

**UNCLASSIFIED**

**AY 2017-2018 PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH TOPIC NOMINATION**

<b>*CLASSIFICATION:</b>	Unclassified
<b>*RESEARCH TOPIC TITLE:</b>	Alignment of Counter-Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) responsibilities
<b>*TOPIC DESCRIPTION</b>	Is the Department of Defense optimally structured to identify and counter the potential convergence of foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) in the western hemisphere? If not, what changes should it make?
<b>*DATE SUBMITTED (YYYY-MM-DD)</b>	2017-06-19
<b>*EXTENDED TOPIC DESCRIPTION</b>	Various types of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) have already converged. Along the southern borders and approaches to the United States, the network of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and alien smuggling organizations (ASOs) demonstrate significant overlap, with the same cartels moving drugs and trafficking human persons. ASOs could potentially move members for foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) into the United States. Further, insurgent and FTO activities significantly overlap with transnational criminal networks activities in parts of the western hemisphere and overseas. Examples include insurgents and FTOs in the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) and U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) joint areas of responsibility that fund rebellion and terror by producing and trafficking illicit drugs. Some analysts have suggested a similar convergence between TCOs and FTOs in the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) joint area of responsibility is likely, posing a serious national security threat. Some analysts have suggested that a merger of USSOUTHCOM and USNORTHCOM would offer greater unity of effort against this threat. Within USNORTHCOM, Special Operations Command North (SOCNORTH) currently leads counter-terrorism efforts, Joint Task Force North (JTF-N) leads counter-drug efforts, and US Army North (ARNORTH) leads efforts for Mexican military engagement. Is the current configuration and assignment of responsibilities optimal to identify and counter this potential convergence, and if not, how can DoD and its interagency partners better counter this potential threat? [NOTE: Research for this question could focus DoD structure throughout the western hemisphere, or it could focus on USNORTHCOM structure, but should recognize that FTOs and TCOs operate across geographic combatant command boundaries.]
<b>*DESIRED OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH</b>	Maximize DoD/interagency effectiveness against the potential threat posed by a convergence of foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) with transnational criminal organizations (TCOs).
<b>*REQUESTING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:</b>	Joint Task Force North (JTF-N)
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<b>FAX NUMBER (Commercial and DSN)</b>	
<b>DESIRED RESEARCH COMPLETION DATE (YYYY-MM-DD):</b>	Standing topic – not time sensitive.
<b>AVAILABLE FUNDING, IF ANY:</b>	JTF-N may be able to support funding for TDY travel on a case-by-case basis.

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<b>COMMENTS</b>	JTF-N can mentor students/researchers through refinement of this research topic and can assist with contacts with other interagency partners.
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