



C4ADS IN 2014:

INNOVATION FOR PEACE

WHO WE ARE

Mission

C4ADS (www.c4ads.org) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to data-driven analysis and evidence-based reporting of conflict and security issues worldwide. We utilize cutting-edge emerging technologies to manage, integrate, and analyze disparate data, from diverse languages, regions, and sources, including our own field research in conflict zones and fragile states.

Approach

C4ADS specializes in collecting and structuring data in information-poor environments, such as Somalia and Northern Mali, and on opaque subject areas, such as clandestine Russian and Ukrainian arms shipments to conflict zones. We have the tools and experience to build these unique datasets, integrate and analyze data using Palantir (network analysis), ArcGIS/QGIS (geospatial analysis), and R (statistical analysis), and to work across multiple languages. Our current team of 8 analysts has fluency in 13 foreign languages: Arabic, Bambara, Chinese, Dari, Farsi, French, Hindi, Kannada, Konkani, Kiswahili, Spanish, Russian, and Urdu.

Beyond pure data collection and analysis, we seek to produce and disseminate compelling content to engage both international and local audiences on issues of conflict and security: in 2013 we worked with major media outlets like Washington Post, specialized platforms like the United Nations IRIN newswire, and local media outlets such as The East African Magazine.

Impact

We aim to achieve real impact with our analysis and reporting. For example, after the publication of *The Odessa Network* in 2013, which mapped the facilitators of Russian and Ukrainian arms shipments to conflict zones, we received reports of **cancelled contracts** between the US government and known illicit arms shippers, the **interdiction** by the Greek authorities (who referenced our work) of at least one vessel carrying ammunition to the Syrian government, and the **withdrawal** of the last American financial institution from clearing dollar transactions for the Latvian banks used by this arms network.

In short, we understand how to collect and structure data in prohibitive conditions, conduct rigorous and defensible analysis, and build compelling narratives to both engage the public and put positive pressure on regulators and policymakers to take action.

Our technology partners include:



WHAT WE DO: 2014 PROGRAM AREAS

Illicit Networks & Enablers of Conflict

Our flagship investigative research program is based on the premise that illicit networks must necessarily and extensively interact with the licit global system in order to operate. Shell companies generate business and tax records; contract disputes must be litigated in legitimate courts; illicit cargo must be shipped via ostensibly licit transportation companies and infrastructure. In an era of online business registries and digital public records, all of these activities inevitably create a trail of open source data, which we leverage to map and expose the physical structure and operations of these networks.

Building on this premise, we believe that illicit networks are most vulnerable to disruption in exactly the places where they interact with the licit system. Nominally licit business and individuals are far more susceptible to the reputational and financial penalties of exposure than the direct perpetrators of conflict and atrocities, who often are already "beyond the pale."

We currently utilize the Investigative Dashboard for searching global public records and identifying local business registries and court systems around the world; ICIJ Offshore Leaks for information on linkages of offshore entities; FleetMon and VTE Explorer for ship tracking; PACER (Public Access to Court Records) for US court case information; and a variety of native language media sources to supplement these global public records. Our philanthropic partnership with Palantir Technologies gives us access to their cutting-edge data management and analysis platform to conduct deep network analysis.

By taking cutting-edge tools developed for the security community, integrating diverse open source data, and applying our analytical methodologies to problem sets with a compelling human interest, we intend to create and disseminate innovative content that engages the public on a global scale and pressures illicit networks where they are most susceptible to reputational and financial penalties.

Within our illicit networks program, our workflow is largely project-driven, though we maintain standing capabilities across regions and languages. We find that in the global interconnected illicit environment, investigating one network nearly always leads to the discovery of connections to others, and we leverage existing investigations and contacts as access points to new networks; this is similar to the "snowball sampling" technique used in social network analysis to penetrate clandestine or difficult-to-access populations.

We have two active investigations within this program:

- We are working with local African NGOs and investigative reporters to expose the militarized and professionalized poaching and ivory trafficking systems leading from Central Africa to East Asia. This work builds on our previous research into transnational crime and conflict economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. We are investigating several key networks: Sudanese paramilitary poachers operating in Central African Republic, Chad, and Cameroon, some of whom are linked to ongoing violence in Darfur; Somali poachers operating in East Africa, linked to al-Shabaab and corrupt officials; poaching and trafficking by various conflict actors in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic, many with ties to local and international mining and logistics companies. This research is currently supported by grants from Born Free USA.

- Building on our previous research into the arms transporters identified in *The Odessa Network* (2013), we are mapping the interactions between these networks and a broad range of illicit groups, including international narcotics traffickers and money launderers. We are currently in negotiations with a private foundation to help support this project.

Data & Conflict

As an organization, we value the process of research as much as the results. We are always looking for innovative and nontraditional uses of data to help us address conflict and security issues.

We have three experimental projects that leverage data and technology to analyze key conflict and security challenges:

- We are analyzing daily sub-meter satellite imagery of smoke patterns at extremist-controlled oil and gas fields and crude refineries in Eastern Syria to estimate production and potential revenue. We are currently in negotiations with Skybox Imaging to provide satellite imagery and video in support of this project.
- We are testing the use of geospatial analysis to map the fresh water and terrain constraints on potential al-Qaeda basing locations in the Sahel and Sahara. We are currently training our model on known basing locations, and our outputs are tracking reality closely.
- We are statistically testing the application of the Ulfelder Coup Prediction Model to state stability in North Korea. There is a general consensus among Korea scholars that the state is stable and a “necessary evil,” which creates serious constraints on the ability of the international community to deal with the threats to regional stability and human rights posed by the Kim regime. However, we believe we can prove that the state is weaker than previously suspected, using only simple statistics and an open source model that has been trained and validated over 60 years of coup data.

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT & ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

We are seeking to raise \$2-2.5 million USD per year, up from our current funding level of approximately \$675,000 USD (2013).

By the end of 2015, we hope to achieve the following:

- Increase our current analytical team from 8 full time analysts to 20-25. This team will allow us to produce and disseminate at least one in-depth investigative report per quarter, along with a joint media release, and allow sufficient time (1-2 months) to manage further media engagement and any legal contingencies. Experience has taught us that this rate of production will consistently produce quality content without overwhelming media partners, policymakers, or the public. Our target funding will also allow the creation of an endowment to backstop operations and even out funding cycles. Once we achieve this optimal balance of funding, personnel, and output, we will decide whether scaling up would best fulfill our mission.
- Increase level of public support in order to regain 501(c)(3) Public Charity status (vice 501(c)(3) Private Foundation). Move to a solely nongovernmental grant and donor-based funding model; phase out contracting as a revenue stream.
- Add three categories of personnel: junior to mid-level analysts to support our ongoing programs and develop new projects; junior, mid, and senior personnel with linguistic, regional, and functional expertise in our current gap areas, namely Latin America; support staff to include one lead data scientist and an additional operations manager.
- Establish 2-3 new tech partnerships to expand our analytical toolkit. As a first target, we are currently in negotiations with Skybox Imaging to partner and utilize their daily satellite imagery/video feed and analytics platform (see above under *Other Current Projects*).
- Purchase access to some or all of the following databases and services to support our investigations: Offshore Alert (\$720 per year) for company information in opaque jurisdictions such as BVI, Cayman Islands, etc. not covered by the open source Investigative Dashboard; LexisNexis WorldCompliance (est. \$5,000 per year) for access to the same adverse information reporting network and “Know Your Customer” resources utilized by top international banks; ThomsonReuters WorldCheck (est. \$5,000 per year) for access to integrated public and proprietary records search designed for corporate counsel and law enforcement; SPARK-Interfax (est. \$10,000 per year) for corporate registries, court records, tax information, and property ownership in the Former Soviet Union. We will also continue to utilize FleetMon (\$4,400 per year) and VTEplorer (\$1,000 per data dump) for ship tracking.

KEY PERSONNEL

Executive Director

LTC (Ret.) David Johnson, USA is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, the Command and General Staff Course, the Joint Defense College at the Ecole Militaire in Paris, and holds a Master's in the History of Strategy from La Sorbonne. David served 23 years in the US Army in the Infantry and Special Forces. A decorated combat veteran and Army strategist with service on six continents and multiple overseas contingency operations, his career is outlined in the Congressional Record. Before coming to C4ADS, he worked for Intel Corporation as Director of Digital Security Products in the Software and Solutions Group. He speaks French, Russian, and Arabic.

Chief Operating Officer

Farley Mesko is the Chief Operating Officer at C4ADS, where his research has concentrated on mapping and exposing illicit networks. He coauthored the World Bank study *The Pirates of Somalia: Ending the Threat, Rebuilding a Nation* and has briefed flag officer and ambassador-level leadership at US combatant commands, joint task forces, and embassies. Farley also works as a freelance journalist and has authored reports for the United Nations and Brookings. He has presented his research at New America Foundation, Yale University, Google Ideas, and American University. Farley studied at Bowdoin College, has worked extensively in conflict zones across Africa, and speaks French and Arabic.

Analytical Production Manager

Tom Wallace received his undergraduate degree in Political Science and Russian Studies from the University of Michigan, where he was named the National Russian Scholar Laureate, and is currently receiving his Master's in Security Policy Studies at George Washington University. Tom's research at C4ADS focuses on government-private collaboration in foreign policy and power projection in the Former Soviet Union and China. He coauthored *The Odessa Network: Mapping Facilitators of Russian and Ukrainian Arms Transfers*, which was featured in the Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Le Monde, and Associated Press. Tom has lived in Russia and China, and speaks Russian and Mandarin.

Financial audits (2010-2012), IRS 990s, and account and routing information available upon request