



## COUNTERING NARCOTICS AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING:

# Transnational Approaches to Transnational Threats

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The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies will soon offer a new two-week course on countering narcotics and illicit trafficking. The course, sponsored by U.S. European Command, U.S. Central Command and U.S. Africa Command, was created in direct response to the growing alarm and realization among partner nations that transnational criminal organizations pose a serious threat to national security interests.

The resident course, designed for 60 participants, is scheduled for March 31-April 11, 2014, at the Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. The Countering Narcotics and Illicit Trafficking (CNIT) course is tailored to policymakers and senior law enforcement practitioners responsible for countering illicit trafficking.

Although illicit trafficking has long existed, the threat it poses to the national security posture of all states, but especially fragile and developing states, has grown. Illicit trafficking has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War, as restrictions were relaxed on the global movement of people, goods and services. Traffickers have adopted technologies that emerged to assist legitimate international, including instant online money transfers, global positioning systems and containerized shipping.

The key difference between legitimate businesses and illicit traffickers is that legitimate businesses are purposely public and accountable, whereas illicit traffickers hide activities and profits. The result is that governments and societies are less able to assess the extent of illicit trafficking and the harm it poses to national security.

Illicit narcotics trafficking is one of the largest money-making enterprises for transnational criminal organizations, which have become increasingly networked around the globe. Many drug traffickers have dispensed with traditional hierarchal, mafia-type structures in favor of a modern, flat business structure that focuses on product lines. As the reach and power of transnational criminal organizations expand, so does their ability to infiltrate existing businesses or establish new legitimate businesses with

the proceeds of their illicit trafficking.

The Marshall Center's CNIT course is designed to reach beyond the tactical and procedural study of illicit activities and examine how illicit trafficking threatens state institutions and, ultimately, the stability of the state itself. The agility of illicit traffickers contrasts with the slower response of governments encumbered by bureaucratic delays. The cash-heavy business model of transnational criminal organizations also presents challenges when it comes to investing the proceeds of illicit activities. One of the key objectives is to launder enormous amounts of money through elaborate schemes that allow them to invest in real estate and legitimate companies.

As this criminal investment activity grows, it creates a climate for legitimizing criminals, who can then use sizable cash resources to corrupt officials and finance political campaigns. It's a phenomenon known as "state capture." As transnational organized criminal elements succeed in corrupting the government and the political process, they directly challenge and threaten the national security of a state.

CNIT is designed to examine illicit trafficking from a comprehensive, whole-of-government perspective. The aim of the course is to understand the totality of illicit trafficking. Participants will gain an appreciation for the networks, trade patterns and smuggling routes preferred by transnational criminals. The course examines the relationships between illicit traffickers involved in smuggling cocaine, heroin, weapons, people and counterfeit goods and the methods of laundering criminal proceeds into legitimate businesses. Participants will learn how corruption tied to illicit trafficking degrades good governance and the rule of law and ultimately diminishes a state's ability to provide traditional services to its population. The course concludes with details on how state capture presents a real national security threat.

Ideal participants for this course are parliamentarians, ministers, senior law enforcement officials and other government professionals engaged in activities to counter narcotics and illicit trafficking.