

The Wild Wild East: Nuclear Trafficking and the 'Lawless Lands' of Eastern Europe and the Russian Caucasus

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Agenda

- Trafficking Data
- Evaluating the 'Lawless Lands'
 - Transnistria
 - South Ossetia
- Projecting future nexus between trafficking and terrorism



COURTESY OF GEORGIAN INTERIOR MINISTRY



Trafficking incidents involving nuclear, other radioactive material, or both, 1991-2012

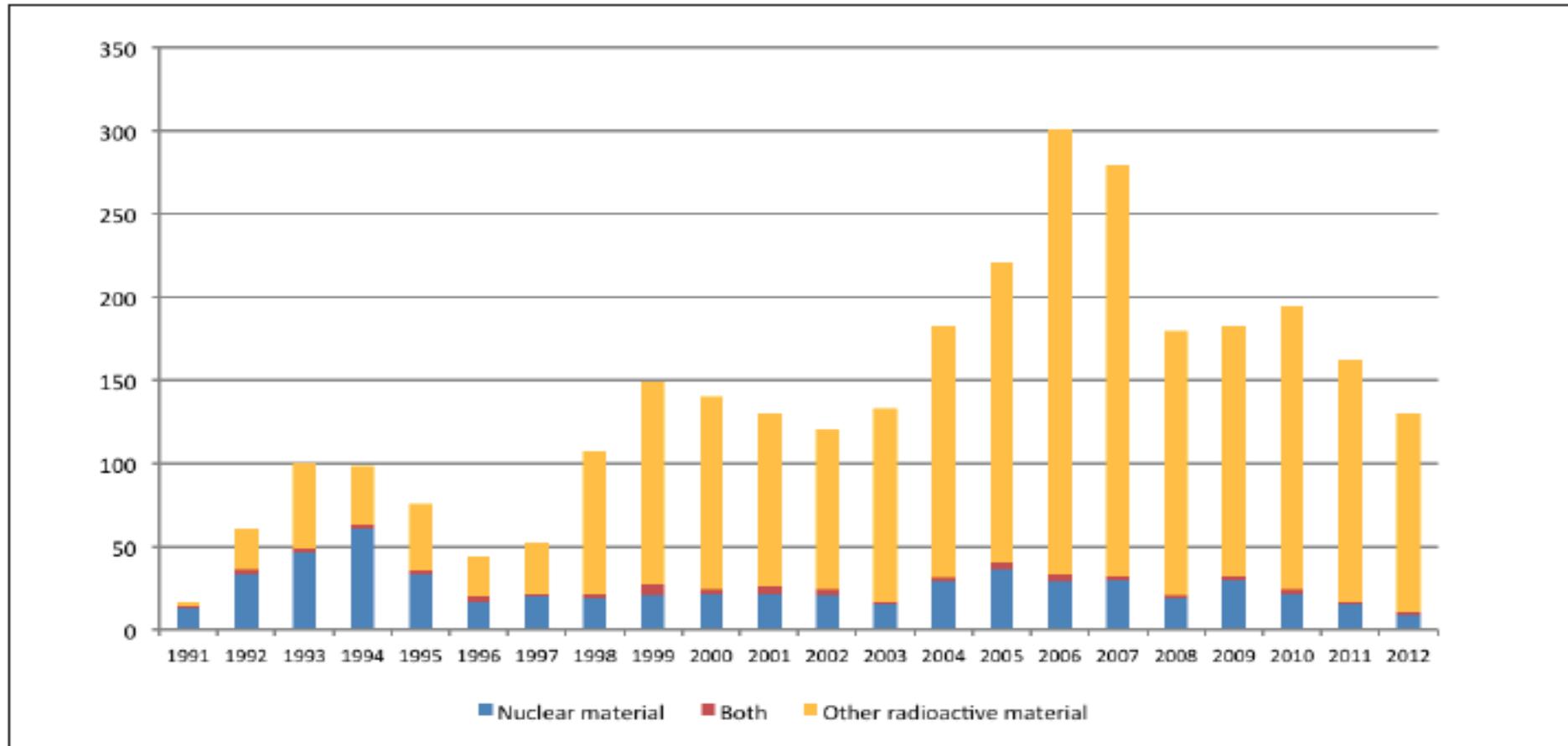
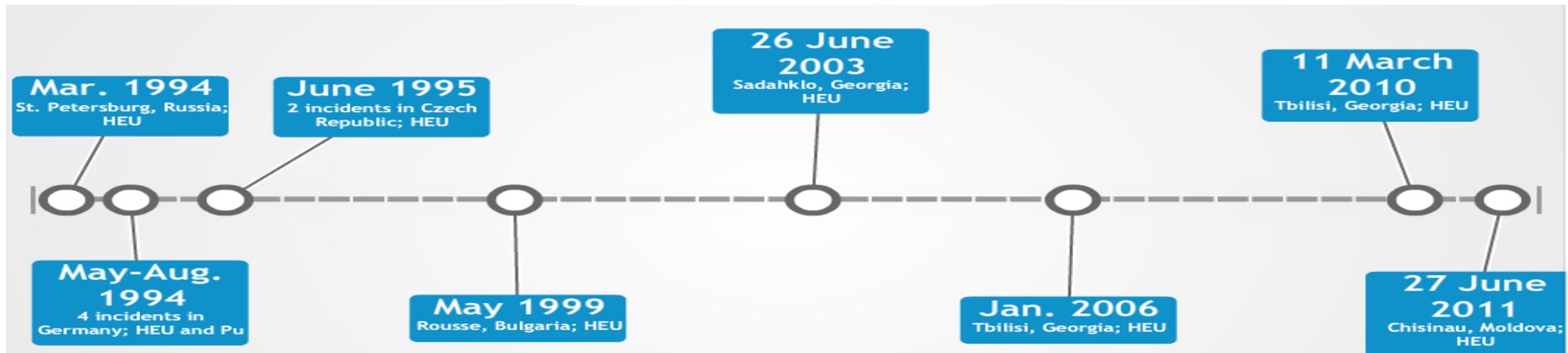
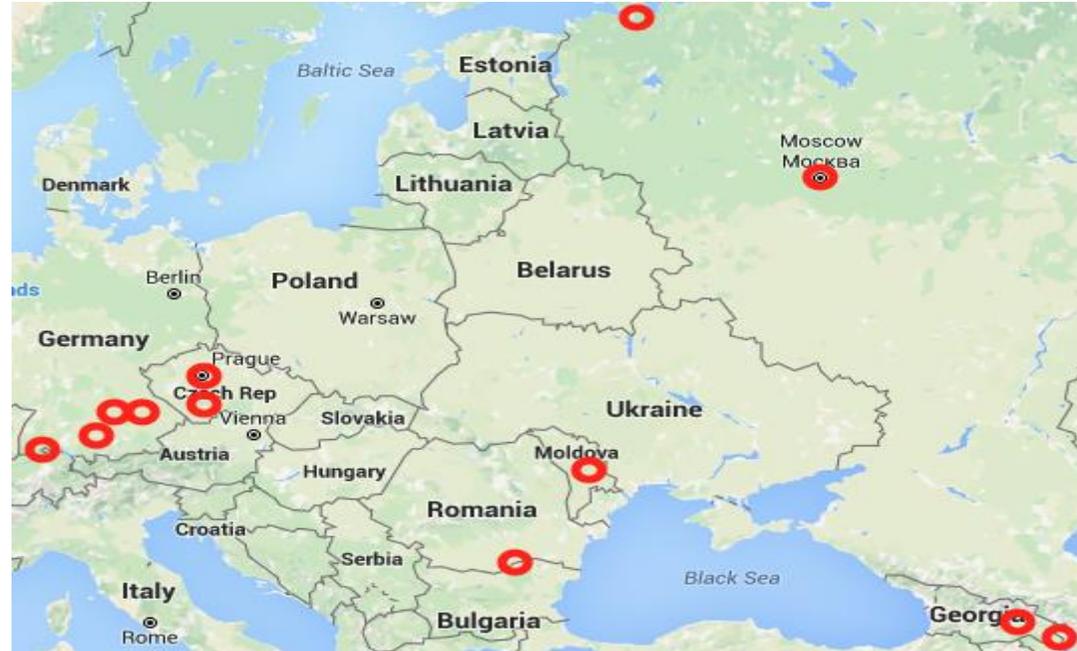


Figure 2. Trafficking and other loss-of-control incidents recorded in the Database on Nuclear Smuggling, Theft, and Orphan Radiation Sources (DSTO), 1991–2012



Incidents involving unauthorized possession of HEU and plutonium-239, 1992-2013



'Lawless Lands' and Trafficking

- 'Lawless Lands' refers to regions within states that the government lacks proper control and influence over
- Areas characterized by weak economies fuelled through trafficking



Transnistria

- Separatist region in Moldova, formed as a de facto state following a short war with Moldova in 1992
- Moldovan police/authorities have no jurisdiction in Transnistria



Trafficking in Transnistria

- EU concerned trafficking in Transnistria could spillover
- Shadow economy brings in roughly \$2 billion through smuggling
- 2014: Suppliers in Moldova sought Islamic extremists to sell enough cesium-137 to make a dirty bomb



South Ossetia

- Separatist region within Georgia, borders Russia
- Smuggler in 2006 originally tried selling HEU in South Ossetia
- Majority of smugglers are opportunistic



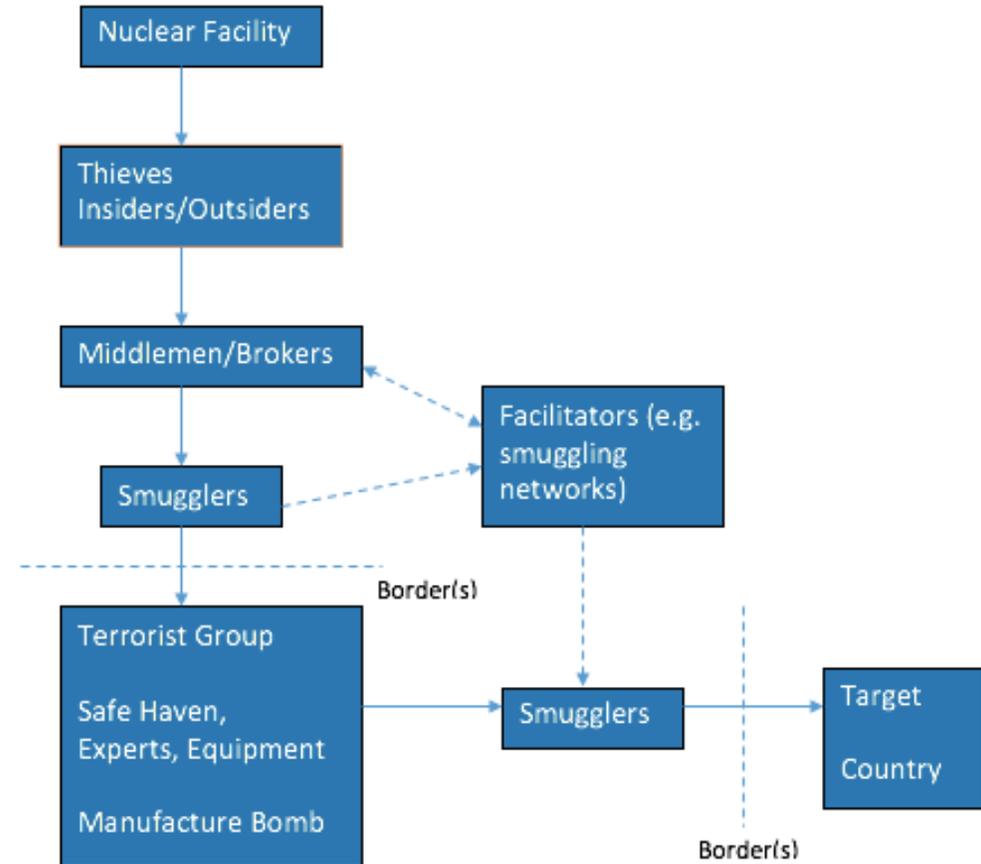
Georgia borders with radiological detectors

- Seven borders with radiological detectors
 - Sadakhlo border with Azerbaijan stopped 2003 incident
 - Kazbegi border with Russia did not stop 2006 incident



Projecting the Nexus with Terrorism

- “I really want an Islamic buyer because they will bomb the Americans”
- Paris attack
- ISIS recently announced intentions to obtain/build chemical weapons



Conclusions

- It is likely that existing smuggling routes through these regions will be used by suppliers of nuclear materials
- Current efforts to reduce trafficking in both regions are insufficient
- Potential for supplying terrorist organizations becomes an increasing concern

