

Project Shield America is an integral part of the ICE counter proliferation strategy of preventing illegal exporters, targeted foreign countries, terrorist groups and international criminal organizations from trafficking in WMD and their components. ICE works to stop organized criminal and state-sponsored efforts to obtain and illegally export licensable commodities, technologies, conventional munitions and firearms; to export stolen property; and to engage in financial transactions that support these activities or violate U.S. sanctions and embargoes. Strategic technology sought by certain proscribed countries includes the following:

- Modern manufacturing technology for the production of microelectronics, computers, digital electronic components and signal processing systems;
- Technology necessary for the development of aircraft, missile and other tactical weapon delivery systems;
- Advanced signal and weapons detection, tracking and monitoring systems;
- Technology and equipment used in the construction of nuclear weapons and materials; and
- Biological and chemical warfare agents, precursors and associated manufacturing equipment.

As with any illegal trade, the exact volume of illicit exports is difficult to measure or even estimate. ICE criminal investigations and seizures indicate, however, that such trade can be valued in the tens of millions of dollars annually. Regardless, the monetary value of the illegal exports discovered by ICE is often secondary to the strategic and potential military value of these products.

International Affairs

ICE international affairs (IA), with 70 offices in 48 foreign countries around the world, enhance national security by conducting and coordinating investigations involving transnational criminal organizations and serving as the agency's liaison to counterparts in foreign governments and their law enforcement agencies.

IA offices also support investigations of customs and immigration violations, manage the Visa Security Program and the International Visitor's Program, represent ICE with international organizations, conduct international training and facilitate the repatriation of foreign nationals removed from the United States.

IA operations are directed by ICE attaches who work closely with international law enforcement agencies.

60 months imprisonment for illegal export of technology to Iran

Iranian arms procurement agent Amir Hossein Ardebili was sentenced to 60 months of incarceration for multiple violations of the Arms Export Control Act and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, as well the crimes of smuggling, conspiracy and money laundering. These charges resulted from a three year international undercover investigation that exposed Ardebili's role as an agent for the government of Iran.

The case revealed the extent of the Iranian government's activities in acquiring American military technology. During the investigation, Ardebili acquired a number of articles of war for export, including gyro chips that can be used in advanced aircraft, missile and space applications; phase shifters that perform a key function in the active radiating elements of electronically steered antennae; and digital air data computers that enhance weapons delivery system performance for F-4 fighter aircraft.

(December 2009)

Student and Exchange Visitor Program

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is responsible for overseeing the status of non-immigrant foreign students and exchange visitors in the U.S. SEVP uses web-based technology, known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), to track and monitor schools and programs, students, and exchange visitors and their dependents throughout the duration of their enrollment within the U.S. education system.

SEVIS collects and maintains appropriate information so that only legitimate foreign students or exchange visitors gain entry into the U.S. The system also provides timely information to the U.S. Department of State, other DHS components and ICE investigators.

Student Visa Fraud Conviction Sends School Operator to Prison

With the arrest of Lydia Menocal, director and sole shareholder of Florida Language Institute Inc. (FLI), and office manager Ofelia Macia, ICE wrapped up its largest-ever student visa fraud investigation, netting 116 administrative arrests of student visa violators.

In 2002, on behalf of FLI, Menocal and Macia applied to DHS for the authority to issue I-20 forms to foreign nationals wishing to enter or remain in the U.S. as full-time language students. These forms are necessary for potential foreign national students to obtain their F-1 student visas. Federal regulation requires students to attend DHS-approved schools and attend class at least 18 hours per week. Additionally, school administrators are required to report students who fail to attend classes regularly.

Between July 2007 and March 2010, Menocal issued and signed hundreds of I-20s for foreign nationals wanting to attend FLI. However, during site visits, ICE special agents discovered that these students were not attending classes. Neither Menoca nor Macia had reported these violations to DHS. During this same time period, Menocal fraudulently earned \$600,000 by charging students to sign their I-20 forms.

For her fraudulent activity, Menocal was sentenced to 15 months in prison and two years of supervised release and ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine and forfeit \$600,000 in money and property to the U.S. Macia was sentenced to one year probation and ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine.

(August 2010)



Intelligence

ICE relies on a robust intelligence force that, as a part of HSI, supports the enforcement needs of executive leadership and operational field units. Using cutting edge technology, complex intelligence gathering tools and multifaceted investigative techniques, intelligence officers and staff collect, analyze and share strategic and tactical data. They also support federal, state, local, tribal and international law enforcement partners.

Intelligence responsibilities include staffing the National Emergency Management Division (NEMD). The NEMD serves as the ICE lead for continuity operations, emergency planning and preparedness, and crisis management. NEMD guides agency responses to critical and possible catastrophic events by recommending policy, promoting training, and sponsoring exercises. NEMD is also responsible for coordinating the ICE Crisis Action Team when responding to natural and man-made disasters.

Intelligence plays a vital role in investigations related to terrorism, illegal immigration, weapons proliferation, war crimes, smuggling, child sex tourism and more. This intelligence aids the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in keeping our nation safe, secure and resilient.

Visa Security Program

Under the Visa Security Program (VSP), ICE deploys special agents with immigration law enforcement expertise to diplomatic posts worldwide to conduct visa security activities such as:

- Examining visa applications for fraud;
- Initiating investigations;
- Coordinating with law enforcement partners; and
- Providing law enforcement training and advice to U.S. consulates.

VSP operations represent ICE's front line in protecting the U.S. against terrorist and criminal organizations. The VSP is aimed at interdicting those who would exploit the legal visa process to enter the U.S. Rather than screening names against lists of known terrorist or criminal suspects, ICE special agents assigned to VSP take a hands-on approach toward identifying potential terrorist or criminal suspects and stopping them before they can reach the U.S.



Illegal Movement of People and Goods

ICE special agents, officers and attorneys enforce provisions of approximately 400 federal statutes. This large and diverse body of laws is reflected in the wide array of offices, programs and projects that make up ICE. People are smuggled and trafficked, while children are sexually exploited at home and abroad. Illegal goods, in a very general sense, predominately involve guns, money and drugs, but ICE's responsibilities extend much further into all kinds of counterfeit merchandise coming into the country as well as the repatriation of cultural treasures out of the country to original owners abroad.



Border Enforcement Security Task Force

In recent years, the U.S. Southern border has experienced a dramatic surge in cross-border crime and violence due to intense competition between Mexican drug cartels and criminal smuggling organizations that employ predatory tactics to realize profits. Law enforcement agencies at the Northern border face similar challenges from transnational smuggling organizations.

In response to this trend, ICE has partnered with federal, state, local and foreign law enforcement counterparts to create the Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) initiative. These multi-agency teams, deployed at strategic locations, were developed to identify, disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations that pose significant threats to border security.

Several international law enforcement agencies serve as key members of BEST teams. On the Southwest border, the participation of the Mexican Secretaria de Seguridad Publica is vital. On the Northern border, Canadian law

enforcement agencies such as the Canada Border Services Agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Niagara Regional Police Service, the Toronto Metropolitan Police, the Windsor Police Service and the Amherstburg Police Service are all active members. The Argentinean Customs Agency is part of the Miami BEST team and the Colombian National Police is part of both the Miami and New York-New Jersey BEST teams.

In 2011, there were 21 BEST teams located throughout the U.S. and in Mexico:

- Arizona (Phoenix, Tucson and Yuma);
- California (Imperial Valley, Los Angeles/Long Beach Seaport and San Diego);
- Florida (Miami Seaport);
- Gulf Coast (New Orleans);
- Mexico (Mexico City);
- Michigan (Detroit);
- New Mexico (Albuquerque, Deming and Las Cruces);
- New York (Buffalo and New York/New Jersey Seaport);
- Southeast Coast (Wilmington, N.C.);
- Texas (El Paso, Laredo and Rio Grande Valley); and
- Washington (Blaine and Seattle/Tacoma).

Sailing vessel with 4,500 pounds of marijuana seized and three arrested

On the Mississippi Sound, south of Bay St. Louis, Miss., the ICE-led Gulf Coast BEST team arrested three smugglers and seized a sailing vessel with approximately 4,500 pounds of marijuana. Upon boarding the vessel, the team found the drug in two large wooden containers in the forward hold of the vessel.

BEST members are co-located so they can effectively share information. The Gulf Coast BEST team included ICE's HSI; U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Air & Marine Operations, Office of Border Patrol, and Office of Field Operations; the U.S. Coast Guard; and the Harrison County (Mississippi) Sheriff's Office.

The success of this operation, and the BEST program in general, is due to the close collaboration between law enforcement agencies.

(November 2010)



Weapons Smuggling

Weapons smuggling between the U.S. and Mexico threatens the overall safety and security of both countries. Weapons smuggled into Mexico from the U.S. often end up in the hands of drug cartels or other smuggling organizations, where they can be employed against law enforcement officers and citizens in either country. These firearms continue to fuel violence along the Southwest border and in the interior of Mexico.

U.S. and Mexican law enforcement agencies have partnered on interdiction, investigation and intelligence-sharing activities to identify, disrupt and dismantle transborder criminal networks.

ICE leverages more than 30 years of experience in criminal export investigations and holds the broadest authorities of any U.S. government agency in the areas of illegal export of munitions, small arms and weapon sanctions violations. Additionally, ICE has primary jurisdiction over investigations relating to the transborder smuggling of firearms and other weapons out of the U.S.

Togolese man sentenced for forcing West African women to work in New Jersey hair-braiding salons

A Togolese man, Hounakey, will pay more than \$3.9 million in restitution to his victims and will spend 55 months in prison, after which he will serve three years of supervised release for conspiring with others to commit forced labor, traffic with respect to forced labor, and holding visas and identification.

From October 2002 through September 2007, Hounakey engaged in a conspiracy with his mother and her ex-husband to obtain the forced labor of dozens of women and girls whom his mother had brought over from Togo with fraudulently used visas. Once the victims entered the U.S., Hounakey and his co-defendants required them to work at hair-braiding salons for up to 14 hours per day, six or seven days a week. The victims were also required to turn over all of their earnings, including tips, to the defendants, along with their passports and identification. Additionally, they were forbidden to speak with their families outside of the defendants' presence or make any outside friends.

(June 2010)



Human Smuggling and Trafficking

ICE is the lead U.S. law enforcement agency responsible for fighting human smuggling and trafficking.

Human smuggling is the importation of people into the country as a deliberate evasion of immigration laws. This includes the unlawful transportation and harboring of aliens already in a country illegally.

ICE has embarked on an ambitious strategy to dismantle organized human smuggling networks:

- ICE pursues intelligence-driven investigations to target large-scale smuggling organizations, regardless of where they operate. Particular emphasis is placed on smuggling rings that pose a national security risk, jeopardize lives or engage in violence, abuse, hostage-taking or extortion.
- ICE coordinates with partners at U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for aggressive investigation and prosecution of smuggling cases along the border.
- ICE targets all links in the smuggling chain. ICE targets overseas recruiters and organizers, fraudulent document vendors, and transportation and employment networks that benefit from alien smuggling within the U.S.
- ICE pursues legislation to increase penalties against smugglers and to create additional criminal offenses to better address spotters who assist smugglers.

Human trafficking is recruiting, harboring, defrauding, coercing through the use of force, or transporting a person or group for the purpose of involuntary servitude, debt bondage or slavery.

Sex trafficking, one common and particularly disturbing form of human trafficking, occurs when a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or when the person induced to perform such acts is less than 18 years old.

In its worst manifestation, human trafficking is akin to slavery. Victims pay to be illegally transported into the U.S., only to find themselves in the thrall of traffickers, who may force them into prostitution, forced labor or other forms of servitude to repay their debt. The victims, surrounded by an unfamiliar culture and language, and often lacking identity documents, find themselves trapped, fearing for their lives and the lives of their families.

In the fight against human trafficking, ICE has developed a number of successful initiatives that focus on attacking the infrastructure that supports trafficking organizations, as well as the assets derived from these criminal activities. This might include seizing currency, property, weapons and vehicles — hitting the trafficking organizations where it hurts by targeting their assets.

ICE and DHS have also launched efforts to raise public awareness of human trafficking, including the ICE “In Plain Sight Campaign” and the DHS “Blue Campaign.”

ICE recognizes that the severe consequences of human trafficking continue even after the perpetrators have been arrested and held accountable. ICE’s Victim Assistance Program helps to coordinate services in support of human trafficking victims.

