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TRANSCRIPT

"MANAGING ILLICIT ECONOMIES IN EAST AFRICA"

A Conversation With Vanda Felbab-Brown

Moderator: Sarah Pray

ANNOUNCER:

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SARAH PRAY:

So I am Sarah Pray. I'm a senior policy analyst here in the O.S.F. D.C. office. And I'm gonna be the moderator for today's brown bag-- with Vanda. I wanted to call this Pirates, Pimps, Diamonds, and Drugs-- because I think that's a little bit-- sexier than maybe the-- the title that we-- we decided upon but-- maybe a little too sensational.

But-- we are goin' to be talking about Vanda's work as-- an Open Society fellow. For those of you who don't know Vanda, she-- right now-- is-- is in the-- the middle of her fellowship with O.S.F. She works for the Brookings Institution. She is looking at illicit economies in-- in East Africa.

And she has recently come back from Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia. And she is looking into illicit economies that include logging, mining, poaching, human trafficking, drug trade, piracy-- among them and is looking at how these illicit economies intersect with violent conflict, social strife, terrorism, et cetera.

I am-- you know, when-- just looking at a couple of the recent statistics about illicit economies. And I'd be curious to hear if-- if these are-- are true or not. You know, one estimate said that the illegal economy accounts for somewhere between eight to 15% of the world's G.D.P.-- which-- the implications for open societies are very clear, right?

That distorts local economies. It-- undermines government-- encourages corruption-- facilitates money laundering-- jeopardizes public health, undermines communities'-- ability to-- to live freely and fairly. So-- you know, it's very relevant for-- for our work here at O.S.F. So I-- I think I'm gonna turn it over to Vanda. She's gonna talk a little bit about her trip, about her work. And then we will open it up for questions. But-- we're thrilled to have you here, Vanda. Thanks so much.

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

Great. Thank you very much. The-- the work-- in Africa that I will talk about that-- Sarah described is part of a larger book on how best to manage seven-- illicit economies. And-- the key thrust of the book is to look at policy effectiveness, what works in-- managing, not suppressing these illicit economies.

But it's very much informed by the notion that although illicit economies pose a variety of very severe harms to states and societies, they often also are the key survival mechanism for some of the most underprivileged, most marginalized populations in the world. And in fact, their economic survival, their physical survival-- and any form of social mobility can be directly-- dependent on the illicit economy.

And that creates some extraordinarily difficult-- dilemmas-- including in the case of Africa, I will talk about what a policy regulatory nightmare it is for something like-- poaching and wildlife trafficking and why that is fundamentally different from something like the drug trade.

So the book is not about Africa per se. It looks-- it does-- a comparative analysis for essentially each of the illicit economies. It looks at different parts of the world. So logging is compared and explored in-- East Africa, in-- the Amazon, in Southeast Asia. In each place, you have essentially different dynamics and different implication for optimal policy-- regulation.

The-- wildlife trafficking chapter, for example, looks at-- different bifurcated markets between East Asia and Africa. And so each-- each of the chapter has its own comparison. The piracy one-- West Africa, East Africa, Southeast Asia, et cetera. But let me talk about-- the East Africa-- fieldwork.

I was there for about three months and-- spent-- time in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya-- and Somalia. Both Somalia and-- as well as Mogadishu and American sector, essentially, of Somalia. And I was looking-- principally at five illicit economies-- which was-- illegal logging and charcoal smuggling-- the drug trade-- and drug trafficking.

So both looking at illicit drug markets-- in the region as well as the legal market in khat or chat, human trafficking and that-- sort of-- morphed-- extended as a result of the research into looking more broadly at prostitution markets-- in-- Africa and brought-- brought out some fascinating-- very surprising, fascinating-- findings-- wildlife trafficking, and-- maritime piracy.

But I have also these two secondary-- interests of mine. And one is to look at urban gangs-- around the world. So-- so I was looking both at the Kenya-- slums and urban gangs there and Ethiopia and why there are-- very few or no urban gangs in Ethiopia. And that ended up being-- some of the most fascinating investigative work I have ever done and-- and really surprising-- surprising outcomes.

And-- I-- I have a (UNINTEL) article-- coming out soon. And finally-- I do a lot of my work on-- intervention in countries and stabilization counter-insurgency project. And so the Somalia research on piracy, logging-- and-- and smuggling also sort of translated into bigger-- research on what is happening with-- Somalia.

There's very fascinating dynamics, arguably-- biggest security progress in 20 years. Yet extremely fragile and al-- almost sort of exact parallels with the problems that Afghanistan is experiencing is already acutely present or very much on the horizon. So I can talk about these issues in the question and answer period as well if there is interest.

But let me make some remarks about-- several of the illicit economies and start with-- drug trafficking, which is getting a lot of attention with respect to West Africa. But a lot is happening in East Africa. There are-- are, in fact, flows-- of heroin quite a bit from Asia and Middle East or to Middle East.

There are cocaine flows increasingly emerging-- as well as meth-- production and-- and meth trafficking. And it is-- only a matter of time before the drama of the drug trade in East Africa becomes the drama of West Africa. And what is also-- apparent there is very much of a state-elite complicity in-- and-- and arguably capture of most of the illicit flows.

Will that stay that way forever? Big question. Or will there emerge contestation among other-- trafficking groups trying to challenge the-- the current-- capture-- will be a determinant effect of how violent and visible the drug trafficking-- will emerge. The traffickers are not terribly sophisticated.

But nonetheless-- you see the emergence of-- people from non-elite, non-political dynasty backgrounds entering the drug trafficking trade using the drug profits to build political capital and even be-- become elected members of parliament. Sonko, who just became the senator for Nairobi, is-- sort of your classic-- equivalent of-- the-- Escobar type, although he is more gentle than Escobar.

He is not as violent. But-- of the sort of s-- self-starter drug trafficker using drug proceeds to hand out-- goodies to poor communities and mobilize political capital. And-- and he has been-- accepted-- by the Kenyan elite-- and-- and is in fact not just tolerated but c-- quite sought after.

Now, again, how much that will emerge, how much these new drug lords-- entering the political system will-- be accepted into the political system or start challenging it will be one of the-- factors determining-- how-- relatively peaceful or violent that market will become.

There is also growing-- local consumption. It's still fairly small. It's very atomized.

It's very much sort of lower level peddlers distributing drugs. And there is still far more consumption of marijuana-- far-- far more use of marijuana, for example, than hard drugs. But it's likely to change over time as well.

The khat trade is very interesting. And it's very interesting because-- in some ways, it can be conceived as a preview of legalizing marijuana markets. Khat is legal in the region is-- both consumption and production are legal. And-- there-- there-- production takes place mainly in Ethiopia and Kenya.

But consumption takes place throughout, particularly in-- various-- Somali-- Ethiopian-- communities, also in Djibouti. And-- it's very much dominated by-- either outside monopolies or key traders. It's a major source of income for farmers in Kenya and even farmers in-- Ethiopia. Lots of the-- trade itself then comes to be dominated by very influential-- businessmen who have great-- effect on how the-- the drug-- how the-- the-- the narcotic is regulated or not. It's not very much at all penetrated by-- organized crime groups. The-- the-- no, it's the--

MALE VOICE:

And how is it regulated?

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

Well, there is state regulation that essentially gives-- license or in some cases not even a license. But-- but areas are permitted to cultivate. And there are essentially geographic effects as to who can cultivate khat. But nonetheless, you have a variety of social problems associated with-- the-- the economy or the khat economy.

One is huge drainage of-- water. And it's so acute, and-- and chronic, and terrible in Yemen. You don't have that same level of effects in Kenya or Ethiopia. But you will because these countries are drying up. There is a sort of confluence of factors why desification is taking place. And khat is a very, very thirsty plant.

And the-- the state regulation has not been really capable of dealing with these environmental-- impacts at all. Bigger-- or-- or-- or another really-- significant issue is especially in places like Somalia or-- Djibouti-- abuse of the narcotic to the effect that-- it really significantly undermines and weakens-- social capital and-- and social structures, family structures.

So come 1:00-- in both Djibouti and s-- and Somalia, everyone is-- all the ones are essentially stoned and useless. And the entire country and economy shuts down. No one can get anything done because everyone is high on khat. But then you have-- and-- one of the very interesting dynamics is this has allowed women in Djibouti-- to get divorces in the context of an Islamic society that they would otherwise never be able to have.

So on the one hand, you can say, "Well, khat is a mechanism of liberation for

women." But, of course, what's underlying that is that the males become so indebted that-- even when the woman-- is left alone with several children, the-- the man not only not at all contributes anything to the economy-- but is-- not anything to do-- to do family income.

But it's such drainage on the income of the family and-- and produces such heavy indebtedness that even the state has recognized-- that they need to allow divorces. So you are having this sort of big social unhealthy impacts of-- of real abuse of the drug. And it's interesting to see how that is happening far more in Djibouti and Somalia than in-- Ethiopia.

Because in the case of Somalia, you have this extremely traumatized society, obviously very susceptible-- broadly to abuse. But there is-- there is more of a sense that things are happening in Ethiopia. It's an authoritarian country-- totally authoritarian country.

But it's authoritarian in a way that still promotes growth and economic development that is absolutely unprecedented in Ethiopia's history. And so there is a lot of-- chewing of khat-- in Ethiopia. But-- the-- the intensity of abuse and-- and negative effects on society seem to be much milder and much more constrained than in a place like k-- like Djibouti, or-- Somalia, or Yemen for that matter.

And then you have other sort of interesting dynamics. So people often make the argument-- locals make the argument, "You know, we-- we have-- some sort of fight with-- a rival. And in the morning, we are about to shoot them. And then come 1:00, we start chewing khat together. And-- then we become friends.

"And when the night is over and we little bit sober up-- well, we get into a fight with them again. But by the time we will be drawing the weapons, we start chewing all over." So they make an argument that it is essentially the social interaction of the khat chewing that reduces some forms of violence.

MALE VOICE:

Khatic (PH) resolution.

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

Right. I-- I am (LAUGHTER) not persuaded that it really holds because-- or that it holds sort of blanket-- strife. Because look at Somalia. It's one of the most violent, strife-torn countries with extraordinary rates of use-- and abuse of khat. But-- there-- there are definite social dynamics associated with-- the chewing that can be-- you know, that-- that cannot be discounted to be fully negative or that-- that are very interesting.

So-- but-- you know, it-- it's an interesting-- it's an interesting market. And there is a big debate in-- Britain where-- khat in the United States illegal. It's also smuggled

here a lot because of-- the size of East-- African communities. In Britain, it's been legal. And-- and it's-- there has been big push to make khat illegal in Britain.

And it's essentially lobbying by women, by females from East Africa facing the same problems that-- that-- that women in East Africa have, that the male-- abuse of khat leads to such family indebtedness that the male is detrimental to the family. And so there is a lot of-- immigrant women pushing for-- making khat illegal. It's a big debate in Britain and-- and an uneasy one.

There is a lot of-- fear that if the trade becomes illegal, that it will then enable-- organized crime groups to capture the trade in a way that's not been the case. Let me now switch to wildlife trafficking and-- you know, I-- I w-- I was-- emailing a bit with-- Steve (PH) from Africa. And I sent-- him this line, "Drugs are easy. You should see how hard it is to come up with any good regulatory policy with respect to wildlife trafficking."

And he sort of said, "Well, only you can get away with saying something like that." And the reason why wildlife trafficking is just so acutely-- difficult to-- to manage and deal with is because-- you have big-- penetration by organized crime groups. But still at the end of the day-- the poachers or spotters, the people who actually find the animals or shoot are often extraordinarily poor people.

And the level of poverty in some of these dessert countries, the greater surpasses even the poverty level for (UNINTEL). Really, really poor people who essentially have no option, who exist in condition where there is not even any subsistent farming possibility because it's dry dessert or very dry savannah.

Yet at the same time-- because of the explosion of demand markets in China and East Asian community, a much more affluent population-- the rate of-- poaching has just multiplied-- extraordinarily. In fact, we are seeing collapses of species at a rate that many biologists believe that if in ten years, 50% of current wildlife is left in East and South Africa-- it'll be a lot.

Th-- this is sort of the catastrophic rate of collapse that we are facing. And-- and-- there are many factors. But poaching is-- absolutely critical and-- and-- driving factor for very sensitive species, very-- endangered species, most iconically rhinos and elephants. But a whole variety of-- of other wildlife products are being shot and consumed.

So, you know, what do you do about it? Well, in the late 1990's, there became a mantra for conservation-- folks-- that there are two solutions or two-- two elements of-- of a solution. One is-- you want to get the community involved so that the community has a stake in conservation. And the second was: Ecotourism can be the source of alternative livelihood for these poor-- families that are dependent on poaching or that participate in poaching.

And I am very sad to report that-- my work debunks the blanket statement. I would not discount-- I would not say that it never works. But it only works under some circumstances. So for ecotourism to generate sufficient income for-- poor farmers, you first of all need the savannah and you need big animals. So that might apply well

in East Africa. But it's not usable in West Africa where you have to trot-- through-- s-- slug it out through a rain forest for days and days to see a monkey.

There's very few general ecotourists who will do that. So some of us will be willing to do that and will be very excited. But the amount of people who will come for such a project is limited. But even in the happy East Africa, big mammals, big open savannah, easily visible-- big iconic animals, the vast majority of the money generated by ecotourism, which is enormous by the way, is captured by either elites, or lodges, or the safari companies.

Extraordinarily little trickles down to communities. A lodge that devotes 6% of their profits to something like community conservation issues is extraordinary. 6% to devote is extraordinary. So you have some of the richest families in Kenya, Tanzania-- that capture the vast majority of the profits.

Very, very little gets to communities. So, you know-- the-- the regulatory system that manages ecotourism needs to fundamentally the structures and monopolies that exist within the political economy. Otherwise-- it doesn't work. It just doesn't get to the communities. The second notion that-- and-- it's extraordinarily difficult to pull off for essentially forest areas where-- where you have rain forest and small mammals, not-- not big, dramatic mammals very easily visible.

And the second is the notion that community management per se leads to good outcomes. Yeah, I am very much a firm believer that the community needs to have a stake in conservation. That implies that the c-- community needs to be able to develop-- the-- to derive economic benefits from conservation.

Because both in Asia-- and in Africa, nature is seen fundamentally through consumptive-- view. The notion that, "Oh, isn't this wonderful to see a zebra, a highlight of my life," is not there. They see zebra every day until they die out. And the sense is, "Well, how will I eat? How will buy myself the cell phone, the iPhone?" No-- the zebra only exists-- well, I-- I only have an interest in supportin' the existence of the zebra if it impacts on my material life.

So communities will very often privilege very short-term maximization money at the detriment on-- on long-term sustainment. Interestingly-- in-- in Kenya-- you have some-- areas that are-- managed by Kenya Wildlife Society, which would be the equivalent of-- our national parks and some that are managed by communities.

Overwhelmingly, those managed by communities are far more corrupt, far more poaching-- far worse habitat than those managed by the state national entity. And even-- the state national entity is not doing well. In-- in fact, one of the things that-- that is striking and extremely disturbing is the-- the increasing rate of corruption among the-- among park rangers in-- in general, whether at the community level or at the national level.

And in a place like Ethiopia, you essentially have no enforcement. You have one brave park manager somewhere, you know, slugging it out against the state, against the poachers, against the community, against the business interests. But he'll be one isolated individual in a, essentially, sea where-- anything goes.

And-- you know, so-- I-- I come with-- I have increasingly come to believe that f-- for many of these places, the only solution is direct financial transfer of money to people not to poach. That is very difficult and very problematic. You are essentially paying people not to engage in illegal and bad, detrimental behavior.

It can also only work if you have law enforcement that's good enough to be able to identify and punish those who take the money and still violate. That presumes a law enforcement that is not corrupt. You don't have it essentially in any of these countries. But this notion that ecotourism is-- is a way out-- I don't think can hold.

And if we pin our hopes without being far more specific under what circumstances it works, we will really end up in a situation where ten years down the road, we will be happy if there is 50% of-- current wildlife level. And by the way, for those of you who follow-- the drug debate-- you know, you think that the-- the-- the debate about legalization as a solution or not is sort of tough and ideological should see the viciousness and-- doctrinary ideologically religious-like debate in the conservation field about whether legal supply should ever be allowed or how it should be allowed.

There is a lot of pressure by some groups, including very prominent-- conservationists to say there should be legal sales of rhino horn. "Rhinos die naturally. Many countries have accumulated the horn. We should sell it on the legal market to wipe out the illegal market." Same with ivory.

And-- on the other hand, you have people who absolutely believe this is the greatest evil and heresy-- that can-- completely exist. And it's extremely complicated. Because you-- in-- in some conservation cases, like crocodilians, legal supply really wiped out illegal market and saved the genera or-- or-- or saved several of the species within the-- within the genus.

Some species were actually directly wiped out as a result of legal farming in-- in Asia. But-- in the current system, th-- there are periodic legal selloffs of either ivory, or horn, or for another-- other wildlife product. There is a huge amount of laundering of illegal sou-- illegally sourced products into the legal one.

And it makes law enforcement that's already corrupt, already ineffective-- far more difficult. Because people really have no capacity to distinguish between the legally sourced and the illegally one. And even more dangerously, it makes it extremely difficult to manage demand and suppress demand, which really is key to conservation successes, to wipe out demand for wildlife products or significantly reduce demand for wildlife products.

And so these legal sales periodically then lead customer to say, "Well, why shouldn't we-- why shouldn't I eat-- consume products with rhino horn-- grind up rhino horn? It's being sold legally." And it's definitely pushing demand out. The question is how much it is pushing demand out. But it's hard to measure, and we don't have the data.

I think this is where studies need to go. How much is the legal supply upping or preventing the decreases in demand? But-- but you have very complicated effects of the legal economy certainly not eliminating either organized crime or the illegal economy and perhaps-- complicating it.

But I still stick to the notion drugs are easy f-- because drugs essentially-- you-- you can take the attitude toward drugs you will just let cultivation happen and will use law enforcement to shape where and how cultivation takes place and where and how trade and trafficking takes place.

You cannot take the attitude with wildlife because there won't be anything left. It will be gone very, very quickly. So drugs are easy. Wildlife trafficking, really hard. Same essentially unhappy story on-- illegal logging and charcoal production. I picked East Africa because it's a very different logging market than what's happening in the Congo or what's happening in Brazil, for example.

And I wanted to have this contrasting case where the-- the trees that are being stripped are the s-- savannah, dessert acacias. And they are being used not for timber or, for that matter, for land-- which is where a lot of deforestation takes place in Brazil-- or in the Amazon broadly and in East Asia but for charcoal smuggling.

And it's-- charcoal use. Essentially, logging-- is illegal without permits in that region. But charcoal production is legal. So what ends up happening is that people cut the tree illegally whether or with the connivance of authorities or not and make it into production-- and make it-- burn it in the kilns for charcoal.

The charcoal is consumed-- domestically in these countries again by some of the poorest populations in the world. For them, it's the principal energy supply for a family, is charcoal burning. It is also a luxury good for Middle East where the most-- desirable acacias are used for barbecues in the Middle East.

So you have this-- this sort of two bifurcated demand market, both local, poor, poverty-driven-- demand and luxury good-- demand. And it's-- just stripping-- any coverage from-- Eastern Africa at fairly catastrophic rates-- with sort of miles and miles of roads covered with these big charcoal bags.

Governments in Ethiopia are almost totally apathetic with respect to any form of enforcement. In Kenya, they occasionally get a little bit more motivated. The key issue is: Can you build-- ca-- can you somehow change the demand markets? And in many of-- many of the poor population, consumers will make the argument that nothing is as cheap as the charcoal and that kerosene or-- gas will cost twice or three times as much.

That often is the case but not always. And when you get to areas where all the acacias are gone like parts of Ethiopia, the-- the charcoal will become so expensive that it becomes competitive-- with other energy products for the family. Now-- at that point, you also have no acacias left, right?

So you-- you-- you don't want to be in that-- in this regulatory position. Because you lost your regulatory effort essentially when it-- when it equals out. So you can imagine scenarios such as subsidizing alternative fuels. Again, it has to be coupled with-- with-- enforcement that people don't still cut it and don't still use it.

And it's so extremely widespread-- that it is a huge regulatory enforcement headache. Because just about everyone does it, including-- middle class families in urban

environments. They still burn with charcoal. So major headache. Then the question is: Can you legally source it? And there have been various efforts to-- make charcoal out of eucalyptus that grows fast.

It's a nasty plant, but it grows fast. And it-- you don't liquidate the-- the natural-- habitat to the same extent. And-- so I interviewed lots of the kiln-- people who operate the kilns and saying, "Why don't you make it out of eucalypt?" And-- they-- they claim that it-- that it doesn't burn well, that it burns very quickly, it explodes, and people don't want to buy it.

They want to buy the hardwood acacia charcoal, not that. So the-- it's a difficult switch to make. More interestingly-- there is legally-- produced cut charcoal in South Africa where acacias have overgrown habitat to the extent that-- from a conservation perspective, it was desirable to reduce the amount of-- acacia overgrowth.

And-- that could be-- something that I am very much exploring with-- some U.N. bodies. How could you at least direct that supply to Middle East to at least cut down on the Middle East-- other side of the Middle East demand driven for-- for-- East-- African-- consumption. But it gets tricky because-- it's still more expensive-- than the illegally sourced-- acacia charcoal.

And you have consumers in the Middle East that are the opposite of green. They have just no-- environmental consciousness whatever. So it's a long slog. But the U.N. approach has been to ban charcoal, especially because Shabaab-- and-- and various other Somali militias make so much money on-- on charcoal smuggling.

I don't think it works because no one has the capacity to enforce it. So I-- and I-- I think that the ban is at best futile-- perhaps increasing interest for organized crime groups to penetrate it. Let me safe a few words about piracy. Just very interesting because it gets into some very tough human rights dilemmas.

So on-- there-- there has been a significant suppression of piracy off of East Africa. And it's very hard to nail down-- why this has happened. You have a confluence of different aspects of policy. And to attribute causality or percentage of causality to any of them-- is excruciatingly difficult to do.

But nonetheless, you have-- far greater law enforcement on-- the water-- the-- on the Somali waters, on the-- the-- Indian Ocean br-- broadly waters than has been the case until 2010. There are armed guards on the ships. Very problematic and controversial from a human rights perspective. And they're shooting at the pirates. They're killing the pirates.

That has nonetheless physically resulted in-- ships being safer and not so-- easily overtaken. And then you have armed citadels, which are these kind of bunkers that are constructed on the ships. If the ship comes under attack, the crew will retreat into that, calls the patrol, and the patrol-- then responds to the ship.

So it buys time for-- the ship to respond-- for the patrols to respond to a ship being under attack. This make a big difference because prior to the prevalence of these citadels being on the ships, the pirates would take a ship over in-- like, seven minutes

was the average time. So it was close to impossible then for-- the patrol to respond there in that time given the space.

But the citadels really changed the dynamic. And finally, there is action against pirates on land, both in Kenya, where-- pirates would be moving around and expatriating money to-- sending money to but also in Somalia, in places like Puntland. Again, very controversial. And some of these internationally sponsored anti-pirate forces have very much-- militia-like characteristics are already being used as the personal presidential guard of the president of Puntland, a complicated story.

But, you know, here is-- here is the dilemma. Do you not take this-- and-- and I would posit that the price of the human rights of the pirates are being violated, right? They-- they are being killed. And their prosecution is often really doesn't-- c-- cannot be called to-- to-- be in any way, you know, due process.

I mean, th-- the-- they-- they are prosecuted. But the trick is-- with the problematic evidence. The trick is that how do you get evidence. They'll-- but if they s-- capture is imminent, they will dump weapons abroad, and they say, "We're fishermen." Well-- you know, vast majority of them are not fishermen.

So they are prosecuted with flimsy evidence. Because in the absence of that, you wouldn't be able to prosecute 'em at all. And you have no deterrence effect whatever on-- the frequency of attacks. And so the-- the-- the key effort there-- needs to be to really teach the navies how to do-- how to gather-- material evidence to have more meaningful prosecutions of the pirates.

Then you have countries like China, India, and Russia, India and-- Russia particularly that essentially don't bother with gathering evidence, put the pirates back on the skiffs without food and water and let them die. How frequently that happens is no one-- is everyone's guess. No one really knows because there is no way to monitor it.

But-- to the extent that any N.G.O. or human rights group could get some satellite data, s-- develop some capacity to monitor that, that would be highly desirable. Because of the stories are very brutish and-- and very unpleasant. You know, that said-- the pirates will themselves report-- that it has deterrence effects, that they are very afraid to run or operate in areas that are patrolled by the Indians or the-- the Russians, for example.

And-- the s-- you know, all that said, the-- the decrease in-- in-- well, I should mention another aspect. One-- one other fascinating dynamic and problematic dynamic is that with the tougher enforcement, the pirates have become far more nervous, twitchy, and far more abusive to the crew that they actually manage to capture. And so you are trading-- a safe deal that anti-kidnapping forces often have to trade.

You beef up-- enforcement, and kidnappers become far more abusive toward-- toward-- the-- the hostages. And-- the-- the same trends are taking place with the pirates. As there is tougher enforcement, less ability to get ransom, more-- liberation-- through raids of the hostages, the pirates have become far more abusive than them than they have been except in West Africa where piracy is exploding, very

little patrolling.

Hostages are being treated very well, released very quickly. But it's a function of the fact that there is no law enforcement. And so at some point, there will be need to be made a choice. Do we care about the amount of piracy of West Africa? And are we going to pull assets from the East Africa territory?

In which case, it's probably going to go up in East Africa. Because structurally, the conditions and incentives for the pirates have not changed other than the presence of law enforcement. I think I have gone, like, way over my time. What-- how long do I still--

SARAH PRAY:

It's okay--

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

So, you know, let me end it here. And-- I-- I am also glad to-- to chat about-- urban gangs or their absence-- how they behave, or-- human trafficking and prostitution markets. S-- so, you know, just ask a question. And I'll (UNINTEL PHRASE).

SARAH PRAY:

Thanks, Vanda. So maybe I'll-- I'll-- I have a meta-question and then-- maybe a couple of more pointed ones. But the-- the meta-question is: It seems like the tie that binds the illicit trades that you discussed is th-- the fact that it is-- staffed by people who have no other options, that the reason that, you know, people are poaching, or selling drugs, or-- you know, getting involved in illegal-- logging, et cetera, is because, you know, they-- they don't have access to the licit economies, right, the access to job markets.

But at the same time, you-- you're-- you're-- you talked about the lack of governance, the lack of-- development, albeit-- Ethiopia is a little bit of an outlier 'cause they're great on economic development. But that isn't necessarily trickling down. So from a policy point of view, where is the solution? Figure it out, wondering where you are headed.

FEMALE VOICE:

Just sort it out for us. (LAUGHTER)

SARAH PRAY:

Yes, right.

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

So-- so-- you know, in each-- so each illicit economy that I look at in the book is-- is own-- each chapter. And each chapter ends or will end with a set of policy implications and recommendations. And very broadly-- I do believe-- that you need to-- that a law en--enforcement is inescapable inclusion.

Then with respect to each of the illicit economies, the question is how do you direct it. But there is a sort of deeper and far more difficult VANDA FELBAB-BROWN: How do you get over generalized corruption of (UNINTEL)-- of law enforcement that is so strong in many parts of the world?

And-- you know, I s-- I-- the-- the-- the book doesn't get into that. I mean, I can sort of offer my own takes of what-- what can be done, what works under what circumstances it works. But it's a bigger question that in-- that essentially that illeg-- that a economy is legal, or illegal, or what-- whatever the regulatory systems is to some extent a bit phenomenal or-- or even just fully dependent on the-- the capacity of law enforcement-- the capacity and willingness of law enforcement to enforce anything.

And so I say, you know, the-- the-- especially the drug field tend to be preoccupied and mesmerized with the notion that problems come from illegality. I would make the argument that you can have well-managed illegal economies and well-managed legal economies. And you can have really badly managed illegal economies and really badly managed-- legal ones.

A part of that is the regulatory framework, and how regulation gets defined, and how regulation is or is not flexible. But the other part is: Do you have law enforcement that is-- that does what it's supposed to do? That is, to enforce the regulation. And many of these countries, you don't have. And there is no incentive for them to be behave properly.

So, you know, this is-- another separate question is: How do you get at this larger malaise of governance and corruption? But what you clearly don't want to do is set up regulatory regimes that conflict with the incentives of interest of the-- many of the key stakeholders in the system. Because then it becomes a completely impossible game.

And should also add that-- so-- and-- and so, you know, what-- what-- what the chapters will do and-- and span of articles will do is to look at, for example, wildlife trafficking. And I will say, "Okay, you know, here-- under these circumstances, ecotourism can work. Under these circumstances, it's not-- unlikely to work.

"This form of community-- engagement-- is likely to produce desirable outcomes. In these circumstances, you might have to rely on direct financial transfer, extremely

controversial proposition." It will also say that I do believe that hunting-- legal hunting should be allowed. The question is when, and how, and how is it structured, and how is it.

But I-- I would not-- never make the argument there should be no legal hunting. I-- again, so very, very controversial position when you-- you think about-- the drug debate being (UNINTEL). You know, it's-- you know, it's-- it's-- a crucifixion in-- in-- in some of these-- debates, like with wildlife conservation. So I-- I have absolutely no-- ambition in it. I would say it would be folly to say, "Here is a blanket set of recommendation that applies to all illicit economies or, for that matter, to-- in every case to illicit economy."

In fact, the-- the-- the sort of big picture takeaway of the book is that specificity matters, that what works as a regulation for one economy in one place may have completely different outcomes, effects in another place. And what you need to do is to base everything on local regulatory-- the-- to base regulation on local institutional and-- cultural settings. So, I know it's a copout answer. But no, I-- I am being--

SARAH PRAY:

Not really--

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

--seri-- I am being serious. You know, the-- the-- the search for the one or-- or set of silver bullets just does not work.

SARAH PRAY:

I w-- you had a question?

FEMALE VOICE:

I had a question about the piracy. But I just wanted to-- I didn't know if-- that's-- that's so interesting. And I-- I like your formulation. I suppose I-- I find myself-- kind of r-- retreating though to the question of the broader governance failure, that, you know, if you're tryin' to solve problems and the range that you have invoked in this few minutes that I've been here-- sorry, I came late by the way.

You know, it just seems to me that you'd be better off tryin' to figure out how to make that core set of propositions about the social contract between a government and its citizens, and taxation, and delivery of services work in the hope of being able to even scale down. I mean, you won't eliminate but scale down the kind of broader-- the-- the more na-- the narrower issues you are trying to deal with and then, you know,

have them, as it were, within s-- range.

But at-- at this point, to imagine how any-- even with what you-- you just said, which is so smart, that you must, you know, focus on the specifics of each c-- circumstances. It's a losing game, it seems to me. I don't know-- th-- that brings me to the question I wanted to ask you about the piracy.

Because, you know, if-- I just-- the bit that I missed-- if it's true that the circumstances have got so much tougher for s-- pirates-- in Somali and Kenyan waters, East African waters and they are fearful of these consequences that you are-- you are describing, what has that done to the level of incidence? And--

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

The incidence is dramatically down.

FEMALE VOICE:

So it means that it's about the volume of inputs or it's about the techniques are being used t-- to-- in other words, how many people do you have to put in a boat, and cast off, and leave to die before you reduce the incidence? Or is it about policing the water and having a certain minimum number of people?

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

It-- it's about both. So the-- the intensity of law enforcement has made a big difference. Now, you are still talking about extraordinary amount of water and space to patrol. But-- but frankly, I-- I-- I am surprised. And I have to say I was wrong. I have argued two years ago that you can never deliver enough enforcement punch given the density of law enforcement.

And-- I was wrong. (LAUGHTER) You know, I-- I have to admit that. Now, what-- what is very hard to pin down in this: It's just how much the effect is the citadels. I would still make the argument that-- that the most effective of the set of policies that have changed-- is the-- the-- the citadels, the self-defenses that the ships now put on as well as things like convoys.

It makes a big difference if the ships go individually or whether they go in convoy. So there is a whole set of defensive measures that, I would say, made the biggest difference. But these defensive measures, they are nonetheless linked to intensity of law enforcement. Because if there was no law enforcement, then no-- the pir-- you would have three pirate skiffs taking a week to eventually starve them out, get them out of the citadels, and take over the-- taking over the ship.

So law enforcement makes a big difference. And that's why the policy is vulnerable to-- if there is a drop in law enforcement because things seem to be looking so much

better there as opposed to, for example, in West Africa, will bring it incidence down? 'Cause the-- the fundamental conditions or interests of the pirates have really not changed.

They-- they are down. And you have some interesting, sort of tangling dynamics with tribal elders and pirates. But-- that, too, is complex. The pirates bring money into the local economy that they would not-- that the economy would not have otherwise. They-- can be captured-- by politicians, and elders, and other interests.

And-- and-- and, for example, in one of the-- the few little projects I had was-- interviewing pirates about how does one become-- captain of the skiff. You know, how do you become not just an ordinary-- you know, are you most vicious? You know-- do you-- have greatest capacity to shoot a gun?

And the answer I got quite frequently was, "Well, if you are the son of these tribal elders, then you have privileged access to lands and ports. Then you are likely going to become-- a pirate captain." And so, you know, you see these fascinating dynamics in how existing structures of power are being reinforced and when they are being challenged.

But-- incidence is dramatically down. And it's a function of better self-defense forces-- and greater law enforcement. It's not a function that the pirates have other options. I mean, they are chilling their heels right now. But they-- you know, it's still a very poor country. They don't have anything to do really. If the sense is that it's less risky-- I would posit that incidence will--

(OVERTALK)

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

--go up again. And-- and they really have nothing. I mean, th-- there is this narrative that they could either be fisherman or that they are fishermen eviscerated, deprived of fishing by-- the big fishing fleets. I-- I don't quite buy it. I mean-- there is tremendous amount of illegal fishing by these big fishing fleets.

It's out of control, and it needs to be enforced. And unfortunately, the anti-piracy patrols-- naval-- navies don't enforce it, including because many of these fishing fleets are Chinese, or Indian, or European. And it's their primary business-- very powerful, potent industries. But the reality also is that these pirates were never fishermen to start with. Many of them were not.

And-- the-- the bottom trawling that these big fishing fleets do that destroy the waters, it's not the kind of fish they would have been catching had they been-- had they been fishermen. But-- but they're not. So-- so they're kind of loose youths now chilling their heels, living it up on the money they made, or not having money. And-- so should the-- the level of enforcement change, there will be a lot of interest on their part to get back in the business in my view.

SARAH PRAY:

Any questions in New York? Gene (PH)?

GENE:

Dave (PH) and I were at a conference about three years ago, three and a half years ago in Bulgaria about organized crime. And a guy who was with-- I think he was the European universities-- or was studying trafficking. And he said that he was about to come to the conclusion that there were more people working with N.G.O.'s on trafficking in Europe than there were people being trafficked. (LAUGHTER)

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

On human trafficking--

GENE:

Yeah--

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

--in general--

GENE:

--on human trafficking. And I wondered-- what you thought of that. And-- is that true-- elsewhere in the world? If-- if-- if there is some truth to that, is that true (LAUGHTER) in other-- in other places as well?

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

You know, it-- it's-- I don't know. But-- human trafficking has become an extremely, pardon the pun, sexy topic. Everyone and their brother wants to be doing-- anti-human trafficking effort. And I am delighted to see finally top levels of U.S.-- government to sort of talk more broadly, including, you know, some of this wildlife trafficking where you have essentially a decade where all the target was human trafficking and nothing else.

My view is that lots of the policies that are being adopted are not terribly effective. And one is this sort of generalized information campaign for women that are potentially to be trafficked. And the-- the campaigns go, you know, "Don't trust the

man who tells you you'll become a model. He'll traffic you," right?

And they are-- they are just not getting any traction often. Even in places like Indonesia, I-- I-- where I was before, I, you know, interviewed some of the women who were trafficked, who were victims of trafficking. And they would be college educated, and they would still fall into this notion, "We will make you movie star or will get you this exciting job in-- in Thailand."

And you said-- and you said, "Well, you know, did you ever hear these campaigns?" "Yes, yes, but we didn't pay attention to it," right? So the-- the messaging-- this-- this blanket messaging, in my view, doesn't work. And there needs to be thinking about how do you change the messaging to get some traction. It's also true that-- there is, in Africa in particularly, there is-- as well as parts of Asia, there is huge family complicity in the trafficking.

FEMALE VOICE:

And government complicity as well--

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

Well, government complicity absolutely as well. But also family. And so the-- the-- the portrayal of the-- of the traffic is this-- trafficker with the moustache somewhere on the side luring these women into. The reality is that they are very often sold by family members. And so, you know, how do you enforce that?

How do you build any preventative measures? It's a very different proposition than, "Don't go with the guy who promises you to become a movie star." Especially in Africa and Asia, it's very, very much a problem, as well as-- government complicity, with many police forces-- in Indonesia, for example, the-- the-- the trafficking market-- human trafficking market is essentially divided among different police/military units in different areas.

And-- you really don't have very much outside traffickers at all. The domestic market anyway is dominated by different police forces, units. You know, how do you start exposing that, cracking that down-- again gets to how do you get at generalized corruption within police forces, how do you identify its leaders that have an interest to behave differently and to have a capacity to change anything and will stay enough in the system and not get pushed out and eliminated-- by the system.

And there is very difficult debate about prostitution: Should it be legal or not and how does that impact and feed into trafficking? And it's another one of those crucifixion debate with people sort of being vehement believers that no-- legal prostitution should ever be allowed because it devalues women and set up these-- mechanisms where women can be trafficked.

I think there has been some very interesting-- experiments, for example, in Australia

where-- legal prostitution-- has had very positive effects both on the quality of life of the prostitutes as well as on-- the sense that-- that trafficking overall is being reduced. But again, the context specificity, I think, is critical.

And the level of enforcement and monitoring that-- New Wales and Australia put-- put up is likely something-- that-- cannot be achieved in other places. That said, a lot of the women that were liberated from being trafficked would end up as prostitutes voluntarily. And-- lots of the alternative livelihoods offered to them, being seamstresses-- they have just no interest in.

And they would say, "No, you know, our best-- option is to be prostitutes." So here is where the East Africa research was absolutely fascinating. There is tremendous amount of prostitution. It is very much-- and-- and in fact, you have women--

FEMALE VOICE:

But no pimps.

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

No pimps. You have very many women that will have a job and still get paid for sex as part time. And some will work fully as-- as prostitutes. But in Kenya, in Djibouti, in-- Ethiopia, I did not find a pimp. And when I would ask the prostitutes, "You know, can I talk with the pimp? Who's your pimp?" "What's a pimp?" L

You're like, "Well, that's the guy who you pay money to, and he protects you." "What?" (LAUGHTER) And it was absolutely extraordinary that you have this very atomized market that really lacks structures-- of organization in-- in the market that my every expectation would be, "There is a reason why pimps exist. You will not have a prostitution market without a pimp." And alas, there was just no pimp to be had and-- and no concept of what a pimp is. In fact, just no protection at all.

FEMALE VOICE:

Is it to do with volume?

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

I-- I-- I wish I knew the answer, why that is not the case. I think there are some structural-- there are cultural aspects to it. But I wouldn't push the explanation too far. And-- the women are very vulnerable. They are vulnerable to customers not paying and abusing them. And they are very vulnerable to police.

So you have s-- the police is not treating them any more mildly. They extort them, demand sex for free, put-- you know, h-- haul them in. So the very same reason why

you have-- a pimp in Europe or the United States exists there. And you would expect that you would have the solution. But you don't.

And-- so it was-- sort of extraordinary that the market is so atomized. But clearly, it's leaving the women vulnerable. In-- in-- in many illicit economies, I would say that an optimal outcome is a very atomized illicit economy that's as close to sort of free market with many, many-- little providers.

In-- in this case, I am not sure that it's helping the women frankly-- in any way. Is it better for customers? Who knows? But it should not be the most important criteria. And-- certainly from-- for the women, they are very vulnerable. And-- th-- the-- and often, they have-- they-- they make also so little earnings very frequently that they have no capacity to-- to escape-- from poverty, although there is great variation in-- in the conditions of the women.

Interestingly, there are also very few brothels. Very few. So you-- you have this sort of individualized chance of getting customers. People-- a prostitute will sort of develop a network. Or perhaps hotels will recommend a prostitute. But it's a much looser arrangement, nowhere near the level of protection that-- an institution like a pimp or brothel-- would bring.

Now, I would expect to win a great prize if I could answer why not. But I-- f-- my-- my expectation is that there are sort of cultural elements to it. And-- and-- and probably historically, I would posit quite a bit of prostitution, extramarital sex in the village setting that has condition a sense that this is not such a special market that-- that-- people should be interested in exploiting and-- and-- and building into structures.

But-- you know, I have flimsy evidence-- to-- to make that argument. And I cannot say that I really resolved it and nailed it down, "This is why you don't have pimps." But the other thing that was very interesting, and I-- I guess am guilty somewhat-- of s-- moving beyond the sort of neutral observer to becoming an agent. When I was interviewing the women about, "Do you have pimps or not?" and explaining what a pimp is, many of them would react, "Wow, that's interesting. That's wonderful. (LAUGHTER) We should really get one." (LAUGHTER)

FEMALE VOICE:

Unintended consequences, I suppose. I am-- I am wondering-- about--

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

Was there a question in New York? I think there was--

(OVERTALK)

FEMALE VOICE:

--goin', I think.

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

She was-- it was (UNINTEL PHRASE).

FEMALE VOICE:

Yeah, I had-- hi, Vanda. Good seein' you. So I had a question actually. And I know that this was a bit tangential or peripheral to your work. But you spoke about this when you came back from Indonesia. You-- you spoke about it again today. But this question of urban gangs.

And you made that interesting comment about how there were very few, if none, that you were able to observe in terms of a presence in Ethiopia. But you did certainly -- see it in-- in Kenya. And in Indonesia, I think you had also made a comment that it was a very strong-- subsection of the-- the youth, I guess, in-- in that country. So I was wondering if you had any initial thoughts as to how or why these differences are emerging in these different countries very much across the world.

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

Yeah. So very interesting. In Indonesia, you have a lot of urban gangs. And what's fascinating about Indonesia as a country is that in many ways, it was a pirate republic. The initial people who brought about independence were criminals and pirates. And from that moment onward, you have different levels of authoritarian and progressively democratic rule.

But the state controls criminals and uses criminals for its purposes. And that survives even the democratization. Even today in the current ten years of-- (UNINTEL), more than that 13, 15, I guess-- of-- democracy, you still have key political actors and key political institution exploiting urban gangs for their purposes.

And what is amazing is that th-- throughout this huge uphea-- political upheavals, the state and politicians have managed to maintain control over the gangs. And the gangs have not broke out of their-- lords'-- reins and become independent and very threatening in the same way that you see in Mexico-- with-- drug groups more broadly or that you see in-- places like Rio or (UNINTEL) where, yes, there is a degree of cooptation.

But it's far more now on the terms of the gangs. And it's-- there's far more confrontation. Whereas in Indonesia but as well in India, Nepal, you have very strong, effective political control of criminal actors, urban gangs exploited for the

purposes of the state but managing to control. Contrast that with-- Kenya, where there is a lot of urban gangs in Nairobi particularly.

And they are quite ethnically based or-- or clan based. And-- they certainly have been-- exploited-- particularly by the Kikuyu politicians like the Mungiki but not just by the Kikuyu politicians for the purposes of the state. That exploded on the politicians in the last election, not in the current one, in the 2007 where-- the politicians used-- gangs to kill so many people that violence was triggered at a level that became very visible.

And now, both the president and vice-president are under indictment-- by the I.C.C. Then you have-- and so you have other non-Kikuyu gangs like the-- Luo gangs. Essentially, each ethnic community has its own gangs. What's very interesting about the-- the gangs in-- in Kenya is that they are both very unsophisticated-- they are mon-- mostly-- they remain at the level of extortion, some limited protection.

But that protection is almost solely based against other ethnically-based gangs. But they don't provide the same level of-- social public services and more broader protection that gangs-- more sophisticated gangs in Latin America or Indonesia would, for example. And so they are quite-- the-- the community is only mildly supportive-- of them. But it's particularly politicians that exploit them.

FEMALE VOICE:

Do you count the M.R.C. as an urban gang? Or are they a different entity?

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

I-- I would say they're a gang. But yeah, it-- it was a gang. They-- they can be both-- both a terrorist (UNINTEL) insurgent group. But I would-- I would make the argument that-- well, they're more than just a gang. They-- they also have a very clear sort of revolutionary political agenda that-- I was about to say that it's, like, way more than, say, the Mungiki.

But that's not even quite true, right? There is all this lingo, and-- and narrative, and ideological narrative among the Mungiki that's extraordinarily revolutionary, extraordinarily ideologically specified in a way that an urban gang in Rio will never have that level of ideology. But-- I-- I-- I would put the M.R.C. in a separate category.

They-- they have more of-- political expression-- than the others. But then you look at Ethiopia. And why are there no gangs? And so this became my sort of most interesting investigative work-- that started with the fact that every time I would move outside of Addis, I would step out of my car.

I would be accosted by young men who claimed that they are compulsory tourist guides. "And so, you know, you want to go to this fish market, you have to pay an entrance fee. And on top of that, you have to pay us $20 so that we escort you around

the fish market." And I would say, "No thank you. I'm not interested."

They would say, "Well, you cannot go in." And so this became constant struggle, and tussle, and fight. And-- and-- if I would take them, they would be useless. They would say, "This is a fish market. This is a fisherman. This is fish. This is a woman (LAUGHTER) who cuts the fish. $20."

But if I wouldn't take them, then I would be deprived of this knowledge. More importantly, I would be mugged, harassed, pick pocketed at a far greater level-- far greater extent than when I had those characters. So as this was going on for-- you know, second week into it, I was like, "Hold on. There is, you know, a s-- a systemic racket, structured racket going on."

And they have IDs issued from the state. They are tourist guides, right? And so I got into doing-- essentially hiring them, interviewing them, or not hiring them, sometimes kinda doing comparative cases. And it became totally obvious that the state, which is very authoritarian and has a lot of control over the country, has nonetheless identified as a key danger this youth bulge that's emerging and not having any employment.

And so their solution has been to generate the state-- organized crime alternative-- by diverting these you-- these-- these young men predominantly to be tourist guides that are imposed on foreigners, that are useless for anything other than you limit the amount of exposure th-- the-- the amount of harassment that a foreigner ge-- gets.

Now, it's these same people who organize-- a gang that will harass you if you don't hire them. So they run their own little racket of-- pickpockets. And so as I got to interview them more-- some of them just totally told me, "Look, we were hustlers. We were pickpocket. Three years ago, the state rounded us up and said, 'You can go to jail, or you can become a tourist guide.'" (LAUGHTER)

They became tourist guides. And-- many of them love the state because they-- they have raised a lot of money off the Western tourists. And they make f-- far more money than they could-- otherwise have. And you see how these 20-year-olds will become community leaders-- and-- and manage community money from ecotourism because of their-- th-- the-- this extraordinary privileged position as-- as a tourist guide in communities that otherwise have nothing.

But they-- they look like gangsters. And you talk with them. "How do you manage the-- the funds? Who-- you know, so you get 10% from ecotourism. How does the village-- how do you divide the money?" And most of the time, it's totally blank. You know, it's pretty much they keep the money for their gold chains, and iPhones, and whatever.

And in some cases, it works better. I mean, there are some communities where the-- where there is much more of an investment of the money they generate personally or they are then in charge of. But in many areas, it's just totally-- but-- cha-- changing-- eli-- eliminating p-- previous tribal-- p-- previous s-- structures and creating this new gangster-like elite-- who are tourist guides.

Now, it's a brilliant policy on the part of the state. But its limitation is (LAUGHTER) that at some point you will not be able to have enough tourists to be feeding the huge youth bulge that is-- entering the system. And-- and the-- the other key mechanism is that most of the tourists are not as uppity as I was, saying, "No, I have no interest in hiring you," and arguing with them.

They will just yield to a certain amount of pressure. But the key mechanism that the state uses to enforce this racket is that-- drivers-- you-- I cannot hire a car. I need the driver. I cannot drive myself. The drivers are under tremendous pressure from both the one party that rules the country as well as police to make sure that-- the foreigner will hire these useless tourist guides.

And in fact, my driver would be terrified when I would refuse. I mean, he-- he was terrified of the punishment that awaited him-- if I would not hire them. So, you know, the-- this-- this system of-- of protection and extortion operates not simply at the level of the actual tourist guide. But it's-- backup structures in the back of the state.

And in fact when I would sorta most protest and refuse to hire them or say things like, "Okay, the minister of tourism is my friend. I will report you, how you lied to me," because they would say that it's legally required to hire them, which it isn't. They just need to enforce it.

What they would then do is to try to unleash the political party at me. So they would round up people from the poli-- local office of the political party and kinda, you know, try to go-- try to go push me around until I yielded to them. So this is a brilliant-- scheme.

SARAH PRAY:

I think I speak for everyone that w-- I want to go on vacation with you. (LAUGHTER) It sounds like it would be pretty interesting. No, this is-- this was fascinating. You know, I think-- I'm definitely interested to see the book. You did raise probably more questions than answers. But I think that you-- you knew you were gonna do that, right?

And, you know, this is-- just goes to show, I think, the-- the work of the Open Society Foundations and, you know, how all of these things are tied together. And, you know, we can't work on one without the other. And, you know, I mean, you laughed at my question at how do we get at, you know, empowering youth and getting to the illicit economies. But, I mean, that's what it's gonna take, right?

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

That's a key component of it anyway.

SARAH PRAY:

Okay. Well, thanks-- thanks to those in New York. Thank you so much, Vanda. This is--

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

My pleasure--

SARAH PRAY:

--really, really--

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN:

Thank you--

SARAH PRAY:

--interesting. Have a great day, everyone.

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *