house of a senior citizen who had bought them two weeks before from an unidentified person. Among the arms found there, there was a pistol model NIE -38 Pochet, made in Germany with a signal-rocket launcher device, fifty-four 9 mm cartridges, some loaded with tear-gas and some for acoustic signaling, 8 signal-rockets, ten 16 mm hunting cartridges and 250 grams of smokeless gun powder.

Hunedoara County Police found two persons who had home-made hunting guns. Mise Balint, age 67, farmer in Batrina village owned illegally a home-made gun, caliber 12 and 2 cartridges, with a linear meter fuse Bickford. Viorel Bistriean of the same village, age 51, illegally possessed two home-made hunting guns, caliber 12, four hunting cartridges and 100 grams of gun powder.

In Bosorod Village, the police found at a farmer's house an Austrian hunting gun. Octavian Cugorean, age 36, possessed 19 hunting cartridges and parts used in the manufacturing of ammunition.

Toplita City Police arrested Manole Urzica, age 24, of Galautas Village, Harghita County for illegal possession of a military gun, caliber 7.92 mm.

Petru Ujica, age 27, of Stinceni Village was arrested for illegal possession of 2 military gun pipes, a gun-pipe for a hunting gun, five 16 mm hunting cartridges, three 9 mm military cartridges, 6 fuses for hunting cartridges, a delay fuse for initialization, 70 grams of TNT and 200 grams of gun powder for cartridges.

Police arrested one of the most dangerous gangs of thieves operating in Bucharest and Dimbovita County.

The head of the gang was Tudor Nicolae of Ploiesti, age 30, with a rich criminal record. The other two members were Catoiu Iulian Aurel, age 23 and Pirvu Alin, age 22, both of them from Ploiesti.

Police found them in possession of a 9 mm Browning pistol with 4 cartridges, a Walther pistol with 46 cartridges, and another fire arm with 89 cartridges. Police investigations revealed that the guns were stolen and had been used.

Francisc Bancsa of Oradea was born in 1956. In 1977 he left Romania for France where he joined the Foreign Legion. In 1983 he left the Legion and established in Belgium, in Jemeppe-Sur-Sambre city. There he formed a gang whose members were Marc Goffart, Awoust Dimitri and Jean (nephew and uncle), Giovanni Ruzzu, Bernard Prignot, Pascal Terwagne and the Romanian Ion Incze.

Bancsa's gang was specializing in armed robbery of big stores, banks and post offices and in attacking the armored money transports.

In 1997 Bancsa was hiding in Romania when the Bruxelles branch of Interpol asked for his extradition and indicated the places in which he might hide.

The Romanian police found in his apartment 3 Kalasnikov – AK47 machine handguns, 270 war cartridges, 9 machine handgun magazines.

A taxi driver was threatened with a pistol in front of the "Top Netty" bar in Timisoara. He requested the assistance of his work colleagues from the "Bimbo" taxi company. The aggressor was caught and handover to the police. His name is Stelian Macesanu aka "The Butcher", age 29 who had a criminal record. He illegally possessed an 8 mm HS pistol loaded with 3 tear-gas cartridges.

Costel Constantin, the former owner of the "Sexy Club" bar in Bucharest and a protégée of the Democrat Party was charged with breaking the Arms and Ammunition Law by illegally possessing a Bertta pistol and 100 cartridges.

The police arrested two students in the Timisoara University campus. They were found carrying four home-made guns, of which, one had a silencer, six 12 mm cartridges and four 6 mm cartridges. The police found in their dorms 4 pipes that were to be used in the manufacturing of other guns, 2 black masks and a pair of black gloves.

Marius Lazar, age 22 and Cristian Preda, age 22, both from Iasi, robbed the house of a US Embassy employee in Bucharest. The police found them hiding in Iasi after they stole a pistol, ten cartridges, jewels and other goods from the house of a dignitary.

Air Guns. The Need for a New Law

In Romania, the air guns can be bought at any gun-store. They are inexpensive, and the buyers do not have to present any license or permit in order to acquire them because the Law number 11/1996 excludes the air guns and pistols from the list of guns whose possession require a permit.

A 4.5 mm air pistol Slavia, Saisy or Walther can be purchased for 1-2.5 million lei. A 4.5 mm air gun is less than 15 million lei. The difference between pistols and guns is given by the speed of the projectile when it leaves the arm (110 m/s for pistols and 185 m/s for guns).

Due to their free sale, there were cases in which the air guns got on the hands of evildoers or kids who caused real tragedies by playing with them.

Stefan Lupsor, an ambulance driver for Bistrita City Hospital, was cleaning his air gun when he accidentally shot in the head Katalin Buther Kresz, age 10.

In the Eremitu village (Mures County), a five year old boy shot his two year old sister with a 4.5 mm Salvia gun which he took it as a broom. The air gun was left unlocked by their grandfather, Kibedy Iosif, age 75. The girl lost an eye.

On the 6th of May, 1998, Laurentiu Draghici of Barlad, age 25, was shoot in the head three times.

Corin Panc Sechelaride, an entrepreneur from Bucharest shot at a waste management driver because he didn't like the way the later drove past his car.

Simona Simu, a nine-year-old girl from Blaj was accidentally shot in the face from a small distance by Petro Iacob, age 17. The teenager who leaved in the neighborhood, , wanting to impress his friends, got out from house with the gun on his shoulder. Reaching the playground, Petru Iacob negligently handled the arm and shot Simona Simu right in the face with a lead pellet.

Maria Ghinga from Iasi found in her parents' garden a 7.65 mm SACM gun, in good condition. The woman did not turn the arm to the Police. Instead she took it home and hid it in the wardrobe. Maria Ghinga's

daughter found the gun, took it and went in front of their block to play with it. The little girl was seen by a police officer who confiscated the arm before her play turned into a tragedy.

A construction engineer, Vasile Daniel Pitfor, age 40, shot a six year old boy with 4.5 mm pistol because he was noisy in Giulesti, Bucharest. The victim's name is Catalin George Mohanu .

Ionel Mihai, age 11, of Sintesti village, Ilfov County, shot his sister, Simona Mihai, age 3, while he was playing with his father's air gun. The girl was wounded in the right leg haunch. He had taken the 4.5 mm gun from his father's car .

Two brothers , Nelu-Aurelian and Cosmin-Valentin Rus (ages 17 and 15) were in their grandmother's custody, in Seulia village, Mures County. One day they took the train to Taut Village, Metes County. There they tried to find jobs.

The forester, Ile Bacila, age 46 hired the brothers as part-time workers. One day time he noticed that his shotgun had disappeared. The two teenagers forced the padlock of the metal box in which the forester legally kept his 7.62 mm "TT" gun, serial number AX-91, 6 bullets, a 12 mm "JJ" shotgun, and a sports gun with ammunition. The two boys took the guns and ammunition. Initially, they intended to stop a car and force the driver to take them home, in Seulia. However, being pursued by the police, they walked about 100 km, hiding in different places until the police found them in Girbova de Jos village, an isolated and afforested place .

Nelu Aurelian shot twice against the police officers. Fortunately, one bullet missed and the other only wounded the first sergeant Moldovan in the shoulder. Since the boys were minors, the police could not fire back.

The two brothers ran away in the forest and lost their shoes. From that moment they walked ten kilometers, bare-foot through snow and water

In Radesti village, between Aiud and Ocna Mures, Nelu forced a boatman to take them across the Mures river.

Afterwards, the two brothers broke into a doctor's country house and stole a 4.5 mm "Pioner" air gun.

The fugitives arrived in Livezile village, close to Aiud-Buru highway. They entered the house of Damaschin Popa, age 67, and demanded food. Although scared by the gun the younger brother held in his hand, Popa managed to send his son to call the police.

The youngsters were arrested and their guns confiscated.

Nelu-Aurelian Rusu was charged with attempt to murder, stealing private property, and breaking the Arms and Ammunition Law. His brother, Cosmin-Valentin was sent to a detention institution for minors where he is to be examined by a psychiatrist.

About the Authors

Zaur Borov studied at the Military School "Marshall Eremenko" in Vladikavkaz, North Osetia, Russia and graduated from the Law Department of the State University of Abkhazia. He is currently working on a Masters Degree in Conflictology at the School of Public Administration in Rostov/Don. He is a veteran of the fighting in Abkhazia and served for two years as the chairman of the Association of Abkhazia Volunteers. Mr. Borov lives in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkharia.



Stephen R. Bowers is a Professor of Political Science at James Madison University and is the Director of the William R. Nelson Institute at JMU. Dr. Bowers is the author of *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe*, a monograph published by the Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism in London as well as numerous papers dealing with Eastern Europe and the former USSR. In preparing this paper, he consulted with military and police officials in Eastern Europe.

