Suspected Terrorists at U.S. Ports of Entry

Review of CBP Actions Taken to Intercept

Summarized for Public Release

Office of Inspector General
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
Inspector General
Richard L. Skinner

of those who contributed to the preparation of this report and those responsible for implementing the recommendations herein have been discussed in detail with those responsible for implementation. It is our hope that this report will result in more effective, efficient, and economical operations. We express our appreciation to all relevant agencies and institutions, direct observers, and a review of applicable documents.

This report assesses the actions taken by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to intercept suspected terrorists at U.S. Ports of Entry. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) was established by

Preface

Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Office of Inspector General
Review of CBP Actions Taken to Interdict Suspicious Transactions at U.S. Ports of Entry

Identification of Transnational Criminal Networks, especially at airports, over the past few years, in the interdiction of narcotics and the drug trade, and the associated trafficking of persons, have been adversely affected. Recent data indicates a significant decrease in interdiction and identification of transnational criminal networks at ports of entry, traditional missions such as narcotics enforcement.

As CBP has stepped up its efforts to interdict known and suspected terrorists, who they could quickly confirm are not the suspected terrorists.

Interestingly, some decisions regarding the admissibility of individuals with authorized travel documents are made at CBP facilities similar to those in immigration. CBP procedures are designed to help protect against identity theft and preserve individuals with more inititative. The need to provide supervisions at POEs with limited resources.

CBP has improved information sharing capabilities within the organization to smooth the flow of entry transactions and enhance the effectiveness of limited resources at POEs. CBP has also developed a new initiative to help improve the information that is shared within the organization.

Results in Brief

This is a summary of a longer and more detailed report that has been

Introduction

Office of Inspector General
Department of Homeland Security

OIG

SUMMARIZED FOR RELEASE
Preventative measures have been put in place to ensure the United States is protected from threats posed by individuals and groups intent on entering the country. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and other federal agencies work together to identify and mitigate potential threats. CBP officers are trained to identify individuals who may present a risk to national security.

CBP officers are responsible for screening all travelers entering or exiting the United States. This includes passengers arriving by air, sea, or land. Officers are trained to identify individuals who may pose a threat to national security or public safety. CBP officers use a variety of tools and techniques to identify potential threats, including advanced technology and databases.

When a traveler is flagged for additional screening, the officer will conduct a more in-depth examination to determine if there is a reason for further investigation. This may include checking travel documents, speaking with the traveler, or referring the traveler to other authorities.

CBP officers are also responsible for enforcing immigration laws and preventing illegal entry into the United States. They work closely with other federal agencies to ensure that individuals who are not authorized to enter the country are returned to their home country.

In addition to the work of CBP officers, the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies work together to identify and mitigate potential threats. This includes sharing information and intelligence to identify and prevent potential threats.

CBP officers are trained to identify individuals who may pose a threat to national security or public safety. Officers are responsible for ensuring that all travelers are screened to prevent potential threats from entering the United States.
When an international flight or vessel arrives at a U.S. airport or seaport, the airline or cruise line must send the manifest to CBP within fifteen minutes of the arrival. The manifest contains the passenger’s name, date of birth, passport number, and the country that issued the passport. The information contained in the manifest is processed in the Automated Passenger Information System (APIS).

Computers screen passenger manifests and identify passengers that have names similar to those on the terrorist watchlist (TSDB) or who have suspicious travel histories. If the arriving passenger may match a person listed in the TSDB, federal agents in addition to CBP officers may be present when the watchlisted passenger arrives.

Once all interviews have been completed, CBP officers decide whether to grant or deny admission. If admission is granted, the passenger is then returned to the country from which he or she traveled to the United States.

CBP officers we interviewed estimated that many secondary screenings conducted at U.S. ports of entry are the result of false matches to names in the TSDB. Using name-based methods to identify known and suspected terrorists, an incoming passenger is often incorrectly identified as a match to the individual listed in the TSDB. The traveler is not the terrorist is only established after the passenger arrives at the port of entry and is interviewed. CBP officers reported that the vast majority of false positive matches to the TSDB are repeat screenings of individuals that have been matched previously and at that time determined not to be the person watchlisted in the terrorist database. First-time referrals to automated fingerprint systems (AFIS) and other biometric systems are probably unnecessary. As long as CBP officers rely on name-based searches, secondary matches to known or suspected terrorists will continue to be identified as possible matches to individuals in the TSDB.
This essay is reprinted with permission in Appendix A.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been working on a new program to improve the efficiency of U.S. border inspections. The program, known as e-Traveler, aims to streamline the inspection process for pre-approved travelers, allowing them to travel through dedicated lanes without the need for additional identification or documentation. This essay discusses the potential benefits and challenges of implementing such a program.

On April 26, 2005, the Washington Post published an op-ed essay that

summarized for release.
where hours, even after showing his credentials,

Philippines applications and I am now spared a needless hassle and waste of time.

diminished emphasis on genuine names?

I was wanted to re-examine. How are we made safer by increased security checks because of an
to Indian. This stuck me as insane. How are we made safer by increased security checks because of an

I am a consular and I think in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. The weak information

in common. I am common is a common at least until recently. Although I have an

I arrived in New York, the son of a Pakistani consular general, educated Stanford University, lived

in the United States. As a green card holder married to a U.S. citizen, I do not have any problems doing so.

I like to share a personal experience that has impacted our collective sense of "homeland

Screening in Need of Sense

Screening in Need of Sense, Washington Post, April 26, 2005

Appendix A
The writer is a senior partner in Sensed Information, a business consultancy.

Recall.

Importantly, the decision to keep or exclude a person is based on the same criteria that are used to make similar decisions about other people. When our ports are not fully processed, our borders are inadequately secured, and only a portion of the people we want to keep are kept. Otherwise, we are washing the experience and judgement of the professionals we have.

Experience should be able to decide whether someone can be excluded from consideration. In some decisions, there is no evidence. When clear parameters, immigration officers with years of experience, and a principle of leadership practice are in place, it is possible to make these decisions.

Finally, and critically, it is a principle of leadership practice to empower people as close as possible to the decision-making process.

There are still residents (12 of 50) whose names are not included in the list of those with a biometric appliance, and even those who have one may be excluded at the discretion of the officer. Currently, the database management should allow classification by more than just a birth certificate or fingerprint.

Clearance. The database could focus on those whom we are seeking.

For one, a database management tool could allow classification by more than just a birth certificate or fingerprint. Resources. During the last multi-hour phase, the immigration guys and I consulted and came up with some simple and immediately actionable solutions. Because of global consulting assignments, I may be in and out of the United States 15 to 20 times a year.
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W. Preston Jacobs, Inspector
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Major Contributions to This Report
Appendix B
Identity of each writer and caller.

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