

# AY 2020-2021 PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH TOPIC NOMINATION

<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	<b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>
<b>*RESEARCH TOPIC TITLE:</b>	Great Power Competitors and the use of TCOs/DTOs to Conduct Operations
<b>*TOPIC DESCRIPTION:</b>	As DoD shifts focus back to great power competition, it is increasingly evident that peer and near-peer competitors are willing to employ Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and Drug Trafficking Organization (DTOs) to conduct operations below the threshold of Armed Conflict.
<b>*DESIRED OBJECTIVES:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an appetite by peer and near-peer competitors to use TCOs/DTOs in operations below the level of armed combat on the Southwestern border?</li> <li>• Is there a willingness by TCOs/DTOs to cooperate with foreign governments?</li> <li>• Identify tactics TCOs/DTOs can use to coerce/intimidate the population?</li> <li>• Identify indications and warnings of the use of TCOs/DTOs?</li> <li>• What areas of the Southwest border are most susceptible to foreign governments and TCOs/DTOs?</li> </ul>
<b>EXTENDED TOPIC DESCRIPTION :</b>	During operations in support of Russian ethnic rebels in the Donbas region and the invasion and annexation of Crimea, Russia used a biker gang, known as the Night Wolves, to conduct political intimidation, weapons/drug trafficking, government subversion, sabotage, and destabilization. Furthermore, it has been reported that Night Wolves rode alongside Russian spetsnaz patrols to enable plausible deniability to the Russian government. Are competitors willing to engage/use Mexican Drug Cartels to conduct operations below the level of armed conflict along the Southwest border to gain political influence or destabilize the region?
<b>* REQUESTING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:</b>	Joint Task Force – North J5
<b>*SUBMISSION DATE:</b>	07AUG2020
<b>DESIRED COMPLETION DATE:</b>	08AUG2021
<b>*POINT OF CONTACT:</b>	Dr. Ed Campbell
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<b>AVAILABLE FUNDING, IF ANY:</b>	N/A
<b>COMMENTS:</b>	

**PLEASE NOTE: \* DENOTES MANDATORY FOR SUBMISSION TO THE DATABASE**