

**UNITED STATES COAST GUARD WESTERN HEMISPHERE STRATEGY,  
2014  
MARCH 22, 2019**

**Summary**

- The US Coast Guard Western Hemisphere Strategy demonstrates that as the tactics of transnational criminal organizations evolve, the Coast Guard must prioritize combatting networks, securing borders, and safeguard commerce.
- This strategy understands the impact of globalization and technological innovation have on the 21<sup>st</sup> century by acknowledging the influence that globalization has had on TCOs.

**Understanding Operations of Illicit Networks**

- This strategy acknowledges the importance of identifying the operational capacity of transnational organized crime groups.
- The strategy correctly states that it is crucial to increase human intelligence capabilities to properly assess networks.
  - By understanding the culture of the criminal networks, the Coast Guard can effectively learn the signaling cues recruiters look for and derail recruitment attempts (Densley 2012).
- This strategy recognizes the influence of weak states and high rates of violence in South American countries.
  - TCOs will search out countries with weak governments in order to manipulate state corruption to be able to cultivate drugs in secret (Wainwright 2016).
- This strategy appropriately lists targeting networks as a priority, but it fails to mention the difficulty of penetrating those networks.
  - TCOs employ sacrifice and provide social services in order to maintain membership and lower defection rates by becoming the only force in a member's life (Berman 2009).
- This strategy names securing borders a priority but fails to mention how to mitigate negative consequence of limiting access to the border.
  - Violence between transnational organized criminal organizations increases when access to the border decrease.  
For example, violence in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico increased as the border was restricted when the United States increased border security measures (Wainwright 2016).

**Background**

- This strategy lists adaptive transnational criminal organizations, climate change, globalization, and technological advancements as the greatest threats to maritime safety.

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- The goal of the strategy is to address and prepare for the evolving threats to the maritime safety facing the United States in the coming decade.
- This strategy was written in 2014, under the Obama Administration with the guidance of other government agencies.