

U.S. ACTS TO COMBAT ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN ARMS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE



"We're acting boldly, we are acting swiftly, and we are acting in concert to combat threats that are endangering the safety and security of citizens across the Americas."

— President Barack Obama

President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton are committed to combating threats to the citizens of the Americas. As narco-trafficking and associated crime and violence continue to rise throughout the region, the United States has implemented programs to strengthen partnerships with the states of the Western Hemisphere to combat illicit trafficking in arms.

Training

- In 2009, the United States, Canada, and the Organization of American States (OAS) hosted the Western Hemisphere's first customs and law enforcement officials meeting in Vancouver to discuss practical approaches and best practices for combating illicit trafficking in firearms.
- In 2009, the United States hosted a workshop in Belize on combating arms smuggling in Central America. The workshop aimed to increase states' capacity to more effectively address the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms and adopt an operational action plan among the seven Central American states. A South American workshop is expected to take place later in 2010.

Tailored Assistance

- The United States has offered technical assistance to all states in the hemisphere, outlining available U.S. small arms and light weapons-related assistance programs to combat illicit trafficking. Programs are being designed to address the specific needs of individual states.
- As part of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, the United States is partnering with Caribbean states to develop programs that address requests for technical assistance to help tackle trafficking in firearms throughout the region.

Marking and Tracing

- The United States signed eTrace agreements with all seven Central American states and 14 of the 15 Caribbean states. eTrace is a web-based firearm trace request submission system that provides for the electronic exchange of criminal gun data in a secure environment. Expanding eTrace participation throughout the hemisphere is a priority for 2010, including the introduction of a Spanish version of the eTrace software.
- The United States provided the OAS a \$1 million grant to supply marking equipment to states in the region in order to increase hemispheric capability to trace firearms and identify illicit trafficking routes and suppliers.

Stockpile Management

- The United States has assessed and offered stockpile management and destruction assistance to a number of states in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through the destruction of aging and unsafe stockpiles, states are avoiding the potential disaster of an explosion, ensuring an increased level of safety for their citizens. Examples include the following:
 - As part of the Merida Initiative in Central America, the United States has provided a grant for \$1.3 million to the OAS for a program that will offer stockpile management and destruction assistance to the seven Central American countries.
 - The United States has provided a \$450,000 grant to the United Nations' Regional Center for Peace, Disarmament, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean to build up the capacity of several Caribbean governments in firearms stockpile management and destruction.