

TRANSNATIONAL CRIME REGIONAL RESPONSE



Leaders from the U.S. Northern Command Intelligence Directorate, the Mexican Secretariat of National Defense and the Secretariat of the Navy gather for the Information Sharing Board Working Group.

U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND

BILATERAL MILITARY COOPERATION ROUNDTABLE

Mexico and the United States created the Bilateral Military Cooperation Roundtable in 2016 through the Secretariat of National Defense (DEFENSA) and the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). The roundtable's objective is to increase operational compatibility between DEFENSA and USNORTHCOM and, more broadly, both nations' militaries. The roundtable addresses topics of mutual interest, including force development, training, capability, regional security and defense of North America and the security of the common border.



U.S. F-16s supporting the North American Aerospace Defense Command intercept a "track of interest" aircraft as part of Amalgam Eagle 2025, an air defense and search and rescue exercise.

U.S. AIR FORCE

REGIONAL TRAINING

USNORTHCOM and its regional partners engage in regular training exercises designed to improve operational compatibility. Some of these exercises, including operations Fenix and Amalgam Eagle, hone skills that counter transnational criminal organizations. Operation Fenix, for example, includes training U.S. and Mexican forces on unmanned aerial systems, intelligence and reconnaissance, maritime interdiction and amphibious night operations, while Amalgam Eagle simulates coordinated cross-border responses to suspicious aircraft.



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Ecuador President Daniel Noboa, right, preside over a meeting at the presidential palace in Quito, Ecuador, in September 2025.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ECUADOR AGREEMENT

Ecuador and the U.S. signed a bilateral agreement in July 2025 to strengthen collaboration against transnational criminal organizations, or TCOs. The countries agreed to exchange information on suspected criminal offenders and to conduct risk assessments of cargo and travelers. In September 2025, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the U.S. would designate two Ecuadorian gangs — Los Lobos and Los Choneros — as foreign terrorist organizations and would designate \$13.7 million to help Ecuador fight drugs and crime and \$6 million more for uncrewed aerial vehicles for the Ecuadorian Navy to combat TCOs.

TRANSNATIONAL CRIME GLOBAL RESPONSE



Synthetic drugs are the target of the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats. The group, created in 2023, addresses health and security threats.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

GLOBAL COALITION TO ADDRESS SYNTHETIC DRUG THREATS

The coalition was created at the initiative of the United States in 2023 and includes 160 countries and 15 international organizations. The coalition, which addresses public health and security risks, seeks to prevent the illicit manufacture and trafficking of synthetic drugs like fentanyl. It also aims to identify international drug use trends and public health strategies.

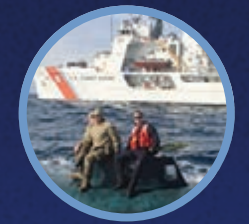


The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency track transnational criminal organizations.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

INTERPOL LIAISONS, U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has three liaison officers assigned to Interpol-United States National Central Bureau in Washington, D.C. (USNCB). USNCB uses real-time analytical intelligence to facilitate law enforcement investigations with 194 member countries. The liaisons assist with extraditions to and from the U.S. and locate immigration violators wanted abroad.



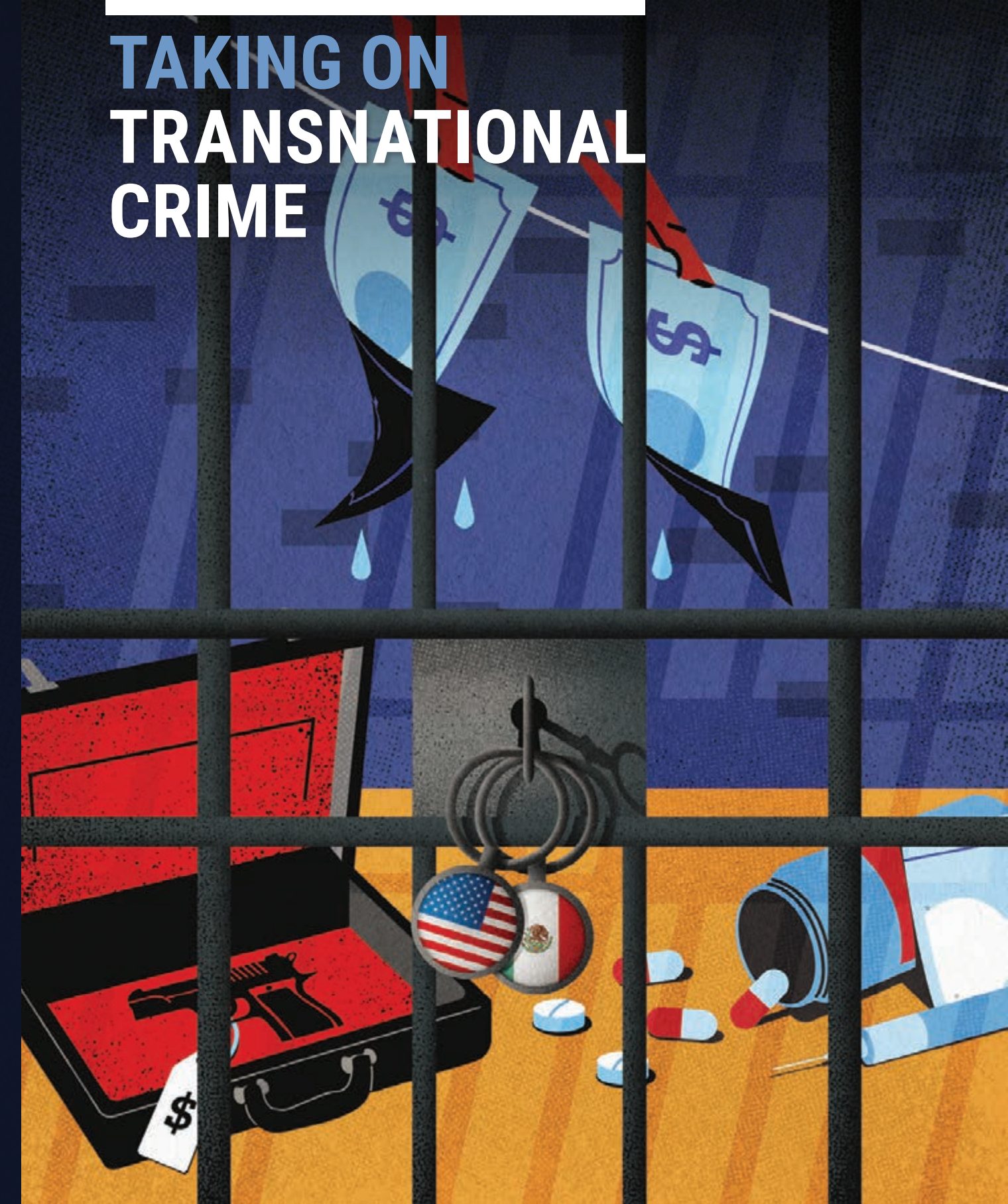
The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Valiant during a mission for Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) in the eastern Pacific. JIATF-S coordinates drug interdiction and operations to counter transnational criminal organizations.

U.S. COAST GUARD

JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE SOUTH

The United States Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) was created in 1989 to coordinate drug interdiction in the Caribbean region. JIATF-S acts as a unified command and control hub for the aerial and maritime forces that detect and destroy dangerous narcotics. Twenty nations have official representation at JIATF-S, which is based in Key West, Florida.

TAKING ON TRANSNATIONAL CRIME



GLOBAL CHALLENGE

A WORLDWIDE LOOK AT TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

CANADA: Indo-Pacific criminal groups smuggle precursor chemicals into Canada to produce synthetic drugs, primarily MDMA, or ecstasy. A variety of networks also smuggle ecstasy and high-potency marijuana southbound and cocaine northbound across the Canada-U.S. border.

UNITED STATES: Transnational criminal organizations target U.S. businesses, consumers and government programs. Criminal networks feature prominently in the trafficking of drugs, movement of contraband, counterfeiting of goods and smuggling of people into the country.

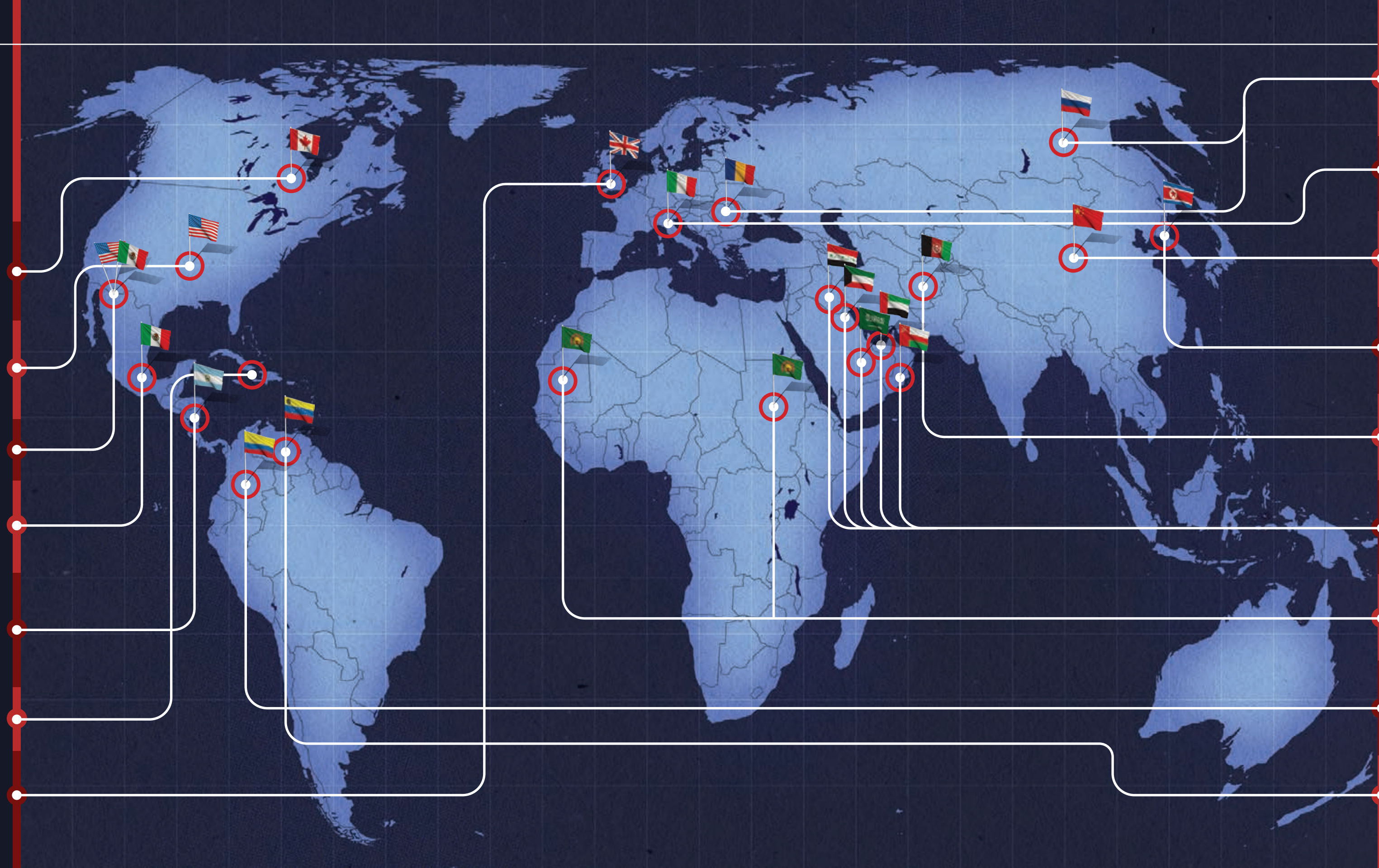
MEXICO-U.S. BORDER: In addition to drug trafficking, transnational criminals are involved in human, money and weapon smuggling.

MEXICO: The government of Mexico is waging a historic campaign against transnational criminal organizations. Many of the drug organizations are expanding into human trafficking and smuggling, extortion, and kidnapping for ransom.

CENTRAL AMERICA: This region is a key area of converging threats, where criminal organizations commit financial crimes and engage in drug, weapon and human trafficking. The wave of transnational crime threatens the region's prosperity and can cost up to 8% of its GDP, according to the World Bank.

CARIBBEAN: Trafficking and smuggling routes have led to increased crime, violence and corruption.

UNITED KINGDOM: Transnational crime in the U.K. generates between \$32 billion and \$64 billion per year from large-scale human smuggling, drug trafficking, financial fraud and marketing scams.



RUSSIA, EURASIA AND ROMANIA: Links among organized crime, businesses and corrupt officials threaten economic growth. Criminal enterprises have entered energy, telecommunications and precious-metals markets. Some of the most sophisticated cybercriminals are based in Russia and Romania.

ITALY: The dumping of hazardous waste and trash is one of the most significant sources of illicit income for Italy's Camorra criminal organization, topping its narcotics, prostitution and embezzlement activities.

CHINA: Transnational criminal organizations are common players in intellectual property crime. The networks are engaged in cybercrime, illicit finance, drug trafficking and the diversion of precursor chemicals used to process heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine and fentanyl.

NORTH KOREA: North Korean entities maintain ties with crime networks to earn hard currency. North Korea is home to the Lazarus Group, a notorious international cyber hacking outfit with ties to the government.

AFGHANISTAN: The proceeds from poppy and coca farming and heroin/cocaine production provide extremist groups with stable financing. About 90% of the world's heroin comes from opium poppy cultivated in Afghanistan.

ARABIAN GULF REGION: Transnational crime figures, including arms dealers, narcotics traffickers and terrorist financiers, work in or through the region. They take advantage of the location's status as a regional trading, financial and transportation hub.

SAHEL, WEST AFRICA AND EAST AFRICA: Sahel smugglers purchase or steal weapons from black markets and sell them to terrorist groups. Drug traffickers increasingly exploit West and East African countries as transit points.

COLOMBIA: The illegal drug trade in Colombia has since the 1970s centered on four major trafficking cartels: Medellin, Cali, Norte del Valle and North Coast. Colombia has been the world's leading producer of coca, which is used to manufacture cocaine, for many years.

VENEZUELA: The country is a permissive environment for terrorist and drug organizations and a departure point for cocaine bound from South America to the United States, Europe and western Africa.