A goal of national strategic guidance is to guide the direction and actions of a nation’s efforts to achieve an advantageous end-state for a particular national interest. National strategic guidance, or national strategies, should address in some form or fashion a nation’s national interests. Much has been written about the national interests: for example, Joseph S. Nye defines national interest as “the set of shared priorities regarding relations with the rest of the world.” This simplistic definition is useful in many ways but most importantly because it applies to all nations. While the U.S. focuses much of its foreign policy discourse on national interests, it certainly does not have a monopoly on the concept. As it relates to CTOC, the U.S., Canada, and Mexico share the national interests of secure borders, peaceful relations, and free trade. Unfortunately, defining and prioritizing national interests can be problematic. As the Report from The Commission on America’s National Interests (2000), posits, “National interests are the foundation of foreign policy … (however,) even among foreign policy elites, there is widespread confusion and little agreement about U.S. interests today.” This discord is not a recent phenomenon, as Samuel Huntington argues, “Without a sure sense of national identity, Americans have become unable to define their national interests, and as a result, subnational commercial interests and

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transnational and non-national ethnic interests have come to dominate foreign policy.”

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the CTOC strategic guidance documents for the U.S., Canada, and Mexico as they relate to SOF. Some of the key questions that will be addressed are: Do the current national strategy documents for the U.S., Canada, and Mexico adequately address the CTOC issue for SOF? Is the threat adequately addressed in these strategies? How can the existing strategy be improved in the areas of performance and effectiveness? But before these documents are analyzed, a discussion of strategic guidance needs to take place. Putting the word ‘strategic’ or ‘strategy’ on the cover of a document is not enough. There are many documents that claim to be strategic but fail to meet even the most rudimentary definition of a strategy. The next three sections will discuss the U.S., Canada, and Mexico strategic guidance, and specifically how they address the CTOC issue. It should come as no surprise that the U.S. strategic documents are quite detailed and apply a whole-of-government approach to the problem. But even with the volume of U.S. documents focused on the CTOC issue, all three nations could improve their strategic guidance by being more proactive and cooperative with each other.

What it Means to be Strategic

There are volumes written about strategy, and this short section will not attempt to summarize it all. What this section will endeavor to do is provide the reader a sense of what it means to be strategic. Most understand the difference between tactical, operational, and strategic—the various levels of thought whether in planning or in warfare. Simplistically, the strategic level is at the top encompassing the whole, whereas operational and tactical address lower levels and just a portion of the whole. So to be strategic is to address time, place, and technology. Strategy covers the diplomatic, information, economic, military, and cultural aspects, or as the preeminent strategy scholar, Dr. Colin Gray, argues, “Just four words express the core of the matter – (Political) Ends, (Strategic) Ways, (Military) Means, and the Assumptions that inform and can well drive action.” Dr. Gray also describes strategy as “the bridge that relates military power to political purpose; it is neither military power per se nor political purpose.” Unfortunately, today’s national strategic documents fall short of Dr. Gray’s succinct definitions.
For example, the United States NSS provides an overview of the current administration’s priorities and focus areas but falls short of being a strategy because it lacks an explanation of the ends, ways, means, and assumptions. A typical critique of the NSS—this one by Walter Russell Mead on the 2010 NSS—describes it as “less a strategy paper than a statement of faith and a wish list.”

There are U.S. strategic documents that come closer to being ‘strategic,’ as those documents focus on a particular topic. While the NSS is trying to coordinate all instruments of state power for all the national security interests, a document like the U.S. Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime (2011) can be more precise and get closer to addressing Dr. Gray’s “four words that inform and drive action.” However, even this CTOC strategy has its flaws which will be addressed in the next section.

For the purposes of this chapter, the U.S., Canada, and Mexico strategic documents that will be analyzed will not meet the ‘strategic’ threshold in Dr. Gray’s definition. Though lacking the ends-ways-means construct, these documents provide useful strategic policy guidance. However, these official documents, published by their respective governments, are strategic in the sense that they portray their respective nation’s priorities and focus areas. Any mention of combating TOC will display that nation’s concern for the issue and any mention of possible solutions will start to address ends, ways, and means. A strategy should translate focus areas into concrete initiatives, but it will become apparent in the following sections that national strategic guidance often falls short.

What does it mean to be strategic? For some, it is theoretical (definitional), while for others it is practical (policies). For our purposes, strategic means providing enough guidance for practitioners at the national level to discern a way ahead. As we will see in the following sections, this low bar for strategic guidance is necessary to avoid getting bogged down in theoretical arguments. Too often critics describe ‘how’ a document should have been written instead of focusing on ‘what’ is inside the document. To that end, the next section will address the U.S. CTOC strategic guidance—specifically the 2015 NSS and 2011 Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime.
CTOC Strategic Guidance (United States)

Any discussion of U.S. strategic guidance must start with the fact that there is a proliferation of U.S. national strategic documents. A simple search on the Homeland Security Digital Library comes up with a list of 125 strategic documents covering various topics such as borders and immigration, infrastructure, intelligence, international, law enforcement, maritime, military, national security, pandemics, public health, space, technology, terrorism threats, transportation, weapons, and other areas. A vast bureaucracy supports the United States Government so the enormous supporting documentation should come as no surprise. At the top of those documents is the U.S. NSS.

The NSS is a report required by Federal Law 50 USC 3043 (previously section 404a) which shapes exactly what this ‘strategy’ must lay out. It is prepared by the executive branch for Congress. In 1986 a law was passed requiring the President to give Congress an annual ‘Strategic Statement.’ All Presidents are inconsistent in meeting the congressional guidance; for example, George W. Bush only produced two in eight years. President Obama has now produced two while in office (2010 and 2015). The NSS lays out the administration’s plans to address national security concerns using all the elements of national power. The document identifies four enduring national interests: security of the U.S., its citizens, U.S. allies and partners; a strong, innovative and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and a rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership promoting peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.

Richard Betts notes the NSS “has sometimes been a Christmas tree on which every interest group hangs its foreign policy concerns,” hence, the lack of ‘strategy’ in the NSS document. The NSS mentions CTOC five times, which for the top U.S. strategic document is significant. In the introduction, CTOC is mentioned as one of the top strategic risks to U.S. interests. In section two, addressing security, CTOC is mentioned twice. In both instances it refers to combating organized crime in weak and failing states through risk-based approaches. The final two mentions can be found in the international order section, and they address the organized crime threat to U.S. collaborative efforts in the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. takes the TOC
threat seriously and the NSS outlines those concerns; however, the NSS falls short of outlining the CTOC ends, ways, and means, and makes no mention of how the U.S. military, let alone SOF, are to be involved. This is not surprising in a 35 page document that provides a vision, outlines interests, and offers vague direction. The next document, the 2011 U.S. Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime, gets closer to being ‘strategic’ and provides some ends, ways, and means.

The 2011 CTOC strategy is more specific—it focuses solely on one threat whereas the 2015 NSS addresses all threats. The 2011 document is clear: TOC threatens U.S. and international security. TOC threatens rule of law, economic interests, and intellectual property while providing support (facilitators) to terrorist groups, smuggling networks, and cybercrime. To address these threats, the CTOC strategy has five objectives, 56 priority actions, and introduces capabilities and tools. The implementation of this strategy will be an interagency effort.11

The Interagency Policy Committee on Illicit Drugs and Transnational Criminal Threats, led by the National Security Staff and the Office of National Drug Control Policy, oversees implementation of the strategy.12 Some of the more powerful interagency implementation tools include:

- White House Executive Order 13581 (Blocking Property of Transnational Criminal Organizations);
- Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control Transnational Criminal Organizations Sanctions Program;
- Code of Federal Regulations 590, Transnational Criminal Organizations Sanctions Regulations;
- Department of State, Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Program.

So how do SOF fit into the 2011 CTOC strategy? Or does it only apply to the Departments of State, Justice, and Treasury? On the contrary, SOF have a role in this strategy—albeit a supporting role to law enforcement. The interagency Threat Mitigation Working Group is one example. This National Security Council-sponsored group produces action plans for high-value targets and has Office of Secretary of Defense and Joint Staff representatives. The
Military and specifically SOF have a strong role in technical assistance and capacity building. While the Department of Justice has the lead to work law enforcement with foreign partners, DOD, using SOF, assists with building partner capacity (BPC). The shortfall in these efforts resides in the fact that no real operational entity exists to prioritize and synchronize U.S. CTOC efforts. This issue will be addressed later in the section.

The SOF role in CTOC is small but growing. Currently, SOF build partner capacity in many states that are engaging in the CTOC fight. As Dr. Harry Yarger argues in his recent JSOU monograph, “Under the conditions of rapid and continued globalization, the lynchpin of the emerging United States grand strategy is building partner capacity (BPC), and SOF are instrumental in the pursuit of a successful BPC policy.” SOF participate in BPC through the FID mission, which is “the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security.” SOF assisting the security forces of fragile or weak states is a piece (albeit small) of the CTOC puzzle.

Another piece of the puzzle is the nexus of crime and terrorism as addressed by the CTOC strategy: “The Department of Justice reports that 29 of the 63 organizations on its FY2010 Consolidated Priority Organization Targets list … were associated with terrorist groups.” This convergence of crime and terrorism is a debatable concept, but even if the link is tenuous at best, the SOF role in counterterrorism still has an impact in the CTOC strategy. Mexico is one example used in the CTOC strategy: “TOC in Mexico makes the U.S. border more vulnerable because it creates and maintains illicit corridors for border crossings that can be employed by other secondary criminal or terrorist actors or organizations.” To the end, “much of U.S. military and security assistance has been targeted at the violence and trafficking of some seven major drug trafficking organizations as well as smaller operations.” While the CTOC strategy does not explicitly address SOF participation, it does identify one of its priorities as, “enhancing Department of Defense support to U.S. law enforcement through the Narcotics and Transnational Crime Support Center.” Therefore, the U.S. national security strategies (NSS and CTOC) adequately address the CTOC issues and threats, but SOF must interpret their CTOC role vice draw from specific strategic guidance. As previously noted, the NSS provides a cursory overview of the
organized crime threat, mainly as a strategic risk to national interests. TOC has a significant security impact on weak and failing states, which disrupts the U.S. economy and foreign policy. The CTOC strategy is more specific in outlining the threat. The strategy outlines how organized crime penetrates state institutions, encourages corruption, threatens governance, and damages the U.S. economy, competitiveness, and strategic markets. Organized crime accomplishes this through trafficking (drugs, humans, weapons, intellectual property), cybercrime, and facilitation of those who would carry out violent acts (terrorists and other criminals). While both strategies address the CTOC issues and threats, there are areas of improvement for both in measures of performance and effectiveness.

The main critique of the NSS revolves around the lack of specificity within the document. Every administration faces the challenge of creating a coherent strategy and maintaining a consensus about how to protect national interests. The solution that each administration employs is to create a document that covers enough issues but reduces the specificity to achieve the lowest common denominator. As Richard Doyle notes, what is eventually produced is “an NSS that offends none of the important participants by saying little of significance.”20 The NSS can be improved by providing measures of performance and effectiveness. Since there have been only four NSSs produced in the last 13 years (2015, 2010, 2006, 2002), enough time lapses between each NSS to conduct an assessment. These measures could assess whether the top strategic risks increase, decrease, or remain the same. The NSS could include measures on resource allocation. The CTOC efforts already mentioned are interagency solutions and require coordinated efforts among disparate organizations. Does law enforcement have enough resources to lead the CTOC effort? These measures of performance and effectiveness can be applied to the CTOC strategy.

The CTOC strategy already contains objectives, actions, capabilities, and tools. While more specific and closer to being a strategy than the NSS, the CTOC strategy could also be improved with measures of effectiveness and performance. In the priority actions section, providing more specificity to the identified actions could make them measurable. For example, the first action mentioned for the “Start at Home” objective is, “Reduce the demand for illicit drugs in the United States, thereby denying funding for illicit trafficking organizations.”21 This action could be measurable by changing it to read: reduce the demand for illicit drugs in the United States by 50 percent
by 2020, thereby denying funding for illicit trafficking organizations. Each of the actions within the strategy can be modified in this way to add the necessary specificity and assessment aspect to the document. As John Driscoll argues, “proper metrics to measure progress … will need to be employed to ensure accurate measurement of ultimate goals, not merely intermediate objectives.”22 Both the NSS and CTOC strategies require specificity added to the existing vision and direction. This argument also applies to other states as well. The next section will address Canada’s CTOC strategic guidance.

**CTOC Strategic Guidance (Canada)**

Much like the United States, Canada’s fight against TOC is problematic, not only because of the number of illicit activities involved, but also because of the number of agencies (local, provincial, and federal levels) assigned to address the threat. Gavril Paraschiv posits, “Transnational organized crime is a phenomenon that has emerged in different cultures and countries around the world: it is a new category of crimes, being a significant global threat.”23 The countries in the Western Hemisphere and specifically North America are not exempt from this threat. In fact, with the long borders between Canada and the U.S. (longest border between two countries in the world—5,525 miles), and Mexico and the U.S. (1,933 miles), they make combating TOC a momentous challenge.24

One of Canada’s overarching defense strategies is a legacy document (published in 2008) titled, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (CFDS). Much like the United States’ NSS, the CFDS uses a whole-of-government approach to meet its domestic and international security requirements. The CFDS outlines three roles for Canadian Forces (defending Canada, North America, and abroad); six core missions (all focused on safekeeping the populace), and four pillars (personnel, equipment, readiness, and infrastructure). This strategic document is much more useful than the NSS due to its detailed modernization and investment sections (programmatic funding details to 2028). However, its treatment of the strategic environment is similar to the NSS in its broad outline of potential threats. The only mention of organized crime is as follows: “Ethnic and border conflicts, fragile states, resurgent nationalism and global criminal networks continue to threaten international stability.”25 This single entry in the CFDS and lack of strategic direction on
how it is to be addressed does not provide SOF the necessary guidance it requires.

One of the main obstacles that Canadian SOF encounter is the jurisdictional issue that creates a barrier to any integrated CTOC approach. Much like the U.S. Posse Comitatus law (limit the powers of the federal government in using its military personnel to act as domestic law enforcement personnel), Canada’s history and constitution limit the federal powers. The provinces retain certain powers in “areas that pertain to national security yet the criminal code constitutionally comes under federal jurisdiction, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is a federal police force.” Therefore the CTOC effort, specifically the SOF role, must tread carefully to avoid perceptions of interference and/or crossing jurisdictional lines. To aid in the effort of interagency cooperation,

Regional Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (INSETs) have been established across the various regions of the country to bring together the RCMP, provincial police services (in Ontario and Quebec), municipal police departments, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) in order to ensure that operational investigations relating to transnational crime and terrorism are properly coordinated.27

Note this does not include the Canadian military (SOF) which would only be drawn in on an as needed basis.

Similar to the U.S., Canada sees the CTOC effort in terms of the crime-terror nexus. In Canada, section 83.01 of the Criminal Code defines terrorism as an act committed “in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause …” with the intention of intimidating the public “… with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act.” The definition of an organized crime group, as stated in the Criminal Code, is a group which is composed of three or more persons in or outside Canada, and has as one of its main purposes or main activities the facilitation or commission of one or more serious offenses, that, if committed, would likely result in direct or indirect receipt of a material benefit, including a financial benefit, by the group or by any one of the persons who constitute the group.29
There are numerous documents and reports that address CTOC and the crime-terror nexus, but they are all law enforcement focused. One example is the Public Report on Actions under the National Agenda to Combat Organized Crime, *Working Together to Combat Organized Crime*, which overviews the scope of serious and organized crime in Canada, highlights governments’ collective response to this problem, discusses where action should focus, and identifies strategies and approaches recommended by the National Coordinating Committee on Organized Crime to reduce its harms. Another is the *Canadian Law Enforcement Strategy on Organized Crime*, which reflects a national collaborative effort of intelligence and operations to detect, reduce, and prevent organized and serious crime. *Canada’s Strategy for Engagement in the Americas* is another whole-of-government approach with three broad goals: first, increasing Canadian and hemispheric economic opportunity; second, addressing insecurity and advancing freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; and third, fostering lasting relationships. Each of these documents provides guidance to policymakers but is focused on law enforcement agencies exclusively.

Despite the lack of Canadian CTOC strategic guidance for SOF, there are opportunities to explore. Nicholas Dorn argues the operating space for CTOC can encompass all instruments of national power. This operating space includes law enforcement (policing leading to judicial decision making); administrative measures (confiscation, fines, and civic sanctions); market regulation (suspension of commercial rights/privileges); and disruption tactics (includes police, customs, and other security agencies). This last category is the SOF operating space. Again, due to Canada’s constitutional restrictions, SOF must tread lightly and cannot act unilaterally. Working relationships between government agencies are based on trust that needs to develop over time. While law enforcement can and do conduct disruption tactics, SOF can cooperate and participate in this CTOC role. The Canadian military (SOF) know all too well the price that is paid for lack of attention on the crime-terror nexus. On 20 and 22 October 2014, two Canadian Forces soldiers were murdered in separate terrorist attacks that took place outside Montreal and in downtown Ottawa, respectively. While both of these incidents were conducted by individuals who had become radicalized and motivated by violent extremist ideology, it is a stark reminder that Canadian law enforcement and homeland security entities (military) need to work together.
Specifically, CANSOFCOM’s primary mission is counterterrorism which involves working with law enforcement agencies to protect the populace.

A different perspective on the threat to Canada and its populace comes from Major Bernard Brister (Royal Military College of Canada) who argues that Canadian security interests should focus on Mexico. Major Brister contends that internal Mexican affairs influence Canadian security in three ways: immigration, illegal drugs, and security relationships. On immigration, “convinced that the domestic economic situation within Mexico is irreversible and/or fearing for their lives as a result of the increasing dominance of criminal organizations in many parts of everyday Mexican life, significant numbers of Mexican citizens began making their way to Canadian ports of entry and claiming refugee status.”34 While Brister acknowledges that the flow of drugs into Canada from Mexico is just a fraction of what travels to the U.S., the “volume of cocaine smuggled into Canada has tripled in recent years.”35 Finally, Brister argues the greatest threat is the effect these issues are having on the U.S.-Canada security relationship. Brister uses the term “thickening of the border” in reference to U.S. efforts to “fire-proof their citizens from the triple threat of illegal immigration, the importation of increasing amounts of illegal narcotics, and terrorist attack.”36 These concerns are valid as TOC takes advantage by moving people, drugs, and guns across borders and can be mitigated through international and interagency coordination that involves the military (SOF).

While the U.S. and Canada have a strong working relationship in their CTOC efforts, the next section will highlight the Mexican strategic document deemphasizing cross border interactions.

**CTOC Strategic Guidance (Mexico)**

Similar to the U.S. and Canada, Mexico’s fight against organized crime is complicated by a variety of factors (geography, limited resources, and external demand for drugs). Geography plays a major role with land borders north (with the U.S. 3,155 km) and south (Belize 276 km and Guatemala 958 km); ocean coastlines east and west (total of 9,330 km) with terrain that varies from rugged mountains to low coastal plains, high plateaus, and desert.37 This unique geography challenges Mexico’s security apparatus to secure the borders from smuggling and other nefarious activities. Another factor is the limited resources Mexico possesses in comparison to the U.S. and Canada.
While Mexico has a $1.3 trillion economy, per capita income is roughly one-third that of the United States and two-fifths that of Canada. Mexico’s economy “is vulnerable to global economic pressures, such as lower external demand, rising interest rates, and low oil prices—approximately 30 percent of government revenue comes from the state-owned oil company, PEMEX.”

This disparity in resources is even more evident in military expenditures. Using 2012 data, military spending as a percentage of GDP is as follows: U.S. 4.35, Canada 1.24, and Mexico 0.59.

Mexico has almost no control over the external demand for drugs and other smuggled items/people. The demand for these illicit items is growing, both in the U.S. and Canada. As a result, TCOs continue to battle with each other and the Mexican government security forces. “Following a decision by the former administration to directly confront [TCOs], there have been 50,000 or more narco-related homicides since 2007.” To address this level of violence and outline a plan of action, the current Mexican administration produced a strategy document titled, “National Security Program (NSP) 2014-2018: A multidimensional policy for Mexico in the 21st century.”

The NSP is a very detailed and comprehensive document especially compared to the U.S. NSS and Canadian CFDS. It contains four sections: the administration’s policy outline, strategic environment, strategic objectives (goals and lines of action), and long-term trends. The policy outline includes the legal and conceptual framework that references the Mexican Constitution. The overarching vision (Mexico in peace) promotes a national security policy that guarantees internal and external security. This is achieved through the National Security Council (NSC) which consists of the Ministry of the Interior, Secretary of National Defense, Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of Public Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretary of Communications and Transport, and Attorney General. The approach to national security is to “promote the security of Mexico through a multidimensional policy that anticipates those internal and external trends that can jeopardize [the] nation … thus safeguarding freedom, human rights and the security of … citizens.” The goal of the NSC is to integrate these institutions to promote cooperation and a culture of safety.

The Mexico strategic environment is outlined in the next section of the NSP. It argues for a position in the world that promotes the advances of Mexico’s economy but recognizes the enormous challenges the country faces (internal security). The NSP highlights Mexico’s role in North America and
its partnership with the U.S. and Canada. There are numerous bilateral and trilateral agreements between the nations, but the North American Free Trade Agreement is the most famous. According to the latest data, between 1993 and 2012, trade among the three members quadrupled from $297 billion to $1.6 trillion. The NSP highlights the importance of the North American relationship and the efforts for institutional cooperation and exchange. That is certainly true for economic, administrative, health, and other domestic issues; however, in the realm of security and specifically in CTOC efforts, the trilateral efforts have been wanting. The role of the Mexican armed forces in the maintenance of internal security has been significant. While criminal groups still have economic power, armament, and territorial presence, the armed forces (including SOF) will continue to carry out the following types of operations: reduce violence; cultivation eradication; inhibit trafficking (weapons, drugs, people); and increase strategic installation safety. These operations could be enhanced with increased cooperation among American, Canadian, and Mexican SOF.

When addressing risks and threats, the NSP contains a section dedicated to TCO. The NSP acknowledges that domestically the actions of organized crime has had a corrosive effect on the confidence of the society in the institutions, the maintenance of democratic governance in specific regions of the country, and the economic and social development in those regions. Internationally, the highly publicized increase in violence in the country has negatively impacted the image of Mexico abroad. Organized crime groups persist in maintaining their presence in specific regions of the country conducting their illicit activities and using violence to ensure the continuity of their activities and transfer and sale of drugs.

Based on the Mexican CTOC efforts, the NSP outlines the following trends: change in land and air routes of drug trafficking; the development of the internal market for the consumption of illegal drugs in the country; the change in consumption patterns; the diversification of the criminal activities of the criminal groups; and the expansion of their sources of income. While Mexican CTOC efforts have had a fragmentation effect on organized crime, it has fallen short of arresting the violence and reducing the threat.

The NSP seeks to codify federal actions (State and municipal) to confront the situation from a regional perspective by including local governments in the effort. The key to success is fusing intelligence from various sources that can provide early warning of illicit activities. Specifically against drug
traffickers, the NSP argues for a whole-of-government response that includes the Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of National Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and the Office of Attorney General. Unlike the U.S. and Canada, Mexican SOF have a central role in CTOC efforts. What is missing from the NSP strategy is an international coalition approach to CTOC.

The third section of the NSP outlines the goals, strategies, and lines of action required to achieve a secure internal and external security. Strategic objective 2 states, “Make sure that the Mexican State national security policy adopts a multidimensional perspective through the coordination of authorities and institutions … to favor the achievement of the objectives and national interests.” Clearly, this objective emphasizes cooperation among internal security organizations. A sub-objective could include an external component that underscores the external aspect among the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Strategic objective 2.2, “Strengthening the response capacity of the Federal forces to contribute [to] the maintenance of internal security as well as the tasks of exterior defense of the Federation,” gets closer to the goal of cooperative coalition actions. This objective can be achieved through military education and training programs, combined military exercises, and exchange programs. Trilateral SOF cooperation could assist in addressing issues of TOC affecting the three neighboring countries through robust intelligence sharing, BPC, and security cooperation activities.

The NSP’s fourth section concludes by looking to the future and the national security challenges facing Mexico. The focus of this section is on long-term issues that could impede sustainable development of Mexican society. The four challenges include: the preservation of biodiversity as a strategic resource; impacts of climate change on food security and the management of water; transformation of the global energy outlook and energy security; and management of the health risks of a global pandemic. While the NSP does not address organized crime in these four challenges, it is not difficult to appreciate how organized crime can take advantage of each situation. Developing solutions to Mexico’s challenges requires a collaborative approach requiring innovation. No one agency can accomplish the task, and only working in concert with other nations (U.S. and Canada) can Mexico hope to address these future challenges. SOF have a role today in combating TOC and a role tomorrow to develop sustainable solutions.
Conclusion

The CTOC authoritative, legal, and operational challenges facing the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are daunting. As Naim observed in 2005, “more than 90,000 merchant and passenger ships dock at U.S. ports. They carry 9 million containers with 400 million tons of cargo. Another 157,000 smaller vessels call at U.S. harbors. The notion that a government agency … can seal such a porous border in this era is challenging, to say the least.” These same facts and figures can be applied to Canadian and Mexican ports of entry and border crossings (official and unofficial). SOF have a CTOC role—albeit there are legal restrictions on how much U.S. and Canadian SOF can get involved. The U.S., Canada, and Mexico strategic documents reflect those restrictions. The U.S. NSS mentions CTOC but does not mention SOF, while the 2011 CTOC strategy is law enforcement focused and hence the military (SOF) have a small supporting role only. The USSOF role resides in BPC and in the crime-terror nexus. Canada’s CFDS only mentions organized crime once, and while a more comprehensive strategy than the United States’ NSS, it still falls short of providing SOF the necessary guidance. Canadian strategy documents focus on the terror-crime nexus, but these documents are focused on law enforcement and not SOF. The constitutional restrictions on Canadian SOF limit their participation in CTOC; CANSOFCOM can focus on CT (a primary mission) and work with law enforcement, as well as U.S. and Mexican SOF. Finally, Mexican SOF have the most experience in CTOC efforts. The U.S. and Canadian SOF can learn much from their counterparts to the south. In addition, the well-trained U.S. and Canadian SOF can assist their Mexican counterparts in achieving the NSP goals, strategies, and objectives. Stability and security in North America is an overarching goal for all three nations and is identified as such in the respective strategic documents. Only through seeking opportunities to work together on a variety of issues, not just CTOC, will this be achieved.

Endnotes


13. Interview with Special Forces Colonel Clyde A. Moore, USSOCOM Senior Liaison Officer, U.S. Department of Justice, 20 May 2015.
17. Ibid.
27. Ibid., 415.
29. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 3.
36. Ibid., 4.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.