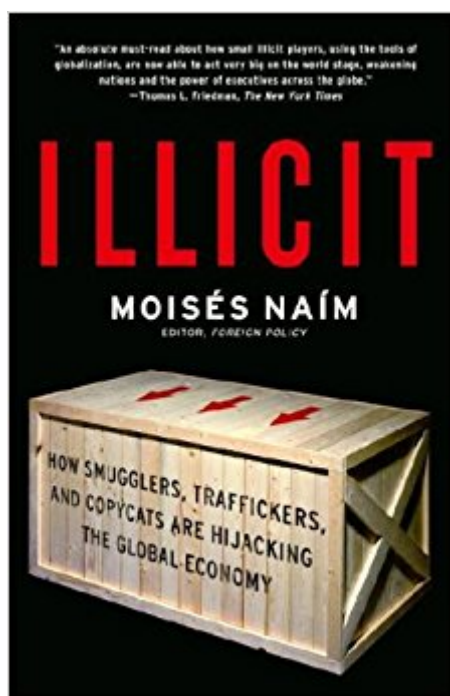


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Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers, And Copycats Are Hijacking The Global Economy



Synopsis

A groundbreaking investigation of how illicit commerce is changing the world by transforming economies, reshaping politics, and capturing governments. In this fascinating and comprehensive examination of the underside of globalization, Moises Naïf illuminates the struggle between traffickers and the hamstrung bureaucracies trying to control them. From illegal migrants to drugs to weapons to laundered money to counterfeit goods, the black market produces enormous profits that are reinvested to create new businesses, enable terrorists, and even to take over governments. Naïf reveals the inner workings of these amazingly efficient international organizations and shows why it is so hard to contain them. Riveting and deeply informed, *Illicit* will change how you see the world around you.

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Customer Reviews

Illicit activities are exploding worldwide. The onslaught of globalization has unleashed a tidal wave of bad stuff--everything from arms trafficking, human smuggling, and money laundering to music bootlegging. Here is the dark side of globalization: the mushrooming underground economy.

Moises Naïf explores this murky world in his book *Illicit*. Naïf is the editor of the relaunched magazine *Foreign Policy* and a former executive director of the World Bank and Minister of Trade and Industry of Venezuela. In *Illicit*, he unties the connections between the Colombian cocaine dealer, the New York banker steering money to offshore tax havens, the Albanian forcing women into prostitution, and the Chinese market stall-holder selling counterfeit DVDs. Naïf

reports that legitimate global trade has doubled since 1990 from \$5 to \$10 trillion. Meanwhile, money laundering has gone up tenfold, exceeding \$1 trillion a year. Smuggling and money laundering have always existed, but Naïf shows how they have increased at a staggering pace in the wake of globalization, despite new government controls since 9/11. The main culprits are the collapse of the Iron Curtain and state deregulation. As the reach of organized crime has expanded, governments have failed to keep up. Naïf illustrates the problems with stories about A.Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb who sold nuclear technology to North Korea and Libya; Walter C. Anderson, an American who was accused of hiding \$450 million in offshore accounts to evade taxes; and Vladimir Montesinos, the Peruvian intelligence czar who is on trial for trafficking drugs and arms. The book, while a little dry, will be interesting to policy buffs and aspiring crooks alike. --Alex Roslin --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review. In this sweeping and informative work, Foreign Policy editor Naïf demystifies the global trade in illegal goods and services and, in the process, presents an original portrait of globalization that skillfully eschews the utopian doggerel that often characterizes such accounts. Naïf provides a detailed tour of the major globalized criminal activities—drug production and distribution, illegal arms dealing, human trafficking, counterfeiting, money laundering and so on—and introduces a host of criminal networks that profit from them. The book is regrettably devoid of the kind of firsthand reporting from the field that would have made the subject matter really jump off the page. Yet Naïf creates a picture of illicit trade which demonstrates that, far from taking place in a shadowy underworld, such activity is inextricably linked to legitimate commerce and directly affects all of us. In Naïf's view, globalization's "diffusion of power to individuals and groups" and away from sovereign states has created a "smuggler's nirvana," in which the lines between legitimate and illegitimate economic activity are blurred and criminal networks possess an unprecedented degree of political influence. Making matters worse, the widening gap between global haves and have-nots—what Naïf calls "geopolitical bright spots and black holes"—has increased the incentive for individuals and groups on both sides of the divide to participate in illicit activities. The remedy? In addition to offering a bevy of specific policy ideas, Naïf urges readers to move away from simplistic moral denunciations and to focus, instead, on reducing the demand for criminals' goods and services and on weakening the incentives for ordinary people to become involved in their enterprises. (On sale Oct. 18) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I love this book! This was required for my transnational crime class and surprisingly enjoy reading it! It is very interesting and a very easy read.

"Illicit" by Moises Naim is a good primer on the underground economy. Mr. Naim's experience as an Editor at Foreign Policy magazine appears to have helped the author hone his skills at synthesizing an impressive quantity of third-party research to support his thesis. It is also evident that Mr. Naim's discussions with numerous high-level personal and professional contacts around the world have helped him reflect on the topic at length, leading him to offer many pages of thoughtful critique and analysis. The end result is a balanced and nuanced book that makes a valuable contribution to our understanding about an increasingly urgent and worrisome problem. Some might also read Mr. Naim's description of how globalization empowers illicit trade as a riposte to free market cheerleaders such as Thomas Friedman, who tend to equate entrepreneurship with utopianism. To the contrary, we find that many counterfeiters and traffickers are highly skilled and creative people who excel at exploiting decentralized and flexible underground marketing, sales and production networks for personal gain but at great expense to our collective peace and security. According to Mr. Naim, "profits...was the name of the game" for nuclear weapons traders such as A.Q. Khan, and it is on this basis that the struggle to curtail illicit trade must be based. Given that governments around the world are currently losing this struggle, Mr. Naim argues for a strategy of harm reduction including the removal of the artificial barriers that create myriad profit opportunities for criminals. For example, this might include the decriminalization of marijuana. The author reasons that law enforcement could better focus on much more dangerous activities and on enforcing the laws in more readily attainable ways, such as prosecuting major drug dealers and the employers of illegal aliens. I found Mr. Naim's recommendations to be refreshingly commonsensical when compared with the more politically expedient but ineffective supply-side fixes that are proposed by far too many policymakers today. Regrettably, Mr. Naim fails to take the book to a deeper level of analysis by making a stronger connection between neoliberal ideology, democracy and illicit trade. To be sure, Mr. Naim highlights the fact that some places on our planet have become anarchic, controlled by criminal gangs of all sorts whose economic power has allowed them to buy off their local governments (if they exist at all). However, he does not acknowledge the fairly obvious fact that illicit trade might represent precisely what neoliberalism desires: pure capitalism without the restraining influence of government. Might his recommendations have been made stronger by insisting on ways to achieve meaningful social and environmental justice through radical democratic reforms,

rather than plugging holes in an already far too leaky and decrepit system of global neoliberal governance? Setting aside this reasonable difference in opinion, I found this book to be an engagingly interesting and informative read. I highly recommend it to all.

Good

Although a few years old now, this book provides a timeless and fact-based perspective of how illicit trade/trans-national crime affects not only our economy, but the very security of our nation.

Required reading. The World is a complicated place

The book came in perfect condition and was a great buy. I am content with the purchase of this book from this customer. Good read and informative book on the topic of the illicit global economy.

This book confirmed many of the event currently in motion. I will read it again and suggest it to others.

Excellent condition. Really good look at what's happening at our borders.

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