



Inside ICE

ICE STORM, ABC HITTING HUMAN SMUGGLERS

Recent arrests at airports in Los Angeles and Newark indicate that enforcement initiatives by ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) may be forcing a shift in the tactics and routes used by criminal human smuggling organizations operating on the Southwest Border.

Since April 8, ICE agents have arrested more than 150 undocumented aliens as they arrived on interstate flights at Newark International Airport in New Jersey. ICE agents also arrested about 130 illegal aliens attempting to board commercial interstate flights out of Los Angeles International Airport during the same time period.

The arrests are important because they indicate criminal human smuggling organizations operating at the Southwest border of the United States appear to be using alternate routes and methods to move smuggling loads.

The change in tactics may indicate that ICE's Operation ICE Storm and the Department of Homeland Security's Arizona Border Control (ABC) initiative are having some success against the smug-



Illegal aliens found in a "drop house" in the Phoenix area await processing by ICE agents. Human smuggling organizations will sometimes hold aliens as hostages until the organization can collect its smuggling fee. Smuggled aliens have also been forced into criminal activity to pay off smuggling debts.

gling organizations at the border and in the interior.

"CBP is interdicting and deterring human smuggling at the Southwest border with ABC, and ICE Storm is hitting them in and around Phoenix, one of the major human smuggling transit points," said John P. Torres, the Deputy Assistant Director, Smuggling/Public Safety Division in the ICE Office of Investigations.

ICE officials in the Office of Investigations said criminal smuggling or-

ganizations have long operated at the Southwest border, but their operations have become more ruthless and a greater threat since 9/11. Most of the illegal aliens smuggled into the United States come from Mexico and Central America, but aliens from far-flung locations like the Middle East and China also seek entry along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"These criminal organizations are in it for the money, period," said Tor-

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AMO P-3 AIRCRAFT PLAYS KEY ROLE IN BIG COCAINE SEIZURE

An ICE Air and Marine Operations (AMO) aircrew located a suspicious shrimp boat off the coast of Panama April 23 and led a U.S. Navy vessel to interdict the boat, where a Navy boarding team located found 2.6 metric tons (roughly 6,000 pounds) of cocaine in a hidden compartment.

The AMO P-3 long-range patrol aircraft, based out of Jacksonville, FL, was launched to search for suspect vessels off the Panamanian coast. Once on scene, the crew spotted and identified the shrimp boat *Miss Lorraine* and also detected a high-speed vessel departing the area. A deployed U. S. Coast Guard helicopter operating

off a cutter in the area was directed to intercept the departing vessel. On board that vessel were seven people and several fuel drums, but no contraband. The P-3 then reacquired the *Miss Lorraine* and directed the naval vessel to the scene. In addition to the cocaine that was discovered and seized, seven persons on board the boat were detained.

This P-3 is attached to the AMO Surveillance Support Branch – East (SSB-

E). Since Jan. 1, it has helped seize nearly 26,000 lbs. of cocaine and 6,200 pounds of marijuana.



An ICE Air and Marine Operations (AMO) P-3 aircraft like the one shown above directed the U.S. Navy to an interdiction that resulted in the seizure of 6,000 lbs of cocaine.

ICE STORM, ABC HITTING HUMAN SMUGGLERS IN ARIZONA

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res. “They don’t care if people die in the desert, and they don’t care if someone is trying to blow up a building in the U.S. That’s why preventing this kind of exploitation of our border is so important to ICE.”

“They don’t care if people die in the desert, and they don’t care if someone is trying to blow up a building

ICE agents also arrested 22 undocumented aliens attempting to board other flights bound for Newark on April 14, and arrested an additional 20 undocumented aliens as they attempted to board flights for New York on April 15. Investigation has revealed that the undocumented aliens utilized false Mexican elec-

toral cards to get through the pre-board screening.

On April 20, 2004, ICE Los Angeles received a request from the Los Angeles Police Department to respond to a location where 88 undocumented aliens were found. Upon arrival, ICE agents found the residence was modified to prevent occupants from escaping. The windows had security bars and the living conditions were deplorable. During a search, two handguns and a machete were recovered. The aliens disclosed they were nationals of Ecuador, Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador who were recently smuggled into the United States near Douglas and Nogales, AZ. The discovery in Los Angeles is similar to drop houses found in the Phoenix area during February and March. More than 900 aliens were found in 20 drop houses in Phoenix since February 1.

Operation ICE Storm is an unprecedented multi-agency initiative to combat human smuggling and the

violence it generates in Arizona and nationwide. Since Operation ICE Storm began in October 2003, ICE has arrested 190 people and seized \$5.2 million and 99 weapons. More significantly, local officials in the Phoenix area attribute a 30 percent drop in violent crime to ICE Storm.

ICE’s Air and Marine Operations (AMO) is supporting both ICE Storm and ABC operations. From April 15-21, branches of the Tucson and Phoenix AMO Air Units flew more than nine hours per day in support of the ABC initiative. More than 400 undocumented aliens were detained by AMO units and turned over to CBP Border Patrol Agents.

Testifying before a Congressional committee earlier this year, Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia said “These types of criminals are exploiting vulnerabilities in our border security for financial gain; however their human cargo could just as easily been a group of terrorists. For these reasons, ICE has made human smuggling investigations one of our top priorities.”

DETROIT SAC SAYS ICE STRIKING HARD AGAINST METH

Testifying before a House subcommittee, ICE's interim special agent in charge for Detroit said April 20 that a joint effort by ICE, other U.S. law enforcement agencies and Canadian authorities appears to have had a marked effect on the available supply of pre-cursor chemicals used to manufacture narcotics in the United States.

“ICE looks forward to even greater success in fighting the growing threat of meth....”

Michael Hodzen told the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources that the continuous pursuit of criminal organizations, including large-scale undercover operations, border interdiction activities, controlled deliveries, and the analysis of smuggling trends, has significantly disrupted the flow of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine from Canada, making it more difficult for methamphetamine producers to acquire these chemicals.

“The combined efforts of ICE, federal prosecutors, the Drug Enforcement Administration, Customs and Border Protection and our Canadian counterparts appears to have had a marked effect on the available supply of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine – making it more difficult for methamphetamine producers to acquire these chemicals,” Mr. Hodzen said.

Tracing the history of “meth” smuggling, Mr. Hodzen said the production and distribution of methamphetamine in the United States is not a new problem. For decades, outlaw motorcycle gangs controlled this criminal industry. However, the potential for high profit quickly

drew others into the industry, including narco-traffickers from Mexico.

As U.S. law enforcement focused its investigative efforts on domestic production and diversion, the U.S. government strengthened anti-diversion regulations. As a result, the criminal organizations sought alternative means to obtain the precursors necessary for the production of methamphetamine. Due to the geographic proximity and the volume of trade with the United States, Canada inadvertently became a primary source of supply for these chemicals, Mr. Hodzen said.

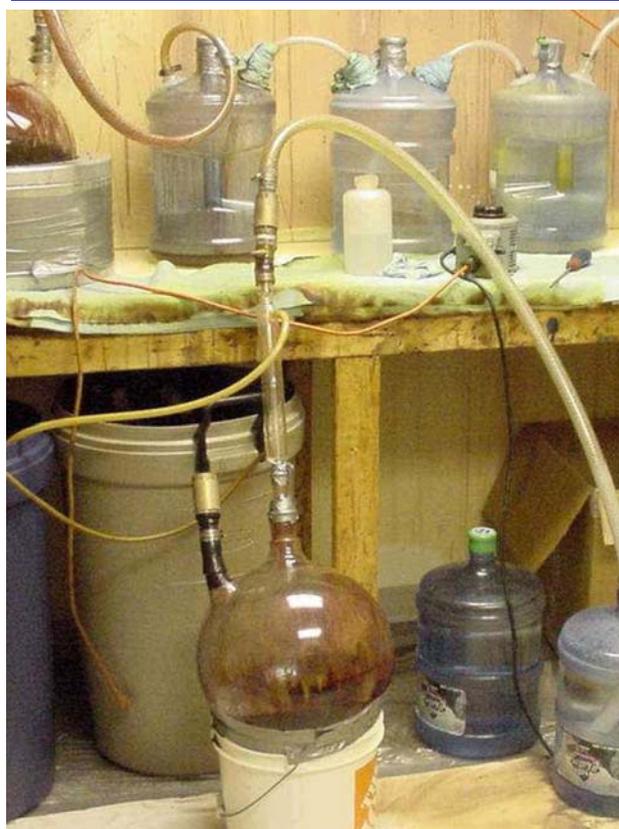
In 2003, in support of law enforcement efforts, the Canadian government implemented tighter regulations, requiring licensing and permits for producers, importers, exporters, and wholesalers. Aggressive bilateral investigation and enforcement action, combined with implementation of these regulations, has led to significant results.

For example, pseudoephedrine and ephedrine seizures from Canada spiked to approximately 127 million tablets between 2001 and 2002.

However, after the Canadian Precursor Control Regulations were implemented, the

number of tablets seized decreased to approximately 11 million tablets in 2003. Simultaneously, the price of pseudoephedrine on the street rose. The decline in seizures and the corresponding rise in street prices suggest a causative relationship in which U.S. and Canadian efforts are making a difference.

“With the continuous cooperation of the Canadian government, the strengthening of regulations that govern these chemicals, and working closely with our law enforcement counterparts in this shared mission, ICE looks forward to even greater success in fighting the growing threat of methamphetamine,” Mr. Hodzen said.



Cooperative efforts by ICE, other U.S. law enforcement agencies and Canadian authorities have made it more difficult for smugglers and illegal drug producers to supply meth labs like the one shown above.

ICE TEAMS WITH COLOMBIA, MEXICO ON MAJOR ARRESTS

ICE agents, working with law enforcement officials in Colombia and Mexico, have made major arrests in two separate money laundering cases.

In the Colombian case, ICE agents working with Colombian authorities have won indictments against nine alleged members of a New York-Colombian money laundering ring for conspiring to launder more than \$6 million in drug money by sending it from Queens and Manhattan to Colombia.

Five of the defendants were arrested May 3 in New York, the same day four defendants were arrested by Colombian authorities in Medellin, Colombia. The U.S. government is seeking extradition of the Colombian defendants.

In May 2002, special agents assigned to the ICE El Dorado Task Force in New York launched the money laundering investigation, code named "Operation Fishnet," focusing on individuals collecting drug proceeds on the streets of New York City and sending it to Colombia. Within weeks, an ICE undercover agent posing as a money courier infiltrated the New York branch of the organization and soon was communicating directly with senior members of the organization based in Medellin.

The investigation disclosed that the Colombian defendants worked primarily as money brokers who entered into agreements with drug cartels to collect drug proceeds in New York. The money brokers, in turn, relied on the New York defendants who worked as money couriers traveling the streets of New York collecting narcotics proceeds. The funds were then transferred to associates of the couriers who laundered the drug money through domestic financial institutions located primarily in the New York metropolitan area.

During the investigation, numerous undercover El Dorado agents assumed the roles of money launderers, accepting the delivery of the drug proceeds from money couriers and assisting in the transfer of funds through the U. S. banking system. Following the instructions of the money brokers in Colombia, the undercover agents deposited the drug proceeds into bank accounts that, unbeknownst to the money brokers, were controlled by the U.S. government.

In this manner, the El Dorado agents deposited approximately \$3 million into the government-controlled bank accounts. The Colombian money brokers provided the undercover agents with wire transfer instructions via e-mail, fax and telephone. Once the funds had been transferred to Colombia, investigators monitored the domestic and international movement of the money, which enabled ICE agents to identify the money launderers in Colombia who received the funds.



ICE agents seized a Learjet 31A similar to the one shown above during the money laundering investigation which resulted in the arrest of Jaime Ross-Castillo in Mexico.

During the investigation, federal agents seized approximately 226 kilograms of cocaine from members of the organization, as well as more than \$3 million in drug proceeds from the New York defendants and others.

In the case with Mexico, ICE special agents and officials from the Mexican Deputy Attorney General's Office of Special Investigations on Organized Crime (SIEDO) announced on April 21 the arrest in Mexico of Jaime Ross-Castillo on money laundering charges related to a multi-million dollar embezzlement scheme.

Ross-Castillo, a 34-year-old Mexican national, is being held in Mexico City. He was arrested after a two-year joint investigation that began in April 2002, when the ICE Attaché Office in Mexico City received information that Ross-Castillo was involved in the embezzlement of approximately \$4.9 million from a bank account in Mexico City and the subsequent laundering of these illicit funds through U.S. and European financial institutions.

The ICE Attaché began working closely with the SIEDO in Mexico, as well with the ICE Special Agent-in-Charge in Phoenix on the investigation. Law enforcement officials from both nations soon discovered that an additional \$8 million had been embezzled in the scheme and that these illicit funds had also been laundered through U.S. financial institutions and corporations.

As the case progressed, ICE agents in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., seized a Learjet model 31A on September 14, 2002. The Learjet, which was valued at roughly \$6 million, had just arrived from Mexico. ICE agents alleged that the jet had been purchased with a portion of the illicit funds from Ross-Castillo's embezzlement scheme.

ICE HOSTS OPERATION PREDATOR FAMILY FORUM IN SAN DIEGO AREA

As part of its ongoing commitment to safeguard children from sexual predators worldwide, ICE teamed up with U.S. Representative Duncan Hunter and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) to host a community forum in San Diego. The forum was designed to arm parents with information to help protect their children.

The theme of the session was “Keeping Kids Safer From Predators.” It was led by Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia, representing ICE. Panelists included NCMEC Chairman and retired U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini, as well as local experts. The goal of the forum was to highlight the risks posed by Internet child pornographers and other predatory criminals, to provide strategies to help parents protect their children, and to assist law enforcement in combating this problem.

Community meetings are part of a public outreach campaign launched by ICE in conjunction with Operation Predator. Operation Predator is an ongoing Department of Homeland Security initiative to combat the exploitation of children by pedophiles, human traffickers, child sex tourists and other predatory criminals. Since the operation began last July, ICE agents have made more than 2,500 arrests nationwide, including more than 100 in the San Diego area.

BOSTON ICE DRO OFFICE GETS MAN WANTED FOR MURDER IN ECUADOR

Boston ICE Detention and Removal Office (DRO) officers arrested an Ecuadorian man in Connecticut on April 16 who is wanted on murder charges in his home country.

The ICE DRO officers arrested Paul Torres-Jara of Ecuador on immigration charges at his East Haven residence. A review of Torres-Jara’s immigration status determined he had overstayed his visitor visa and was living in the United States illegally, making him eligible for apprehension by ICE. Torres-Jara, 21, was arrested without incident.

Ecuadorian law enforcement officials had not issued the warrant for Torres-Jara until after he had already been legally admitted into the United States as a visitor. East Hampton Village, NY police learned that Torres-Jara was in the Hartford area and contacted federal authorities.

Torres-Jara was being held without bond in ICE custody pending removal proceedings. He will be scheduled for a removal hearing before a federal Immigration Judge.

“This is the unified approach to law enforcement envisioned

when the Department of Homeland Security was created a little over a year ago,” said Bruce Chadbourne, field director of ICE’s DRO in Boston.

ICE RECOVERS AND RETURNS ANCIENT ARTIFACTS TO GOVERNMENT OF PERU



Assistant Secretary Michael J. Garcia returned 41 ancient artifacts worth more than \$1 million to Eduardo Ferrero Costa, the Peruvian Ambassador to the United States, in a ceremony April 30 at the Embassy of Peru.

The artifacts were smuggled from protected archeological sites in Peru by individuals who wanted them either for personal collections or to sell them for profit.

Dating from 100 A.D. to 1,530 A.D., the pre-Columbian items include a rare mother-of-pearl knife, gold and plaque ornaments, nose jewelry, copper pins, pottery, pottery shards and textile fragments.

ICE agents recovered the artifacts through three different investigations into antiquities smugglers and dealers in several U.S. states.

MIAMI ICE AGENTS UNCOVER 200 KILOS OF COCAINE HIDDEN IN COFFEE

ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) special agents seized 200 kilos of cocaine worth \$3.6 million Wednesday at Port Everglades, FL. The cocaine was hidden in a coffee bean shipment that arrived from Buenaventura, Colombia.

ICE agents arrested Hector Barrios, 26, and Roberto Visa, 30, in connection with the seizure. The seizure was made with the assistance of the Broward Sheriff’s Office.

“Vigilance and teamwork are the keys to success,” said Special Agent-in-Charge Jesus Torres of ICE’s Miami Field Office. “This combined effort of the Department of Homeland Security team and the Broward Sheriff’s Office demonstrates the unified front of law enforcement that ensures our domestic security is not compromised.”

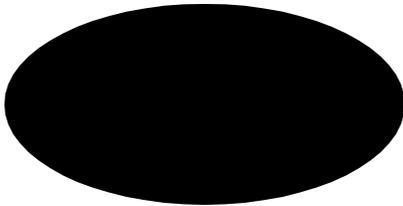
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U.S. IMMIGRATION AND
CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

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ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money, and materials that support terrorist and criminal activities.

RECOGNITION



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