



Combating Transnational Organized Crime



March 5-6, 2012
National Defense University

**Workshop on Transnational Organized Crime
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Key Findings**

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Overview

On March 5 and 6, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats and the Center for Complex Operations at the National Defense University co-hosted a working-level event on transnational organized crime (TOC). Day 1 of the workshop brought together law enforcement and military personnel to explore how DoD and law enforcement agencies are combating TOC, identify ways to generate deeper military-law enforcement cooperation, and reveal different agencies' priorities and capabilities vis-à-vis TOC. Day 2 was military-only and focused on how DoD can improve its effectiveness in supporting whole-of-government approaches against TOC.

Key Discussion Findings

- *TOC is a complex, evolving threat to national security.* Transnational criminal networks are flexible and adaptable, and lack top down structures. They are amorphous clans that come together for specific operations and then dissemble. TOC erodes government capacity, legitimacy, and the rule of law, and provides the essential resources to sustain terrorist groups and insurgencies. Transnational criminal organizations also make vast sums of money from both legal and illegal sources, much of which goes untracked in a world where globalization and interconnectivity make it more difficult to follow the money.
- *Participants defined key characteristics of transnational criminal organizations that make them very difficult to degrade and defeat.* Criminal networks have technological and moral flexibility, and are not afraid of change but embrace it. These groups are not restricted by policy, law, or borders. Time is on their side, and they have a high threshold for failure – people and money are expendable.
- *The President's "Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime," which declared TOC to be a threat to national and international security, has helped focus agencies' attention to TOC.* The Strategy called for building, balancing, and integrating the tools of American power to combat TOC and related national security threats.