

UNCLASSIFIED
AY 2017-2018 PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH TOPIC NOMINATION

*CLASSIFICATION:	Unclassified
*RESEARCH TOPIC TITLE:	Economic/Threat Analysis of Narcotics Supply Chain
*TOPIC DESCRIPTION	Apply an economic analysis of the heroin and/or methamphetamine supply/distribution chain from the source zone, through the transit zone, and to the consumption zone. Based on this analysis, and considering DoD authorities and policies (or any recommended changes to existing authorities/policies) and capabilities, where and how can DoD provide the most effective contribution to the U.S. government's counter drug efforts? What ends, ways, and means should DoD apply based on this supply chain analysis?
*DATE SUBMITTED (YYYY-MM-DD)	2017-06-19
*EXTENDED TOPIC DESCRIPTION	Heroin and methamphetamine are emerging threats to Americans. ¹ Mexico is the dominant source of these drugs (and also the dominant transit route for cocaine); most of these drugs enter the US along the southwest border. The U.S. government and partner nations have traditionally targeted drugs in three supply chain zones: the source/production zone, where the drugs are grown or made; the transit zone, through which drugs move; and the consumption zone, where efforts focus on demand reduction. (Given the convergence of production and transit zones in Mexico, some have suggested an alternative model that divides wholesale and retail markets.) In part because of capabilities and authorities, DoD has focused its efforts on supply reduction by eliminating drugs in the production zone and interdicting them in the transit zone. (Using the alternative model, both of these DoD efforts take place in the wholesale market.) However, some recent research implies that source zone/wholesale market efforts such as drug crop irradiation have limited effects on supply, domestic drug use, and on drug cartels. This research suggests that activities closer to the consumption zone/retail market such as demand reduction are more effective, in part because they inflict higher costs on drug trafficking organizations. ² An economic supply chain/market analysis combined with an analysis of DoD capabilities to affect various markets or supply chain zones would facilitate more efficient application of DoD assets against to the drug threat.
*DESIRED OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH	Understand the drug supply chain to maximize the effectiveness of DoD activities against drug trafficking transnational criminal organizations (TCOs).
*REQUESTING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:	Joint Task Force North (JTF-N)
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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>Additional Background and Sources:</p> <p>¹ Heroin and methamphetamine are increasing threats to the United States and its citizens, with 71% of Law Enforcement Agency respondents to the 2014 National Drug Threat Survey referring to one of the two as “the greatest drug threat” in their areas. Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Department of Justice, “2015 National Drug Threat Assessment Summary,” (October 2015), 3, 26; Office of National Drug Control Policy, The White House, “The International Heroin Market.”</p> <p>² As a popular media example of the argument that effects against trafficking organizations are more effective closer to the consumption zone, see Tom Wainwright, <i>Narconomics: How to Run a Drug Cartel</i>, (New York: PublicAffairs, 2016).</p> <p>JTF-N can mentor students/researchers through refinement of this research topic and can assist with contacts with other interagency partners.</p>