



Tel: +44 (0)20 8587 9540 | Fax: +44 (0)20 8587 9545  
<http://www.cdrcb.co.uk>

## **International Commercial Crime**

International trade is the lifeblood of society. The well-being and economic progress of a country depends on efficient and successful international trade. Criminal elements world-wide, some local, some national and some international turn the process to their own ends and for their own gain and for the loss of the society in which they operate.

Reduced to basic principles, international commerce depends to a great extent on the movement of goods in one direction and the movement of money in the opposite direction. Criminal elements will try to infiltrate and corrupt this process wherever they can. As much trade depends on a level of trust, criminals find this intervention all too simple.

Criminals will try to corrupt the system in the following basic ways:

1. They will infiltrate the system of financial credit and payment at the initial stages of any business dealing.
2. They will steal the cargo in transit.
3. They will misrepresent the nature of the transaction in many ways and so defraud the consignor or the consignee or the insurer.

The criminals themselves are generally found within the commercial system itself. They are so often traders or are otherwise engaged in the commercial process who find that there is more financial benefit to be gained from corrupting the system than there is by allowing it to work properly. This is not the type of crime committed by an intruder.

In size this type of crime is difficult to quantify. Much of it is never made an official statistic and is never reported within a single national law enforcement jurisdiction. Insurance companies who so often bear the loss have no central system for recording losses due to crime. Although the figure can only be an estimate, some sources estimate the losses due to international cargo and trading crime to be in the region of 3% of the world economy.

There is one factor concerning the criminal elements which is almost unique. The variations in method are closely linked to the ethnic origin of the criminal. There are specialist methods which appear to be the monopoly of certain racial groups. Asians will adopt one method, Middle East criminal groups will favour another whilst African groups tend towards a different method.

However, these differences of method do not affect their basic objective, which is to make money. They are not concerned with political or social issues, they are not into drug running, they are only concerned with financial rewards.

They have many factors which work in their favour, The basic factor which assists them in what they do is the fact that theirs appears to be a crime without a victim. As financial gain appears

to be the only objective, there is no shock to society as with terrorism, crimes of violence and drug running neither is there a shock to governments as with crimes of political subversion. There seems to be no loser as such.