In this month's update, we discuss the strongest predictors of gang violence. From outside alliances and larger gangs benefit from keeping ties within; 4) Social networks are crime, members select their own; 3) Gang cohesion matters for survival. Smaller gangs benefit storefronts to covertly process payments for illegal activity.

The talk highlights how criminal organizations circumvent the payments and laundering. The talk discusses how credit card transactions have increasingly become a conduit for money by hiding behind legitimate e-commerce and online businesses. It showcases how these networks are connected and how the traditional banking ecosystem has been compromised.

The annual update reflects on the last 12 months during which we helped plan and execute the second COE Summit, positioned three research projects for transition, launched the Annual Meeting, and supported three MSI Summer Research Teams, all while managing a director transition and the effects of the pandemic.

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Our two big takeaways from this last year are (1) the only constant in life is (unexpected) change, and (2) a good organization and team sees the opportunities in such a dynamic environment, thinks creatively, and pivots quickly, and not only survives but thrives.

We're honored to celebrate the first anniversary of the DHS Science and Technology Directorate’s Center for Innovation and National Challenges (CINA). CINA, under the leadership of our Executive Director, Dr. Michael White, has successfully completed its first year of operation.

CINA has been a leader in developing and promoting the use of innovative technologies and methods to support homeland security missions. We have supported a wide range of research projects, from advanced analytics and artificial intelligence to social media analysis and cybersecurity.

CINA has provided funding to over 50 research projects, including some of the most promising and innovative ideas from experts across the country. These projects have helped us to identify new and emerging threats, develop new tools and technologies, and improve our understanding of how to prevent and respond to these threats.

CINA has also played a key role in fostering collaborations between academia, industry, and government. We have brought together experts from a variety of fields to work together on common goals and to tackle complex challenges.

CINA's success is due in part to the support and commitment of our partners and stakeholders. We are grateful to all those who have helped us to make a difference in homeland security.

We look forward to continuing to make progress in the years to come, and to continuing to be a leader in homeland security.