Transnational organized crime has expanded dramatically in size, scope, and influence. Transnational organized criminals are threatening US interests by:

- Co-opting some governments and weakening governance in others.
- Forging alliances with government elements including security services and big business interests.
- Undermining competition in strategic markets.
- Providing funding and logistical support for terrorists/insurgent activities.
- Stealing intellectual property.
- Expanding narco trafficking and engaging in arms smuggling and human trafficking.
- Using cyber technologies to perpetrate sophisticated frauds.
- Using facilitators who operate in the licit and illicit worlds and provide services to criminals and terrorists alike.

**A Growing Threat . . .**

Transnational organized crime—a threat to US and International Security—manifests itself in various regions in different ways:

**United States**
Transnational criminal organizations commit numerous crimes in the United States, including money laundering, drug trafficking, and money laundering. These activities are facilitated by the US’s large scale of the illicit drug market and the ease of moving money around.

**Canada**
Canada-based TOC groups smuggle precursor chemicals into Canada to produce illicit synthetic drugs—primarily ecstasy. A variety of TOC networks are active in the region, including those that smuggle ecstasy and high-quality marijuana southbound and cocaine northbound across the US-Canada border.

**Mexico**
The trade in drug trafficking transnational organized criminals are involved in human, money, and vehicle smuggling.

**Central America**
Central America is a key area of converging threats, where criminal organizations exploit the region as a haven for illicit finance and engage in drug, weapon, and human trafficking. The emerging wave of transnational crime and violence is threatening the region’s prosperity and can cost up to 8 percent of GDP, according to the World Bank.

**Caribbean**
Drug trafficking and smuggling routes in the region have led to increased levels of crime, violence, and corruption. The Merida Initiative and the Central America Regional Security Initiative make progress in Mexico and Central America, traffickers may increase their use of smuggling in the Caribbean.

**Gulf Region**
A variety of TOC figures—including gray area dealers, narcotics traffickers, and terrorist financiers—work in or through the region. The United Arab Emirates, taking advantage of the strategic location as regional trading, financial, and transportation hub. Weak or inadequate terrorist financing legislation is another vulnerability in the region, particularly in Kuwait.

**Bolivia**
Bolivia’s cocaine trade is expanding. Increasing numbers of Colombian, Mexican, and Eastern European drug traffickers have relocated to Bolivia and have established relationships with Bolivia’s drug organizations. Bolivia is a source of cocaine that fuels South America’s transnational cocaine trade to West Africa and Europe.

**Venezuela**
This country is a permissive environment for drug and terrorist organizations and a major departure point for cocaine bound from South America for the United States, Europe, and Africa. Corruption and a lack of judicial independence hinder effective prosecution. It is unclear to what extent the Venezuelan Government provides support and access to foreign terrorist organizations.

**Afghanistan and Colombia**
The proceeds from poppy/coca farming and heroin/cocaine production continue to provide insurgent and extremist groups with stable sources of financing beyond the reach of governments. Afghanistan’s democratic future is threatened by terrorist groups that derive funding from the drug trade and kidnapping. Ninety percent of the world’s heroin comes from opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.

**Sahel, West Africa, and East Africa**
Sahel-based smugglers purchase or steal needed chemicals to produce illicit synthetic drugs—primarily ecstasy and high-quality marijuana southbound and cocaine northbound across the US-Canada border.

**Somalia**
Crime attacks off Somalia/Gulf of Aden skyrocketed from 22 in 2006 to 217 in 2009, according to the International Chamber of Commerce.

**Asia/Pacific**
The economic importance of the region has increased the threat that TOC poses to intellectual property rights. Human smuggling and money laundering are also rampant in parts of Asia.

**Priority Actions**
- Enhance Intelligence and Information Sharing.
- Protect the Financial System and Strategic Markets Against Transnational Organized Crime.
- Strengthen Interdiction, Investigations, and Prosecutions.
- Disrupt Drug Trafficking and Its Facilitation of Other Transnational Threats.
- Build International Capacity, Cooperation, and Partnerships.