

UNCLASSIFIED

AY 2017-2018 PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH TOPIC NOMINATION

*CLASSIFICATION:	Unclassified
*RESEARCH TOPIC TITLE:	Dark Web Narcotics Trade
*TOPIC DESCRIPTION	What are likely future trends in use of the “dark web” by transnational criminal organizations to sell drugs and other illicit materials, and what measures can the U.S. government take to best mitigate this threat?
*DATE SUBMITTED (YYYY-MM-DD)	2017-06-19
*EXTENDED TOPIC DESCRIPTION	The “dark web” is a segment of the world wide web that is part of the larger “deep web,” a portion of the internet that is not indexed by standard search engines and inaccessible without specialized software and configurations. Open source reporting suggests that the dark web is assuming an increasing role in synthetic opioid trafficking in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Most of these drugs are produced in China and transited to the United States by Latin American drug cartels, though the dark web opens the possibility for direct shipment from China to the buyer. This form of narcotics trafficking raises new and unique difficulties to counter and opens the possibility for trafficking in other illicit materials.
*DESIRED OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH	Help the whole of government in targeting the dark web as a pathway for movement of illicit materials.
*REQUESTING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:	Joint Task Force North (JTF-N)
*POINT OF CONTACT:	Ms. Lauren Schindler, Mr. Steve Wilke, & Dr. Ed Campbell
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DESIRED RESEARCH COMPLETION DATE (YYYY-MM-DD):	Standing topic – not time sensitive.
AVAILABLE FUNDING, IF ANY:	JTF-N may be able to support funding for TDY travel on a case-by-case basis.
COMMENTS	<p>For open source discussions of the dark web, see:</p> <p>Nathaniel Popper, “Opioid Dealers Embrace the Dark Web to Send Deadly Drugs by Mail,” <i>The New York Times</i> (June 10, 2017), accessible at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/10/business/dealbook/opioid-dark-web-drug-overdose.html?_r=0</p> <p>Tom Wainwright, <i>Narconomics: How to Run a Drug Cartel</i>, (New York: Publics Affairs, 2016), Chapter 8.</p>