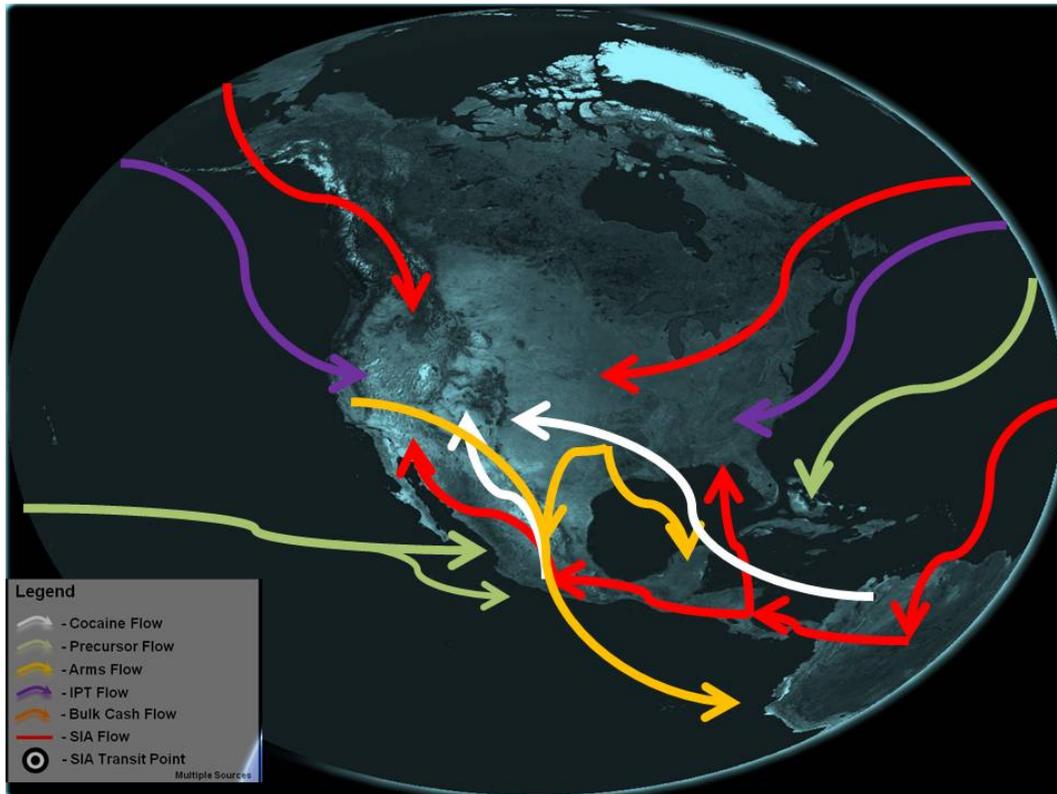




WG 6-13 CTOC WARGAME ANALYSIS STRATEGIC WARGAMING SERIES 25-26 September 2013



UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE Center for Strategic Leadership & Development 650 Wright Ave Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013

The findings contained in this report are based on the results of an academic wargame conducted at the United States Army War College 25-26 September 2013. Except where expressly indicated, the ideas presented are derived directly from the comments of wargame participants. The views contained in this report are intended to inform senior Army and Defense leaders including, but not confined to, members of the Army Staff, Geographic Combatant Commands and Army Service Component Commands. This report does not express the policies or official views of the United States Government, the Department of Defense or the United States Army.

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19 November 2013

This report is an important contribution to defending America in the coming decade. The US Army War College and USNORTHCOM conducted a fantastic exercise on the United States Government's efforts to combat transnational organized crime (TOC). Transnational organized crime is one of the most insidious and adaptable threats to our nation. The effect of their methods, particularly brutality, violence and corruption, transcends suffering and imposes its own form of terrorism on all of those affected. Focused national attention on what is arguably the greatest threat to US domestic security is long overdue.

The two day exercise was extremely informative. As a whole, the dialogue during the exercise displayed that our USG "Blue Network" is working extremely hard to combat the threats associated with transnational organized crime. The participants clearly understand strategic intent, know their authorities, and understand their departments' priorities and commitment to this endeavor. It is highly commendable that USSOUTHCOM and SOCOM are working with USNORTHCOM to align their TOC efforts with those of our interagency partners. I trust our leaders across the US government and DoD will consider the findings in this report and take clear steps to better integrate interagency effort towards improving our security.

This exercise re-emphasized that the security of the United States is threatened not only by nation-states, but by state proxies, terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). The criminal activities carried out by the networks formed from these groups cross law enforcement and intelligence community lines of effort and represent challenges that are occasionally unique, frequently integrated, and always evolving.

No single agency can conduct a campaign against TOC on its own. A common framework is needed to address this networked enemy with a networked USG response. Such a framework exists in the Department of State's Citizen Security Initiatives; but, as the exercise revealed, even these fell short in achieving unity of effort across the board. Moreover, no similar unifying initiatives have been developed to serve the C-TOC strategy *within* the United States. An integrated approach for the "home" and the "away game" is obviously in order.

Aligning the expansive and disparate efforts of our government's TOC efforts is no small task, yet it is necessary to contend with an evolving and dangerous threat. The attached report offers some perspective on how the current Blue Network functions and the challenges this brings to the Combatant Commanders in supporting our government's collective efforts to combat TOC. Achieving unity of effort is necessary work, which is currently on the right path, and is served by the continued focus on improving USG effectiveness and efficiency in accomplishing the President's Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry R. McCaffrey". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Barry R. McCaffrey
General, USA (Ret.)
Commander, US SOUTHCOM 1994-1996

United States Army War College Strategic Exercise Series
Exercise 6-13 Transnational Organized Crime
Executive Summary

The United States Northern Command, the United States Southern Command, and the United States Special Operations Command are collectively pursuing more effective means of supporting the Nation and its international partners in combating transnational organized crime (TOC). Beginning with the President's *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime* (CTOC) (2011), all three commands seek to better understand the ongoing United States Government (USG) total efforts surrounding TOC. Building upon that understanding, the commands intend to more closely align their CTOC efforts in support of the whole-of-government effort. On the 25th and 26th of September 2013, the U.S. Army War College conducted an exercise to assist the three combatant commands in gaining a greater understanding of the USG interagency effort in CTOC. While this exercise focused on USG efforts, commonly referred to as the "blue network," the exercise is part of a broader effort by the commands to review the entire TOC problem and potential strategic solution sets.

The exercise highlighted three key characteristics of the current interagency environment that will challenge the combatant commanders' desire to contribute in the battle against TOC. First, the current USG effort toward implementing the CTOC guidance is best characterized as departmentally focused, as opposed to an integrated interagency effort. A second order effect of this general characterization is that the current process is less likely to recognize and react when conditions worsen from a containable criminal environment to a national security threat. Additionally, the ability to change focus and re-prioritize response across the USG in a whole-of-government reaction to such developments is limited. Finally, the Department of Defense (DOD) in general, and the combatant commands in particular, should work with the rest of the interagency institutions to develop common strategic measures of performance and effectiveness to focus and define supporting requirements with clear responsibilities and within the means of existing authorities.

While there are concerns over potentially diminished support from the Department of Defense in combating transnational organized crime, a more immediate challenge exists in identifying how to effectively and efficiently utilize the support that is available from the combatant commanders. Defense support is effectively optimized if the civil authority and intent are clearly outlined and defense support requirements are communicated in the context of strategic ends. Well-defined interagency metrics may assist DOD assessment of interagency requests for assistance, and ensure service and combatant command efforts are nested with strategic ends as well as with the needs of the requesting federal agency.

Key Findings

This exercise provided six major findings surrounding the federal interagency efforts in combating transnational organized crime.

- 1) USG departments' and agencies' responses to transnational organized crime can be characterized as decentralized, agency-centric, and functionally focused.
- 2) The President's *Strategy for Combating Transnational Organized Crime* has not yet been a catalyst for creating a unified whole-of-government approach to combat transnational organized crime.

- 3) The Department of State Citizen Security Initiatives--Plan Colombia, the Merida Initiative, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI)—currently serve and can continue to serve as a framework to unify efforts outside the United States and in the Western Hemisphere.
- 4) There is no parallel framework similar to the Citizen Security Initiatives to unify efforts to combat TOC inside the United States and in the strategic approaches into our Nation.
- 5) The USG may be slow to react to national security threats that emerge from transnational organized crime because current implementing guidance does not address the USG means to identify, monitor, and respond to potential TOC national security developments.
- 6) Important elements of the TOC problem should be considered as the USG addresses the need to improve efforts to implement CTOC objectives.
 - The TOC environment is evolving. Currently there are significant changes underway in the illicit traffic flows (human smuggling, weapons trafficking, drug trafficking, and illicit trade).
 - Resources are likely to remain constrained for all USG departments and agencies involved in CTOC efforts. Accordingly, effectiveness and efficiencies are more important now to achieve national level objectives.
 - As need for greater efficiency is on the rise, DOD support in interdiction operations, heretofore coincident with their surveillance, detection, and monitoring mission, is being reduced.
 - Within the territorial confines of the United States gangs and associated violence are growing concerns, primarily due to the heavy influence foreign drug trafficking organizations have on gang operations and resources. As participants better understood the issues associated with domestic efforts to implement CTOC objectives, their concern increased as domestic efforts did not appear as well developed as overseas efforts.
 - Regional or hemispheric TOC changes should be tracked and monitored across departmental, agency and GCC boundaries, especially changes that indicate increased national security or regional security risks.

Report on Exercise 6-13 Transnational Organized Crime Overview of the Exercise

The *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security* was published in July 2011, to address "one of the most significant challenges" to the United States, international security, and governance in the Western Hemisphere. The Strategy reminds us that the security of the United States is threatened not only by nation-states, but by state proxies, terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). The networks these groups form and use cross law enforcement and intelligence community lines of effort and represent unique, challenging, and evolving threat networks. The USG's whole-of-government approach requires the Combatant Commands (CCMDs) to support broader USG efforts to counter the networks that threaten the U.S. and partner nations. As such, the U.S. Northern Command and the U.S. Southern Command, in partnership with the U.S. Special Operations Command, are investigating means to improve combatant commands' support to the civil component of the federal interagency effort. From 25 through 26 September 2013, the U.S. Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership and Development conducted a two-day tabletop exercise (TTX) in support of these combatant commands.

Transnational organized crime is a multidimensional problem that encompasses the criminal organizations, their activities (e.g., drug production, illicit flows, money laundering), and their operating environment. This exercise focused purely on the United States Government (USG) "blue network" efforts. The purpose was to better understand current USG CTOC in the Western Hemisphere and review department and agency perspectives on implementing the President's CTOC Strategy. The exercise primarily focused on the interaction between USG activities, in an attempt to review the "blue network" and capture how it is functioning to achieve CTOC Strategic Objectives.

Methodology

The research methodology began with a literature review of CTOC government and scholarly literature. The U.S. Army War College assembled 36 participants and 20 observers to provide subject matter expertise during the exercise as they engaged with the designed model. The participants represented organizations with major roles in CTOC from across the interagency. Participants were divided into two multidisciplinary working groups. A series of questions were developed to guide both groups in pursuit of two objectives through scenario and strategy driven discussions:

Objective 1- Review how the elements of USG interact when strategic developments drive a USG response to potential threats that emerge out of transnational organized crime. (Map the "blue network").

Objective 2 – Identify the impact of the 2011 National Strategy on the type of support DOD provides to other USG agencies to enhance interdiction of illicit flows and combat transnational organized crime.

Exercise Results

The following are the key findings concerning the USG “blue network” response to TOC.

1) **USG departments’ and agencies’ responses to transnational organized crime can be characterized as decentralized, agency-centric and functionally focused.**

Departments and agencies tend to view transnational organized crime from multiple perspectives and through the lens of their individual organization’s authorities, roles, and responsibilities. All Federal departments and agencies recognized the complexity of the operating environment (OE). The determination of which departments and agencies will participate and which will lead the Federal effort adds to the complexity. A further degree of complexity arises because there is no fixed “blue network” that responds to threats generated by TOC. Instead, the Federal departments and agencies that participate in the effort to counter a particular threat are determined by how the threat is defined against four attributes of the CTOC OE. These attributes are (1) whether the threat is classified as a crime, terrorism or a national security threat; (2) whether the appropriate response is defined as law enforcement or national defense; (3) whether the threat occurs within the United States (domestic law applies) or outside it (international law applies); and, (4) in which physical domain (U.S. territory, air or maritime approaches, foreign country) the threat occurs.

Since each department and agency assess itself against the OE individually, the differing views of the TOC problem drive individual department and agency planning, resourcing, execution, and performance measurement decisions. These separate and frequently distinct standpoints surrounding transnational organized crime are not facilitating a holistic view of the fluid and dynamic TOC problem. Worse, the stovepiped views of the problem make it difficult to facilitate a unified whole-of-government, “blue network”, approach to combat transnational organized crime.

The United States government is combating transnational organized crime using authorities, roles, and responsibilities designed for other ends. Departments and agencies are acting under organizational authorities contained in the U.S. Code and further delineated in counterterrorism authorities, counternarcotics authorities, cyber authorities, etc. However, no similar legislation has been initiated to consolidate or network these authorities to support a whole-of-government approach to CTOC. As a result, the “lead federal agency” for CTOC efforts is established by the function to be executed, and often driven by perception, resources and will. Departments “assume” the lead, frequently without a discernible authority, and without interagency coordination, collaboration or concurrence. The stovepiped nature of the USG approach to TOC is thereby perpetuated.

Since departments and agencies currently view the problem from widely different perspectives, and have significantly different authorities; there is little to no interagency integration in planning, resourcing, and executing CTOC implementation guidance. Department and agency CTOC supporting strategies and plans are being developed and implemented based on the organizations’ internal decisions concerning priorities, ends, ways, means, and performance measures. This stove-piped approach to strategy and planning, coupled with a significantly constrained resource environment, is driving department and agency CTOC efforts that do not appear to be coordinated and collaborated at the interagency level. In this environment, organizations tend to develop strategies and plans with significant consideration to resource constraints and less consideration to the top-down guidance.

The decentralized, agency-centric, and functionally-focused nature of the USG's CTOC efforts is also on display in the areas of information sharing and intelligence exchange. Exercise participants believe information and intelligence sharing is essential and that it is improving across the interagency. They also believe, however, that the exchange is not as consistent or as expansive as it needs to be to support a unified whole-of-government approach. Individual department and agency classification requirements, authorities, institutional biases, and lack of means and mechanisms to promote timely exchange are among the barriers to necessary improvement noted by the participants.

2) The President's *Strategy for Combating Transnational Organized Crime* has not yet been a catalyst for creating a unified whole-of-government approach to combat transnational organized crime.

As described above, the interagency is currently functioning in a decentralized and agency-centric manner, and the *Strategy* has not proven to be a catalyst for change toward a more integrated approach. All participants recognized the importance of the national level implementing guidance and were able to explain their agency's efforts to meet the intent. However, some participants saw a need for more comprehensive interagency implementation planning. These participants believed their agency would be more effective in executing their CTOC responsibilities if there was a comprehensive assessment of what needs to be accomplished, who will get it done and how it will be resourced.

Exercise participants recognized the benefits of an interagency focus on strategy implementation, following a pattern of Assessment, Planning, Execution, and Evaluation. There are existent individual department and agency plans, but these plans are not designed to achieve unity of effort with the rest of the federal effort. Participants discussed how interagency implementation planning efforts could inform, and be informed, by departmental and agency plans. The President's *Strategy* establishes national level "objectives" and "priority actions" for CTOC. Participants saw a need for a more holistic assessment of the CTOC problem that tied actions to agencies enabled by coordinated interagency planning efforts. Those efforts could establish department, agency and interagency CTOC objectives, orchestrate methods and coordinate resources. Some, but not all participants from non-DOD government departments and agencies supported this view, while a significant number did not. Those participants that saw the current process as ineffective also believed that an overarching interagency level C-TOC implementation plan should be developed. Support for an overarching interagency implementation plan was not universal, although some participants did not find the current construct to be ineffective.

Having a common understanding of who is accomplishing the individual parts of the CTOC Strategy and where support is required could improve USG unity of effort. One of the most significant challenges currently facing the federal government comes from a lack of shared measures of performance (MOP) and measures of effectiveness (MOE). Implementation guidance, while being considered by departments and agencies, has neither provided, nor does it appear to be being implemented, in a manner to cause departments and agencies to change their internal MOP and MOE, which are based on internal. There was general agreement that developing common measures of performance (MOP) and measures of effectiveness (MOE) for achievement of CTOC objectives would improve synchronization of activities and develop a common sense of priority. However, it was acknowledged that significant challenges would have to be overcome to do so. The most significant of those challenges is that current MOP and MOE are established to address congressionally mandated reporting requirements, which may or may not align with CTOC strategy objectives.

As with planning and executing, resourcing is likewise left up to individual departments and agencies. Some participants believed that some of the organizations responsible for CTOC are not properly sized and structured to carry out their missions. In some cases these organizational imbalances have led to inappropriate interdependencies that may not be sustainable in the long term. Therefore, participants viewed more robust interagency planning as a mechanism to properly size and structure all of the organizations, such that they can meet the Strategy's objectives and meet shared interagency measures of performance. Given the adaptive and dynamic nature of the TOC environment, continuous evaluation of the "blue network's" effectiveness is critical and must be facilitated by interagency, vice departmental measures of performance (MOP) or measures of effectiveness (MOE). This, in turn should lead to adjustments in resourcing.

3) The Department of State Citizen Security Initiatives (Plan Colombia, the Merida Initiative, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and the Central American Region Security Initiative (CARSI)) currently serve and can continue to serve as a framework to unify efforts outside the United States and in the Western Hemisphere.

Throughout the exercise, participants emphasized the likely failure of any USG approach that focused on a single element of the TOC problem (e.g., drug interdiction). Both exercise working groups concluded that any USG effort to combat TOC must simultaneously focus on three elements: the organizations, their activities (e.g., drug production, illicit flows, money laundering), and the operating environment. Participants observed that the Citizen Security Initiatives serve as a good example of how to achieve unity of effort because the initiatives address all three elements, and provide the authorities and resources for interagency capabilities to succeed. As a result, supporting agencies place a high priority on supporting these initiatives. By integrating initiative support requirements into their plans, these agencies effectively generate a comprehensive interagency effort.

If the Citizen Security Initiatives are indicative, success is best achieved when efforts are coordinated through a single department, in this case the Department of State. State's role and authority makes them the universally recognized lead federal agency for achieving policy goals outside the United States. However, this alone is not the key to success. Participants noted that the Initiatives work for three reasons. First, the intent of the initiatives and the CTOC strategy are aligned, incidentally, if not deliberately. Second, success of the initiatives is tied to achieving a unity of purpose between the United States and the partner nations. The combined wills then serve as the foundation of a centralizing focus of USG efforts as well as the partner nations. Third, the initiatives are focused on achieving long term goals which harness the longer term focus of all supporting agencies. Those long term goals, in turn, were rooted in achieving lasting improvements which can mitigate the impact of TOC in those countries and mitigate the national security threat to the United States by:

- Reducing the culture of lawlessness that exists in some regions of our concern;
- Strengthening communities, law enforcement and economic conditions so partner countries may break from the influence of TOC networks; and
- Providing partner countries with resources necessary to combat criminal organizations.

While the Citizen Security Initiatives do serve as the best example of how the "blue network" is achieving unity of effort, several agencies expressed frustration with them. The primary concern revolved around a perception that the short-term, departmental, operational objectives are in conflict with the initiatives' long term horizon. Several individuals remarked that this perception is only exacerbated by the lack of shared interagency metrics to link

operational and strategic objectives. Combined with the departmental nature of CTOC efforts, these conditions lead to some frustration among supporting agencies. Participants viewed the lack of cohesive effort as resulting from lack of understanding of their agency's roles, and the ultimate purpose of their individual agency efforts. As the lead, DOS works to overcome the tactical impatience of other agencies through the development of a holistic approach to CTOC within a country or region. However, the differing planning horizons and the often short term nature of resources frequently create an atmosphere that is contrary to achieving unity of effort. Since many agency-specific performance measures are tied to shorter-term, immediate effects, participants concluded an effort to develop common CTOC strategic performance measures may alleviate some of this frustration.

4) There is no parallel framework similar to the Citizen Security Initiatives to unify efforts to combat TOC inside the United States and in the strategic approaches into our Nation.

As described in Key Finding 3 above, the four Citizen Security Initiatives are viewed as a powerful and successful framework to combat TOC outside the United States. However, there is not a similar framework for efforts inside the United States. During the exercise, participants found it difficult to articulate how their agencies' priorities and efforts were aligned with the CTOC *Strategy's* domestic priority actions. Exercise dialogue reflected a desire to mirror the unity of effort achieved by the four Citizen Security Initiatives inside the United States. The lack of a similar framework serves as a barrier to effective discussion on how department and agency efforts and priorities are synchronized with the *Strategy's* priority actions and how they are coordinated across the interagency.

Domestic elements of the *Strategy's* priority actions were generally perceived as law enforcement related, with either the Department of Justice or the Department of Homeland Security appropriately charged as the lead federal agency. However, participants saw a need for a framework to unite USG domestic efforts. They reasoned that a failure to coordinate departmental activities aimed at achieving the goals of the *Strategy* could result in cross-purposed efforts, wasteful expenditure of resources, conflicting agendas, and poorly aligned priorities. This was considered particularly true concerning activities that initiate beyond our borders, since law enforcement has limited authority and capability to know and understand what is occurring there. Therefore, domestic success is highly dependent on the efforts of the entire CTOC community, and requires not just operational and tactical coordination, but coordinated strategic implementation, to insure efforts across the community are mutually supportive.

5) The USG may be slow to react to national security threats that emerge from transnational organized crime because current implementing guidance does not address the USG means to identify, monitor, and respond to potential TOC national security developments.

The CTOC *Strategy* characterizes the spectrum of potential harm posed by transnational organized crime as ranging from "a manageable public safety problem" to "a national security threat." A portion of the exercise focused on understanding how the USG reacts when TOC developments evolve across this spectrum. As the threat resulting from TOC changed in the exercise from crime to homeland security concerns, participants were unaware of how trigger points would be identified and collectively monitored to understand and identify the transition. As such, they could not predict the government's reaction to an evolving security threat. If these trigger points are not established, and their meaning understood across the interagency,

participants concluded the USG may be slow to recognize and respond to a developing security threat.

Participants also realized departments and agencies are not individually or collectively looking for CTOC warning signs that may indicate an aspect of TOC is evolving into a potential national security threat. The department-centric approach cited throughout this report proved most problematic for participants when a TOC scenario moves from criminal to security concerns. They opined that under these deteriorating circumstances, the USG response needs to be more than maintaining the same courses of action, through the same independent agencies, with the same resources. They held that a department or agency may react to worsening conditions by using more of its own resources, sending additional requests for assistance to other agencies, or seeking updates from the intelligence community. But generally, departments and agencies will continue to do what they are chartered to do in accordance with agency-specific guidance, without a common understanding of what constitutes a negative trend in the region and without identified triggers or decision points to indicate the need to do something different.

The absence of an overarching interagency plan, outlining measures to be taken as an impending CTOC security crisis is revealed, will also hinder USG response. Participants agreed re-prioritization is unlikely to occur without a clearly identified threat condition and a pre-planned collective USG response. The USG effort may need to transition to an interagency, vice departmental approach in order to realign focus and funding in order to react. Participants noted the CTOC *Strategy* clearly identifies the potential for a threat of this nature, but current implementing guidance does not address the USG means to identify, monitor, and respond to potential TOC national security developments.

The exercise did not specifically investigate the crime-terror nexus that is born of collaboration between transnational criminal organizations and transnational terrorist groups. However, most participants recognized such an event would drive an entirely different process, since it would compel the USG to operate in radically different ways outside its day-to-day operations. Participants were not able to clearly define how they would recognize a crime-terror nexus, and the day-to-day CTOC efforts are not focused on monitoring such a development.

Many participants concluded that in order to mitigate risks associated with the TOC threat spectrum, the implementing guidance should provide specific direction on what to monitor and how the USG is expected to react. Guidance should identify lead agencies and authorities, while providing interagency direction for the formation of working groups as a development becomes more severe along the TOC threat spectrum. Additionally, the guidance should indicate which departments and agencies must develop contingency plans for the various threats and identify the specific decision points that are likely to necessitate action. Currently, some plans exist solely at the organizational level, vice the interagency level, and are not shared or cross-referenced with other department and agency plans. Existing organizational plans should facilitate interagency plans, and the interagency plans can further inform the development or modification of department and agency plans.

6) Important elements of the TOC problem should be considered as the USG addresses the need to improve efforts to implement CTOC objectives.

Participants wrestled over whether the current USG efforts required improvement. Many saw the current efforts as moving forward and having great potential. Others were skeptical and saw resource issues looming and a need to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Initially some

participants thought establishing a single organization to oversee the entire CTOC effort-- determining leads, monitoring success, etc. -- would improve USG unity of effort. However, as the groups investigated this proposal, a general consensus was that influencing these efforts falls within the purview of the Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) on Illicit Drugs and Transnational Criminal Threats and the Threat Mitigation Working Group. Both exercise groups concluded that instead of asking, "What problem are we trying to fix?" it would benefit all agencies to identify key strategic TOC trends which are shaping the current environment and should be considered by everyone in their efforts to improve. They suggested five trends are shaping the current strategic TOC environment and would continue to do so in the foreseeable future.

- 1) The TOC environment is evolving. Currently there are significant changes underway in the illicit traffic flow of multiple descriptions (human smuggling, weapons trafficking, drug trafficking, and illicit trade).
- 2) Resources are likely to remain constrained for all USG departments and agencies involved in CTOC efforts. Accordingly, effectiveness and efficiencies are more important now to achieve national level objectives.
- 3) As need for greater efficiency is on the rise, DOD support in interdiction operations, heretofore coincident with their surveillance, detection, and monitoring mission, is being reduced.
- 4) Within the territorial confines of the United States gangs and associated violence are growing concerns, primarily due to the heavy influence foreign drug trafficking organizations have on gang operations and resources. As participants better understood the issues associated with domestic efforts to implement CTOC objectives, their concern increased as domestic efforts did not appear as well developed as overseas efforts.
- 5) Regional or hemispheric TOC changes should be tracked and monitored across departmental, agency and GCC boundaries, especially changes that indicate increased national security or regional security risks.

Conclusions

- 1) The *Strategy for Combating Transnational Organized Crime* (C-TOC) has not been a catalyst for change in the federal government. The interagency partners are functioning no differently than prior to 2011, i.e., as departments and agencies rather than a single USG network. There is guidance, but no comprehensive interagency implementation plan for the strategy. The lack of a clearly coordinated and collaborated approach across departments and agencies is challenging for unity of effort; is inhibiting a synchronized comprehensive response; and is disallowing opportunities for synergies that could result in increased efficiencies and effectiveness.
- 2) All Federal departments and agencies involved in executing the C-TOC strategy need to recognize the complexity of the operating environment (OE). The determination of which departments and agencies will participate and which one will lead and coordinate the Federal effort adds to the complexity. A further degree of complexity arises because there is no fixed 'Blue Network' that responds to threats generated by TOC. Instead, the Federal departments and agencies that would participate in the effort to counter a particular threat will be determined by how the threat is defined against four attributes of the C-TOC OE. These attributes are (1)

whether the threat is classified as a crime, terrorism or a national security threat; (2) whether the appropriate response is defined as law enforcement or national defense; (3) whether the threat occurs within the United States (domestic law applies) or outside it (international law applies); (4) and, in which physical domain (U.S. territory, air or maritime approaches, foreign country) the threat occurs.

3) Because identifying where the threat lies against each of these dimensions will determine which departments and agencies respond and which is the Lead Federal Agency, developing a common understanding of the nature of a threat becomes a critical task. Without a common understanding, individual departments and agencies will only continue “doing more of what they were already doing” rather than keying integrated interagency responses. In order to develop a common understanding the nature of a threat, all departments and agencies must share a common framework for evaluating threats.

4) There are divergent perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the current interagency process to manage C-TOC issues. Some DOD participants expressed concerns that the current process does not produce a networked whole-of-government approach that is necessary, in their view, to effectively combat TOC. They see the overall USG response to transnational organized crime as decentralized, agency-centric and functionally focused. Some, but not all participants from non-DOD government departments and agencies supported this view, while a significant number of others did not. Those participants that saw the current process as ineffective also believed that an overarching interagency level C-TOC implementation plan should be developed. Support for an overarching interagency implementation plan was not universal, although some participants did not find the current construct to be ineffective.

5) There was general agreement that developing common measures of performance (MOP) and measures of effectiveness (MOE) for achievement of C-TOC goals and objectives among all departments and agencies would improve synchronization of activities and unity of efforts. However, it was acknowledged that significant challenges would have to be overcome to do so. The most significant of those challenges is that current MOP and MOE are established to address congressionally mandated reporting requirements, which may or may not align with CTOC strategy objectives.

6) The chief implementation mechanism in the Western Hemisphere (outside of the U.S.) for the C-TOC strategy is the Four Citizen Security Initiatives: Plan Colombia, the Merida Initiative, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and the Central America Region Security Initiative (CARSI). There is not a similar implementation mechanism guiding efforts in the approaches and inside the United States.