

Kingpin Designation Act

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In this article, Timothy O'Toole, takes a look at the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (the Kingpin Act) 20 years in, reviewing what it has achieved and prospects for its further application and enforcement. The Kingpin Act is a U.S. law that targets significant foreign narcotics traffickers, their organizations, and agents with the purpose of denying them access to the U.S. financial system and to prohibit all trade and transactions between the traffickers and U.S. companies and individuals.

"Since 2000, the United States Treasury Department, through the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), has designated more than 2,200 individuals and entities under the Kingpin Act. The sanctioned parties cover a wide range of countries and activities, including drug cartels in Latin America, drug producers in China, and money launderers in the Middle East," O'Toole wrote. "The Kingpin Act has been increasingly used as a tool to aid regulators outside the United States. OFAC and other U.S. agencies often share information learned in their Kingpin investigations with foreign regulators, which can then provide justification for foreign officials to undertake enforcement actions of their own. U.S. regulators continue to rely heavily on the Kingpin Act, not only in U.S. enforcement actions but also working in concert with regulators in other countries."