
CABLE Gram
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CABLE Gram Volume 3 Issue 66

12 December 2006 CABLE Gram™

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Take care,

Zhi Hamby-Nye, Editor

Henry Ziegler, Associate Editor

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We search the topics and Websites that you request, so it is important for you to provide feedback. We are in our infancy and the CABLE Gram will be as useful as you help make it. Please let us know the topics and keywords that will assist you in your professional endeavors. Send all comments and suggestions to zhi@cablegram.org – please type CABLE Gram in the subject line.

FEDERAL

1. Strict U.S. Rules Disqualify Some Canadian Arms Workers (New York Times, 12 Dec 2006)

As a private in the Canadian army reserve, Marcos Henriquez drove light armored vehicles, sometimes while he was training with American soldiers. At the end of four years with the military, Mr. Henriquez found work inspecting similar vehicles as they rolled off an assembly line at a General Motors of Canada plant in London, Ontario. That is, until he was laid off with 172 co-workers in 2002. Mr. Henriquez said G.M. had told them that the United States government, one of the plant's major customers, had decided that their dual citizenship made them security risks.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/12/business/worldbusiness/12arms.html?ref=americas>

2. ICE Agents Raid Processing Plants (AP, 12 Dec 2006)

Federal agents raided meat processing plants in six states Tuesday and arrested an unknown number of suspected illegal immigrants in an identity theft investigation, temporarily suspending operations at all six plants. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials said the workers were being arrested on administrative immigration violations and, in some cases, criminal arrest warrants stemming from a nearly yearlong

investigation. ICE chief Julie L. Myers told reporters in Washington that agents had uncovered a scheme in which illegal immigrants and others had stolen or bought the identities and Social Security numbers of possibly hundreds of U.S. citizens and lawful residents to get jobs with Greeley-based meat processor Swift & Co. Six Swift processing facilities were raided Tuesday, in Greeley; Grand Island, Neb.; Cactus, Texas; Hyrum, Utah; Marshalltown, Iowa; and Worthington, Minn., representing all of Swift's domestic beef processing capacity and 77 percent of its pork processing capacity.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?P4E122C5E>

3. Dems promise fast start on changing security grant distribution (By Chris Strohm, CongressDaily, 6 Dec 2006)

House Democrats plan to introduce legislation at the start of the new Congress to overhaul how billions of dollars in homeland security grants are distributed, but say they will still provide every state with a minimum amount of funding. Incoming House Homeland Security Chairman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., is discussing legislation to change the funding formula for the grants with Speaker-elect Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., aides said. The legislation would require allocating more money to areas with higher risks. "This will definitely be addressed in the first 100 hours," a Pelosi aide said. It was not clear, however, whether lawmakers would resurrect previous bills to overhaul the funding formula or write new legislation. The aide said the effort is part of the Democrats' intention to make good on a campaign pledge to implement recommendations from the 9/11 Commission.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=35604&dcn=e_gvet

4. FBI seeks extra funding to avoid delays on tech upgrade (GovExec.com, 7 Dec 2006)

The FBI's \$425 million effort to upgrade its case management system is at risk of delays if Congress does not provide additional funds in the next stopgap spending measure, the bureau's chief told lawmakers Wednesday. Testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee, FBI Director Robert Mueller said the bureau needs \$157 million to begin the second phase of building the system, known as Sentinel, in February as planned. President Bush included \$100 million for the project in his fiscal 2007 budget request. According to Mueller, the Office of Management and Budget has helped the FBI find the additional \$57 million, using funds left over from the first phase of the effort and unspent balances in other accounts.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=35617&dcn=e_gvet

5. U.S. launches new intl port security plan (UPI, 11 Dec 2006)

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and Energy have launched a new Senior Freight Initiative to boost port security. The DHS and the DOE Thursday announced the first phase of the SFI. The DOE's National Nuclear Safety Administration called it "an unprecedented effort to build upon existing port security measures by enhancing the federal government's ability to scan containers for nuclear and

radiological materials overseas and to better assess the risk of inbound containers." Major U.S. port terminal operators, ocean carriers, and shippers have promised to cooperate with the SFI at in their overseas facilities, the NNSA said. "Our highest priority and greatest sense of urgency has to be aimed at preventing a nuclear weapon or dirty bomb attack against the homeland," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "This initiative advances a comprehensive strategy to secure the global supply chain and cut off any possibility of exploitation by terrorists.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.upi.com/SecurityTerrorism/view.php?StoryID=20061208-112640-4775r>

6. U.S.-bound cargo ships to get nuclear once-over (NBC, 07 Dec 2006)

Beginning early next year, cargo containers bound for the United States from six foreign seaports will be screened for dangerous nuclear materials, the first phase in a program intended to expand the scrutiny of shipments before they reach American ports. "No weapon of mass destruction is more formidable than a nuclear device or a radiological dirty bomb. It's critical to see that they don't make it into the U.S.," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff in revealing details of the program Thursday.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16098898/>

7. DP World will sell U.S. port assets to AIG (Washington Times, 12 Dec 2006)

DP World announced yesterday that it will sell its terminal operations at seven major U.S. seaports to an American company, bowing to pressure from Congress. The global marine terminal operator, based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, said it reached an agreement Sunday to sell P&O Ports North America to a subsidiary of AIG Global Investment Group, a division of insurance giant American International Group. Terms were not disclosed. P&O Ports North America operates cargo port terminals in Newark, N.J., Philadelphia, Baltimore, Miami, New Orleans and Tampa, Fla. It also runs a passenger terminal in New York City and stevedoring facilities in 16 locations along the East and Gulf coasts.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.washtimes.com/business/20061211-094845-1982r.htm>

8. Dubai To Continental Express: Fly Me (Forbes.com, 6 Dec 2006)

For the first time, the passenger name records of a U.S. airline will get turned over to a revenue-management technology firm based in the United Arab Emirates. ExpressJet Airlines has agreed quietly to outsource the processing of passenger name records to a subsidiary of Emirates Airlines, the fast-growing Dubai carrier. The five-year contract with ExpressJet, which flies as Continental Express in the U.S., could be worth as much as \$10 million for Mercator, the IT services division of Emirates, a state-owned airline. An ExpressJet official confirmed the transaction.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?Z6545285E>

9. TSA opens airport security to non-fliers (Cheapflights.com, 8 Dec 2006)

Non-fliers will be allowed beyond airport security in a project being piloted at Dallas/Fort Worth and Detroit airports. In a proposed reversal of the rules introduced after 2001, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is toying with the idea of allowing friends and family through checkpoints, giving them access to shops and restaurants that are typically the preserve of airline passengers. If the trials at Dallas, which started last week, and at Detroit Metro Airport, due to begin next week, prove successful, they could pave the way for a nationwide adoption of the program. At present, only guests at the Grand Hyatt Hotel at Dallas/Fort Worth International or the Westin Hotel at Detroit Metro Airport can bypass security and access shopping facilities without a boarding pass. Even then, they are subjected to stringent checks.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://news.cheapflights.com/airlines/2006/12/tsa_opens_airpo.html

10. DHS allows more time for input on traveler screening program (GovExec.com, 6 Dec 2006)

The Homeland Security Department on Tuesday extended the deadline for public comments on a program that allows government officials to gather, store and share information about travelers for up to 40 years. The department will accept comments about a month longer than originally planned on a notice to make the public aware of the screening procedures used in the Automated Targeting System. The comment period for the notice, published in the *Federal Register* on Nov. 2, was slated to end this week, but now will close on Dec. 29. "In the interest of transparency and because we value the public's comments, the department has decided to grant the extension," said DHS spokesman Jarrod Agen.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=35602&dcn=e_gvet

11. Report: Dems should address rail security, grants process (GovExec.com, 12 Dec 2006)

A report offering advice on how congressional Democrats can best implement remaining recommendations from the 9/11 Commission said grants should be re-evaluated, rail security should be treated with more urgency and foreign diplomacy should be improved. The report, written by an analyst in the Global Business Services division of IBM, suggested that homeland security committees in the 110th Congress conduct oversight hearings on "processes and methodologies" employed when the Homeland Security Department issued grants for port, transit, rail, bus and trucking security. Christian Beckner, the analyst, also said congressional Democrats, who have said they will fully implement the 9/11 Commission's recommendations within the first 100 hours of taking control of the House, should undertake oversight of biometric passports. The Transportation Security Administration should be required to submit data to lawmakers prioritizing vulnerabilities and defining priorities that will guide budget decisions, the report said.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=35676&dcn=e_gvet

12. The US Coast Guard is expanding its cooperation with China (Taipei Times, 9 Dec 2006)

Quietly, out of the public eye, the US Coast Guard has been gradually expanding its exchanges with China's agencies engaged in maritime security. Chinese law enforcement officers ride coast guard cutters patrolling North Pacific fishing areas. Chinese and US officers scrutinize port security on each other's coasts. The Chinese take part in joint training drills. China, along with Canada, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the US attend an annual North Pacific Coast Guard Forum in Alaska. And the coast guard has just posted a Chinese-speaking officer, Captain Barney Moreland, to the US embassy in Beijing to be a liaison with Chinese officials, including those dealing with port security. Most of the US\$207 billion in Chinese exports to the US in the first nine months of this year were moved by ship.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2006/12/09/2003339768>

13. Billions Later, Plan to Remake the Coast Guard Fleet Stumbles (New York Times, 09 Dec 2006)

Four years after the Coast Guard began an effort to replace nearly its entire fleet of ships, planes and helicopters, the modernization program heralded as a model of government innovation is foundering. Four years ago the Coast Guard launched what is now a 24-billion dollar program to replace or rebuild nearly its entire fleet of planes, helicopters and large ships. The start-up has been rocky. The initial venture — converting rusting 110-foot patrol boats, the workhorses of the Coast Guard, into more versatile 123-foot cutters — has been canceled after hull cracks and engine failures made the first eight boats unseaworthy. Plans to build a new class of 147-foot ships with an innovative hull have been halted after the design was found to be flawed. And the first completed new ship — a \$564 million behemoth christened last month — has structural weaknesses that some Coast Guard engineers believe may threaten its safety and limit its life span, unless costly repairs are made.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?D2232185E>

14. Mistakes disbursing Katrina aid attributed to 'human error' (From Congress Daily, 7 Dec 2006)

Lawmakers and government investigators on Wednesday said human error, not technology, appeared to be to blame for why the Federal Emergency Management Agency made hundreds of millions of dollars in improper payments in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. FEMA's information technology systems tagged "hundreds of millions of dollars" in potentially improper payments before they were made, but "someone somewhere" made a decision to let the payments go through, Greg Kutz, the Government Accountability Office's managing director for forensic audits and special investigations, told the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee during a hearing. FEMA Director David Paulison has said the agency began making disaster relief payments to individuals immediately after the hurricanes struck without fully investigating whether they qualified for the aid, all in an effort to ensure that those who needed assistance received it.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=35622&dcn=e_gvet

15. New agency charged with fighting bioterror threats (Federal Times, 11 Dec 2006)

Lawmakers created a new agency last week. In its final days, the 109th Congress passed a bill creating a new \$1 billion agency to fight bioterror threats. Called the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), it will fund research into cures for infectious diseases and other biological threats, a field that has drawn limited research from pharmaceutical companies due to its low profit potential. The new agency, to be located in the Health and Human Services Department, is intended to centralize federal efforts against bioterrorism. The [Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act](#), which creates BARDA, was passed by the House without objection early on Dec. 9 and by the Senate on Dec. 5. It now awaits the president's signature.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://federaltimes.com/index.php?S=2416694>

16. Congress approves bioterrorism preparedness bill (Reuters, 9 Dec 2006)

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Congress on Saturday passed a bill to improve U.S. preparedness for bioterrorism or other health crises, in part by accelerating development of new vaccines and drugs. The bill, sponsored by Massachusetts Democrat Sen. Edward Kennedy and North Carolina Republican Sen. Richard Burr, was one of a number of bills passed by Congress before adjourning Saturday morning and sent to President George W. Bush. "With this bill, we take many important steps to increase our preparedness and response capabilities for public health emergencies by increasing our medical surge capacity, strengthening our public health infrastructure, and clarifying the responsibilities of federal officials," Kennedy said.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?G28232C5E>

17. Bush Administration Targets South American Fundraising Operation for Terror Group Hezbollah (AP, 6 Dec 2006)

WASHINGTON - The Bush administration took action Wednesday aimed at choking off a major fundraising channel for Hezbollah operating in the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. The Treasury Department's action covers nine people and two entities — a shopping center in Paraguay and an electronics company, Casa Hamze, located in the shopping center. As a result, Americans are forbidden from doing business with them, and any bank accounts or other financial assets belonging to the designated people and entities found in the United States must be frozen.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?L3F125C5E>

18. Man linked to US smuggling ring that allegedly funded Hezbollah gets 21 months in prison (AP, 6 Dec 2006)

DETROIT: A man linked to a ring that dealt in contraband cigarettes, counterfeit Zig-Zag rolling papers and counterfeit Viagra and allegedly sent some of the profits to the

Lebanese guerrilla group Hezbollah was sentenced to 21 months in prison. Imad Majed Hamadeh, 51, of Dearborn Heights, Michigan, pleaded guilty to racketeering charges in July. He was sentenced Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Gerald Rosen. Hamadeh is one of 18 people who ran a multimillion-dollar cigarette-trafficking ring, according to an indictment unsealed earlier this year.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?Q1445385E>

19. How Nuke Secrets Left Los Alamos (CBS, 06 Dec 2006)

After seven years of security scandals at the nation's premier nuclear weapons research facility, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the latest incident shows security - at least for some - amounts to little more than an honor system. **CBS News** has learned how shockingly easy it was for a young employee to walk out of Los Alamos with classified data - data related to decades of U.S. underground nuclear weapons tests.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/12/06/earlyshow/main2232935.shtml>

STATE AND LOCAL NEWS

20. AZ: Human smuggling verdict tossed (The Arizona Republic, 6 Dec 2006)

A Maricopa County judge dealt a surprise blow to the county attorney's crusade to prosecute immigrants who pay coyotes to smuggle them into Arizona. Using a rare court procedure, Judge Thomas O'Toole on Tuesday tossed out a jury's guilty verdict and acquitted Aldolfo Guzman-Garcia, an undocumented immigrant who paid \$700 to have a coyote bring him to Arizona. The judge said he did not believe there was sufficient evidence to show that Guzman-Garcia was part of a human-smuggling ring.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/1206smuggling12060.html>

21. CA: Report says state, local agencies must fill port security gap (Inside Bay Area, 7 Dec 2006)

SACRAMENTO - State and local agencies must bolster efforts to fill security gaps federal officials have left at California ports, says a new state report, which also endorses Oakland's bid to use voter-approved bonds as leverage for more U.S. funds. The Port of Oakland -- which inexplicably received no federal security funding this year -- is pitching use of prospective transportation bond money approved by voters last month to boost their matching funds for acquiring federal money, according to the state Senate Office of Research report. The \$20 billion transportation bond provides \$100 million for port security, which is intended mostly for equipment purchases but is not limited to that use. Eve Grossman, the port's government affairs manager, contacted U.S. homeland security officials about using state bond funds to help meet the local financial match requirement for federal funds -- or to even offer more than the required 25 percent minimum as an incentive.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.insidebayarea.com/ci_4799930

22. DE: Mexican accused of smuggling 12 in pickup (The News Journal, 9 Dec 2006)

A Mexican citizen who entered the United States illegally is accused of attempting to smuggle 12 unauthorized immigrants in a pickup truck from Texas to New Jersey. Jesus Salinas Escamilla, 22, will remain in custody pending an indictment, Judge Mary Pat Thyng ruled Friday morning. If he had been released, he would have faced an immigration detention order. Salinas Escamilla was detained Monday when a Delaware state trooper stopped him on I-95 for speeding, according to testimony from Michael Deshaies, a special agent with the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Dover.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?Y19231C5E>

23. FL: Area Brazilians alarmed, confused by smuggling link in kidnapping (Naples News, 9 Dec 2006)

News that baby Bryan Dos Santos Gomes apparently was not kidnapped by a woman seeking to replace her child but as ransom to force the parents to pay the “coyote” who smuggled them into the United States was met with mixed reactions Saturday in Fort Myers’ Brazilian community. In a press conference Saturday, Fort Myers Police Chief Hilton Daniels revealed the investigation has turned now that investigators know the parents of Baby Bryan had been smuggled illegally into the country and still owed the smugglers for helping them make the trip. “We now know that this is a human smuggling operation,” Daniels said. “The parents paid an unknown amount of money to get into this country from Brazil.”

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?M2A252C5E>

24. FL: Follow-Up: Port Radiation Monitors Unused (Local10.com, 7 Dec 2006)

MIAMI - Just one day after Local 10 looked into why radiation detectors are sitting unused at the Port of Miami, it now looks like it won't be long before that security equipment will be in use. The Port of Miami was one of the first in the country to get sophisticated radiation detection equipment designed to stop a terrorist threat. But Local 10's Rad Berky found out that radiation sniffers are not being used. The monitors are gamma ray imaging systems capable of penetrating up to 6 inches of steel.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.local10.com/news/10477829/detail.html>

25. KS: Kansas is 'wide open' to agriterrorism (The Hutchinson News, 11 Dec 2006)

Cattle trucks by the hundreds roll across Kansas each day, carrying thousands of head. They come from across the country, from states like Texas and Iowa and from other countries like Canada and Mexico. Some of the cattle will graze in Flint Hills pastures; others will fatten at a western Kansas feedlot before hitting their final destination - a Kansas slaughter house. While an economic boon for this agriculture state, the sheer volume of cattle - and the time they spend in transit - have long been a concern for animal health officials, especially after the Sept. 11 attacks brought home the fact that America is vulnerable. And between contagious diseases and agriterrorism, some wonder: Could those trucks be carrying something more than beef for the dinner plate?

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.hutchnews.com/news/regional/stories/agriterror121106.shtml>

26. MN: E. coli cases spread in southern Minnesota (AP, 12 Dec 2006)

A suspected E. coli outbreak that began in Iowa widened in Minnesota on Tuesday, with health officials linking 14 apparent cases to Taco John's restaurants in Albert Lea and Austin. A spokesman for the Wyoming-based chain confirmed that the two southern Minnesota restaurants get their produce from the same supplier as the Taco John's in Cedar Falls, Iowa, where nearly three dozen people developed E. coli symptoms earlier this week after dining there.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.startribune.com/462/story/871405.html>

27. NJ: Middlesex County to get more homeland security money (Home News Tribune Online, 7 Dec 2006)

Because of its tank farms, chemical plants and high population, Middlesex County will now benefit from more homeland security funding, state counterterrorism authorities said today. The state Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness said Middlesex County will join northern New Jersey counties as well as Jersey City and Newark as part of group that prepares against terrorism regionally.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.thnt.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061207/NEWS/61207009>

28. NY: New York's extensive war on terrorism rivals national effort (McClatchy Newspapers, 6 Dec 2006)

NEW YORK - Scores of police officers pulled their squad cars to a stop just before dawn by the public library in Midtown Manhattan, parking on both sides of a converted mobile home, a command post on wheels. Inside, surrounded by half a dozen police captains, Inspector Sal DiPace opened a packet stamped "sensitive" that laid out how 200 cops from all five New York boroughs would help protect America's largest city from terrorists on the day before Thanksgiving. Welcome to the front line in the war on terrorism, a metropolis of 8 million people scarred forever by the huge pit where the World Trade Center once stood, a city whose leaders are making an all-out effort to ensure that Sept. 11 never happens again. Their endeavor is massive. In the five years since the attacks, New York has transformed its anti-terrorist network, making the city the envy of all others. "The NYPD has been doing very sophisticated, very creative things," said Brian Michael Jenkins, a counterterrorism expert at the RAND Corp., a research center. He labeled many of the city's initiatives as "best practices" adopted from law-enforcement agencies worldwide.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.belleville.com/mld/belleville/news/nation/16178905.htm>

29. OR: Tainted Oysters Sicken 8 in Oregon (AP, 12 Dec 2006)

Federal health authorities are investigating a norovirus outbreak linked to frozen raw oysters from South Korea that sickened eight people in Oregon. The eight became ill after eating oysters imported by Fortuna Sea Products Inc. at a private event in

Woodburn, Ore., the Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday. Norovirus causes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and cramps sometimes accompanied by fever, chills, headache and muscle aches. It typically lasts one to two days. The virus was traced to raw frozen oysters on the half shell imported from South Korea, the FDA said. On Nov. 27, California-based Fortuna recalled 1,100 cases of the South Korean oysters, which were distributed in Texas, Colorado, Nevada, California and Oregon.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.breitbart.com/news/2006/12/12/D8LVK2T80.html>

30. TX: Men sentenced for smuggling immigrants aboard yachts (AP, 9 Dec 2006)

BROWNSVILLE, Texas - Three people convicted of helping smuggle illegal immigrants past federal checkpoints aboard a luxury boat have been sentenced to prison. Luis Alberto Gutierrez-Zapien, Robert Milton Moore and Baldemar Valdez Jr. are among five people accused in the scheme. Prosecutors say they used Breakaway Cruises, a South Padre Island charter boat company, to help ferry illegal immigrants from Port Isabel to Corpus Christi between July 1, 2005, and May 21, 2006. Gutierrez-Zapien, the alleged middleman, was sentenced to six months in prison on conspiracy to transport and harbor illegal immigrants within the United States. Moore, who managed Breakaway Cruises, was sentenced to two years in federal prison on charges of transporting illegal immigrants within the United States and criminal forfeiture.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.dfw.com/mld/dfw/news/state/16200488.htm>

31. TX: Holiday surge in child smuggling seen (AP, 6 Dec 2006)

LA JOYA, Texas - Little Douglas Ramirez of Guatemala was crying as the preschooler and his two older sisters, ages 10 and 13, were picked up by border agents last week along a highway just north of the Rio Grande. That was where they were abandoned by the smuggler who had brought them across the Mexican border to reunite them with their father in the U.S. for the holidays. Immigration officials in Texas say the annual holiday surge in children crossing the border illegally is on. Illegal immigrants working in the United States sometimes arrange for friends, relatives or professional smugglers to sneak their youngsters into this country.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/national/1110AP_Smuggling_Children.html

32. TX: Punishment phase in smuggling deaths retrial to begin (AP, 6 Dec 2006)

Prosecutors were set to begin their efforts today to convince a jury that a truck driver convicted for taking part in the nation's deadliest human smuggling attempt should be sentenced to death for his crimes. Tyrone Williams was convicted Monday by a federal jury for his role in the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants who died of dehydration, overheating and suffocation inside his sweltering tractor-trailer. The same jury will now hear evidence in the punishment phase of Williams' retrial to determine if he should be sentenced to death or up to life in prison. Williams transported more than 70 immigrants inside his trailer during a May 2003 smuggling attempt from South Texas to Houston.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/metropolitan/4382448.html>

33. WA: Airport Christmas trees removed (KING 5 News, 10 Dec 2006)

SEA-TAC Airport - All 15 Christmas trees inside the terminal at Sea-Tac have been removed in response to a complaint by a rabbi. A local rabbi wanted to install an 8-foot menorah and have a public lighting ceremony. He threatened to sue if the menorah wasn't put up, and gave a two-day deadline to remove the trees.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.king5.com/localnews/stories/NW_120906WABxmastreesEL.11b0d0cc.html#

KEY PEOPLE

34. Rep. Oberstar looks ahead on port security (Logistics Management, 6 Dec 2006)

Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN), who is likely to chair the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in the next session of Congress, indicated in an Associated Press interview that port security will be high on his agenda. "I think we should have a revenue stream for port security as we have for aviation security. We're doing very little in the way of screening of containers, when we should be pushing the security border further out from United States, as we do in aviation," Oberstar told an AP reporter. The lawmaker spoke in the interview about a container security fee. "What we should have is perhaps a one-time security fee of \$50 or so per container. Those containers generally hold \$200,000 worth of goods, weigh generally 20 tons. A \$50 - even \$100 - fee would be minimal," he said.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?P4341385E>

35. TSA Hires Southwest Airlines Executive (AP, 11 Dec 2006)

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Transportation Security Administration on Monday said it hired an executive from Southwest Airlines Co. to serve as the agency's chief technology officer. Mike Golden, who most recently served as Southwest's senior director of airport security technologies, will be TSA's assistant administrator of operational process and technology. He will oversee the implementation and development of security technologies across several modes of transportation, according to a TSA release.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/fn/4394247.html>

36. Mafia takedowns win Italian chief FBI honors (AP, 9 Dec 2006)

WASHINGTON- The FBI gave one of its highest honors Friday to Italy's national police chief for working a quarter-century with the U.S. to bring down an estimated 1,000 Mafia and other organized crime leaders in both countries. Prefetto Giovanni "Gianni" De Gennaro, who at times put sandbags on his windows to shield his family from snipers and whose organized crime officers slept at police stations to remain safe, was awarded the FBI Medal for Meritorious Achievement. The ceremony at FBI headquarters marked the first time the honor was given to an official outside of the FBI's ranks. De Gennaro, chief of the Italian National Police, said he worked so closely with the FBI and federal prosecutors that "sometimes I even woke up wondering if i was in Rome or in New

York," he told an auditorium packed with current and former top FBI and Justice Department officials.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.policeone.com/international/articles/1196110/>

GANG ACTIVITY

37. MA: Report says lower profile mob still thrives in New England (AP, 9 Dec 2006)

BOSTON - The New England mob is much smaller and has a lower profile than it did during its heyday in the 1980s, but it's still making money at traditional criminal pursuits such as extortion, drug trafficking and bookmaking, authorities said. Several decades of federal prosecutions have weakened the Mafia, and the number of "made men" who have taken a formal oath and pledged their souls to the Mafia is about half of what it was in the Boston area in the early 1980s, Detective Lt. Stephen P. Johnson of the State Police told The Boston Globe. Johnson, who oversees organized crime investigations as head of the Special Service Section, said the Boston faction has about 20 to 25 active soldiers who report to several capos.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://news.bostonherald.com/localRegional/view.bg?articleid=171254>

38. PA: Teamwork, sophisticated surveillance shut down huge 'White Market' (The Morning Call, 11 Dec 2006)

The law enforcement network had a head start when it received a \$2.5 million federal grant in April for a regional approach to fighting gangs whose proximity to Routes 222 and 22 made cocaine and heroin distribution easier. Law enforcement officials in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton, Reading, Lancaster, Harrisburg and York already were convinced of the importance of Teamwork with a capital "T." "Operation White Market," the first case prosecuted under the federally funded Route 222 Corridor Anti-Gang Initiative, involved remarkable teamwork by law enforcement officials in the U.S. Attorney's Office, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the FBI, and police officers from several municipal departments in Lehigh and Northampton counties.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?T2B262C5E>

39. RI: Rhode Island police bust alleged gambling ring connected to Mob (AP, 11 Dec 2006)

NORTH SCITUATE, R.I. - Rhode Island police have arrested a dozen people in a sports betting ring that allegedly generated about \$675,000 in illegal wagers in just two months, all under the watch of a man whom detectives call a ranking member of a New England Mafia family. The man accused of being the ring leader, Edward Lato, 59, of North Providence, is a longtime member of the Patriarca crime family, a syndicate that traditionally dominated criminal rackets in Providence, Boston and beyond, said Maj. Stephen O'Donnell, a spokesman for the Rhode Island State Police. "He's as high as you can go before you get to the bosses," O'Donnell said Monday.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?Z1C226C5E>

40. El Salvador: Clinic helps members break with gangs (Washington Post, 10 Dec 2006)

SAN SALVADOR - The first patient of the day was a plump 16-year-old wearing sparkly barrettes, Mary Jane-style shoes, and a shy smile. But there was nothing girlish about the tattoo that Abelina Orellana had come to have removed: a giant 18 scrawled across her back in crude, gothic numerals. The emblem signifies membership in the vicious 18th Street, or Eighteen, gang that, along with rival Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, has terrorized communities across Central America for nearly a decade. As long as she was marked with the symbol, Orellana's hopes of building a new life apart from the gang were slim. Employers would be fearful of hiring her. Members of MS-13 could mistake her for an active gang member and attack her. And police might jail her under a 2003 law that makes gang membership a crime, with tattoos the only evidence required.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?N20212C5E>

41. Bolivia: Troops dispatched to corral guerrillas (Washington Times, 12 Dec 2006)

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia - Troops have been dispatched to the central Andean valleys of Peru in recent weeks to counter renewed guerrilla activity by re-equipped leftist rebels of the Shining Path, according to high level government officials. "We have deployed 1,500 troops to make sure that a small group of guerrillas don't move out of a jungle zone," Peruvian Prime Minister Jorge del Castillo told The Washington Times. He said the insurgents are "trapped" and that highly trained special forces are in the area. Twenty-three members of the group have been arrested since Shining Path resumed operations at the beginning of the year with a road ambush that killed eight police officers. In a videotape released at the end of last month, a hooded leader using the pseudonym of Comandante Artemio said the group would resume large-scale attacks in three months. The Maoist movement, responsible for more than 70,000 deaths during a guerrilla struggle in the 1980s, was largely dismantled after the capture of its founder, Abimael Guzman, in 1992. Guzman and other Shining Path leaders are serving life sentences in prison.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061211-104707-7810r.htm>

42. Italy police in 'Mafia crackdown' (BBC, 12 Dec 2006)

More than 100 people have been arrested in anti-Mafia operations across Italy, Europe and Latin America, police say. Naples police said they had detained at least 90 people in Italy and elsewhere, suspected of running an international drugs trafficking ring. A second operation targeted a Mafia network with ties to Italy's southern Calabria region, with most arrests taking place in Milan, in the north. Those held are suspected of involvement in drugs and arms trafficking. Naples prosecutors said further arrests had been made in Ecuador, Spain, France, Colombia, the Netherlands, Germany and Bulgaria.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6173637.stm>

43. Bulgaria, Italia Launch Huge Anti Organized Crime Operation (Sofia News Agency, 12 Dec 2006)

Bulgaria's unit for fight against organized crime and Italian police started a large-scale operation for the breaking of a massive drug-dealing circle. The international police operation that started at 5 a.m. on Tuesday aims at busting an organized crime circle that supplied immense amounts of heroin for the Apennine peninsula. The two police services have been developing operation's strategy for almost two years. Police officials from over 30 countries in Europe, USA and South America have taken part in the operation. CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=73963

NARCO TRAFFICKING

44. CA: S.B. County to use \$2.3M grant to fight meth traffic (Daily Bulletin, 9 Dec 2006)

A \$2.3 million grant will help the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department assemble two special teams to crack down on illegal transportation and distribution of methamphetamine coming in from Mexico. The department is one of 40 law enforcement agencies statewide receiving part of the \$29 million grant. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services is parceling out the money to combat the sale and distribution of the illicit stimulant. Neighboring Riverside County received \$1.8 million and plans to use the money, once it's released by OES, to secure more personnel, more vehicles and other equipment to combat the drug's distribution, Riverside County Sheriff's Sgt. Earl Quinata said.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.dailybulletin.com/news/ci_4809226

45. FL: Cocaine Bags Wash Up On Fla. Beaches - Street Value Totals More Than \$1M Combined (Local6.com, 12 Dec 2006)

FLORIDANA BEACH, Fla. - About \$600,000 worth of cocaine washed up on a Central Florida beach Tuesday hours after nearly \$500,000 worth of cocaine washed up in South Florida. Tuesday, Lena McAneney and her friend found a box stuffed with 20 packages of cocaine on Floridana Beach. McAneney said she immediately called the police. "It's scary -- there's people looking for it," she said. "People die for stuff like this." Brevard County Sheriff's Office spokesman Andrew Walters confirmed the discovery. Authorities estimated the drug's weight at 27 kilos and its street value at \$600,000, Local 6 News partner Florida Today reported.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.local6.com/news/10519280/detail.html>

46. MI: Three convicted in cocaine-smuggling case (The Detroit News, 8 Dec 2006)

MOUNT CLEMENS - A Macomb County jury today convicted three of four men accused of smuggling 22 pounds of cocaine from Phoenix to Detroit in 2005. The jury found Rigoberto Cardenas-Borbon, Antonio Perez-Chica and Hugo Moran-Dopico guilty

of delivery of more than 1,000 grams of cocaine and conspiring to deliver drugs. Jose Martinez, who is not an American citizen, was found not guilty and is being held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement to be deported to Mexico.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061208/UPDATE/612080457>

47. OH: Grand jury names 11 in pot smuggling ring (The Cincinnati Post, 8 Dec 2006)

A federal grand jury in Cincinnati has indicted 11 men, charging them with running a major drug smuggling ring in Clermont County. Federal authorities said the men brought marijuana in from Arizona to sell in Greater Cincinnati, created a false business to conceal the operation and further laundered the drug proceeds through The Reef, a riverside bar and restaurant in the Watertown Yacht Club in Dayton, Ky. The investigation, led by the FBI, resulted in the seizure in Clermont County of 1,500 pounds of marijuana that was discovered in June inside a box truck.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://news.cincypost.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061208/NEWS01/612080372>

48. PA: Massive drug ring ends with 9 arrests (The Express-Times, 8 Dec 2006)

ALLENTOWN | Officials toppled the drug gang running what authorities call the largest cocaine ring in the Lehigh Valley and took nine people in to federal custody. Mafia El-Don distributed at least 50 kilograms of cocaine in the Valley since the summer, according to U.S. Attorney Pat Meehan.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?P2D216C5E>

49. WA: Hiker arrested as smuggling suspect (The Bellingham Herald, 5 Dec 2006)

A hiker rescued north of Glacier this weekend after four days in the snow got lost after allegedly walking across the border with marijuana, authorities said. Jeffrey Matthew Fairleigh, 34, was booked into Whatcom County Jail on suspicion of smuggling drugs — 3 pounds of marijuana that he allegedly held onto despite being lost, rescued by helicopter and taken to St. Joseph Hospital. His rescue involved three helicopters and their crews from different federal agencies, a Whatcom County sheriff's deputy, a team of search and rescue volunteers, and a number of emergency coordinators.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.bellinghamherald.com/102/story/43241.html>

50. Canada: Major drug bust by Alberta RCMP catches two locals (The Golden Star, 6 Dec 2006)

RCMP targeting high-level drug trafficking and organized crime activities in Alberta arrested two Golden business owners last week following a two-year investigation. Cpl. Wayne Oakes, spokesman for Alberta RCMP, says the charge indicates that Kamran Sattar and Farhan Sattar are alleged to have been involved in communications or dealings with others that would likely have resulted in trafficking of a controlled substance, which in this case was cocaine. Kamran and Farhan Sattar, brothers who now live in Calgary, were arrested as part of the Project KOKER investigation. In all, 18 men and women

were taken into custody through the investigation and are charged with a variety of offenses associated to drug trafficking, proceeds of crime and organized crime related offences, according to Alberta RCMP. Two of those arrested are members of the Edmonton chapter of the Hells Angels.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?U2241385E>

51. Bermuda: Drug smuggling plan was ‘well orchestrated’ (The Royal Gazette, 7 Dec 2006)

A duo accused of conspiring to import \$236,000 of cocaine into Bermuda had a “well orchestrated and well engineered plan” to smuggle the drug to the Island, a court heard yesterday. Senior Crown counsel Paula Tyndale said there was “no innocence” involved in the plan hatched by Jahmiko Hayward and Shannon Dwayne Tucker. The defendants both deny the conspiracy charge. They claim they knew nothing about a car bumper, intercepted by Police at Bermuda Airport in 2004, found to contain cocaine.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?W5141385E>

52. Spain: Police smash Costa Blanca cocaine smuggling ring (Expatica, 7 Dec 2006)

ALICANTE - Spanish and Portuguese police broke up an international ring that smuggled cocaine into Europe, arresting 24 people in both countries and seizing 140 kilos of the drug, police officials said on Thursday. They also raided a laboratory the group set up in Madrid for processing the cocaine, which had previously been impregnated in clothing or concealed inside pieces of wood and taken from South America to Portugal. The ring used people recruited in Portugal and financed their trips from Alicante in Spain to South American countries to pick up the drug.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.expatica.com/actual/article.asp?subchannel_id=81&story_id=34914

53. Croatia, Interpol stop drug smuggling ring (UPI, 11 Dec 2006)

RIJEKA, Croatia - Croatian police and Interpol have broken an international drug trafficking ring with the arrests of two men, media reports said. Serbian Veselin Tomic, 45, and Croatian Dragan Jokic, 26, are suspected of being members of the ring that earlier this year allegedly smuggled at least 90 pounds of cocaine with a market value estimated at \$2.2 million, Croatia's Vecernji List newspaper reported Monday. Tomic was arrested Friday when he tried to cross from Croatia into Serbia at Bajakovo, on a main highway to Belgrade, while Jokic was arrested late in October, police told reporters in the Croatian northern Adriatic port of Rijeka. The cocaine was hidden aboard a Croatian ship sailing from Brazil to Europe. When the crew discovered the stashed cocaine, they took pictures of the drug before throwing it from the ship, police said Sunday.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/view.php?StoryID=20061211-075539-6809r>

CYBERTHREAT & THEFT

54. Organized Crime Using Savvy Students To Steal Info: Report (City News, 8 Dec 2006)

It's been the same way for years - students looking for a good job to help them pay for the increasingly expensive costs of going to college. But there's one profession some are starting to get into that can only lead to a failing grade in life: computer fraud. According to a new study by Internet security firm McAfee, a disturbingly large number of students around the world are being lured into the shady world of online fraud by organized crime. The company claims criminals know there are vast fortunes to be made by stealing information off PCs, but most don't have the know-how to make it happen. So they actively recruit those who do - college students taking high level computer courses.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:
http://www.citynews.ca/news/news_5960.aspx

55. UCLA Sends Out Identity Theft Alerts (NBC4.tv, 12 Dec 2006)

LOS ANGELES - Authorities are warning current and former students, faculty and staff members about a major computer security breach at UCLA. Campus officials said one or more hackers gained access to a database containing personal information on about 800,000 people. The hacking began in October 2005 and ended on Nov. 21, 2006, when it was detected and blocked electronically. The hacked database includes UCLA's current and some former students, faculty and staff, some student applicants and some parents of students or applicants who applied for financial aid. The database also includes current or former staff and faculty of the University of California, Merced, and current or former employees of the University of California Office of the President, for which UCLA does administrative processing.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:
<http://www.nbc4.tv/news/10515496/detail.html>

TECHNOLOGY

56. Doorless intermodal container unveiled (Today's trucking Online, 8 Dec 2006)

HAMBURG, Germany - Cargo container security could be a piece of cake says the company that recently introduced the world's first doorless can. Displaying its containers for the first time at Intermodal -- the world renowned intermodal show in Hamburg, Germany -- CakeBoxx LLC says its patent-pending doorless cans will help solve some of the biggest security issues facing port authorities and transport providers today.

According to a recent study conducted by the RAND Corporation, only 5 percent of containers entering the U.S. are scanned or X-rayed and only 5 percent of those are then inspected by hand. As a result, says Cakeboxx founder Garry Whyte, "the current global cargo container system is one of the biggest security vulnerabilities facing ports and supply chains across the world." Once a CakeBoxx container is closed, says Whyte, nothing will get out -- or in -- whether the container is onboard a ship, in a stack of containers at the port, or on a railcar or truck, as the interior of a CakeBoxx cannot be accessed without specialized container handling equipment.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:
<http://www.todaystrucking.com/news.cfm?intDocID=17132>

57. Mobile can spy on you even when off (Daily Times Monitor, 6 Dec 2006)

The FBI appears to have begun using a novel form of electronic surveillance in criminal investigations: remotely activating a mobile phone's microphone and using it to eavesdrop on nearby conversations, says a report published by CNET News.com on December 1. The technique is called a "roving bug," and was approved by top US Department of Justice officials for use against members of a New York organised crime family who were wary of conventional surveillance techniques such as tailing a suspect or wiretapping him. The FBI is apparently using a novel surveillance technique on alleged Mafioso: activating his cell phone's microphone and then just listening, the report says. While it appears this is the first use of the "roving bug" technique, it has been discussed in security circles for years. Nextel cell phones owned by two alleged mobsters, John Ardito and his attorney Peter Peluso, were used by the FBI to listen in on nearby conversations. The FBI views Ardito as one of the most powerful men in the Genovese family, a major part of the national mafia.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://masl.to/?V2042385E>

58. Australia: State to test remote-control spy planes (AAP, 7 Dec 2006)

UNMANNED spy planes capable of a range of tasks from crop-spraying to detecting terrorists will be tested in regional Queensland. Experts have gathered at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane for a workshop on aerospace automation. The two-day workshop is focusing on remote-controlled aircraft, known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). UAVs could be used in the early detection of bushfires, traffic management, power line maintenance, wildlife surveillance and crop spraying. The Federal Government is also looking at the technology to protect remote facilities such as offshore oil rigs from terrorist attack, as well as detecting illegal fishing.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,20888503-5003402,00.html>

RESOURCES

59. "Homeland Security: Evolving Roles and Missions for United States Northern Command," Congressional Research Service Report updated November 16, 2006

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homsec/RS21322.pdf>

60. "National Emergency Powers," Congressional Research Service Report updated November 13, 2006

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/98-505.pdf>

61. "Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing: U.S. Policy Development," Congressional Research Service Report November 29, 2006

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RS22542.pdf>

EVENTS

62. Training event links IT with military, international partners (FCW, 7 Dec 2006)

In the Defense Department's latest homeland defense simulation, a dirty bomb explodes in Baltimore Harbor, setting off a chain of events that endangers the National Capital Region. DOD demonstrated its planned response to this scenario in a training event that used information technology to link several military components and international partners. The Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) led the demonstration, called the Joint Virtual Training Special Event. The scenario was played out on the floor of the Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference, held in Orlando, Fla., this week. Other participants included the Naval Sea Systems Command, the Space and Missile Defense Command, Air Forces Northern, and teams from Australia and Sweden.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fcw.com/article97045-12-07-06-Web>

63. Airmen play role in homeland defense exercise (by Tech. Sgt. Jim Fisher, 355th Wing Public Affairs, 8 Dec 2006)

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. (AFPN) -- A simulated catastrophe hit Davis-Monthan AFB Dec. 4 and tested base Airmen's ability to deal with a major accident with nuclear implications here.

Exercise Vigilant Shield 07, a national-level scenario which kicked off at Davis-Monthan AFB, connects the departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Energy and a host of other federal, regional and local agencies.

The exercise is also going on simultaneously at several centers of activity across the nation. At the outset Dec. 4, Davis-Monthan AFB officials were busy paving the way for a response task force takeover and ushering in the Department of Homeland Security staff to manage the accident.

"We had to get into the crash site, save the injured, and then take steps to ensure public safety," said Col. Hal Hoxie, who led Davis-Monthan AFB's disaster control group. The DCG, a team of experts from multiple disciplines, was responsible for orchestrating the response to the accident.

Responders immediately established a perimeter, taking steps to safeguard people in the area and contain hazardous material. Work with civil agencies began in the first minutes of the "crisis." The colonel's team undertook extensive environmental action and consequence management, while keeping the public informed through Air Force and local authorities, he explained.

"I was impressed at how professional our teams were and how they teamed with Tucson and county police, fire and emergency management officials," Colonel Hoxie said.

The responders at Davis-Monthan AFB were also working with the national command authority to ensure the full resources of the federal government were brought to bear against the scenario, Colonel Hoxie said. This was the primary objective of exercise planners and organizers at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, according to a statement released by U.S. Northern Command Public Affairs.

Vigilant Shield is focused on a synchronized response from U.S. combatant commands in a homeland defense scenario with round-the-clock activity. The goal is to improve the DOD's ability to manage a series of extreme events. A key part of this is interagency response, the statement explained.

This cooperation was clicking at the exercise's southern Arizona venue, said Ronnie Faircloth, DTRA's acting director of Combat Support.

"The people and resources of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, together with the outstanding support of the city of Tucson and Mayor Bob Walkup, made this training experience a success. The base and city will no doubt walk away from this exercise better prepared to meet the challenges they could face in any scenario."

Vigilant Shield ended for the Davis-Monthan AFB area Dec. 7, but continues until Dec. 14 for other exercise regions across the nation.

FULL REPORTS

64. U.S. Partners with Six Nations for Sea Freight Security - Containers to be scanned for nuclear radiation, hidden cargo (By Jacquelyn S. Porth, USINFO Staff Writer, 08 Dec 2006)

Washington -- The United States will work with six nations in Asia, Europe and the Americas to improve port security and prevent nuclear-related smuggling by using advanced detection tools to scan containers for nuclear and radiological materials.

The Secure Freight Initiative -- unveiled December 7 and supported by the departments of Homeland Security, Energy, State and others -- will spend \$60 million to put sophisticated detection equipment in key ports to protect international commerce from the threat of nuclear weapons or the spread of radioactive contamination from an exploding "dirty bomb," according to Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff.

Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman said deploying and using better detection methods will help "prevent nuclear devices from being smuggled into the United States or partner countries."

Specialized X-ray equipment and optical scanners will be sent to Pakistan's Port Qasim and Honduras' Puerto Cortes in February 2007. By summer 2007, detection equipment will be operating in the British port of Southampton. The effort will expand later in 2007 to South Korea's Port Busan, Oman's Port Salalah and the Port of Singapore.

Chertoff said the initiative reflects a vision “to work multilaterally with our partners all around the world” to provide maritime security and facilitate international commerce. A test program of a similar system also is under way in the Port of Hong Kong.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SAFE PORTS

Implementing the Secure Freight Initiative will address congressional requirements -- established by the Safe Ports Act of 2006 -- to scan 100 percent of the U.S.-bound cargo located in at least three overseas ports. (See [related article](#).)

Chertoff said the government-to-government and public-private sector partnerships involved in this initiative set “a perfect example of an area in which global cooperation and international activity can raise security standards and trade efficiency.”

Speaking at his headquarters to diplomats, shipping representatives and reporters, Chertoff emphasized the goal of facilitating world trade while providing an inhospitable environment for terrorists attempting to use dangerous nuclear materials.

Under Secretary of State Robert Joseph said the initiative will add an important dimension to the partners’ ability to detect the shipment of fissile or radioactive materials. Nations have an international responsibility to implement measures to defend against the nuclear terrorism threat, he said. (See [related article](#).)

The equipment bound for the ports will scan for radioactivity as well as concealed suspicious cargo. Under Secretary of Energy Linton Brooks said the initiative “will lead to strengthening the overall security of the global supply chain.”

Brooks said the initiative builds on earlier efforts to improve nuclear security on Russia’s borders as well as other programs under way such as the National Nuclear Security Administration’s Megaports Initiative and Homeland Security’s Container Security Initiative. (See [related article](#).)

Separately, U.S. Customs and Border Control announced December 7 that the United States and Colombia will work together to prevent nuclear material from being smuggled into U.S. ports. Border Control Commissioner W. Ralph Basham said securing global trade is a major priority. Advanced technological equipment and more secure containers will be used in the Port of Cartagena to screen high-risk shipments, deter smuggling and promote security.

A [transcript](#) of the press conference announcing the Secure Freight Initiative and a [press release](#) are available on the Homeland Security’s Web site.

The [press release](#) announcing the U.S.-Colombia agreement is posted on the Customs and Border Control Web site.

For more information about U.S. policy, see [Response to Terrorism](#) and [Arms Control and Non-Proliferation](#).

(USINFO is produced by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

65. CDC rates hospital bioterrorism preparedness (CIDRAP News, 11 Dec 2006)

Soon after the terrorist attacks of 2001, Congress approved emergency funds to teach hospital staffs how to recognize and respond to bioterrorism attacks, and today the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its first report on those efforts.

The information in the report, published today in a CDC bulletin, came from 2003 and 2004 supplements to the annual National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Surveys conducted by the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. The survey was designed to assess terrorism preparedness training and identify training differences related to hospital characteristics.

"Information about the strengths and limitations of terrorism preparedness in US hospitals is crucial in planning how future funding could be used to improve the domestic defensive posture," the report states.

Of 874 hospitals included in the survey, 739 (84.6%) responded.

The survey revealed that teaching hospitals were better trained for handling bioterrorism than other types of hospitals were. Hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations were well ahead of other hospitals in training the following employees about terrorism response: nurses, staff physicians, laboratory employees, nurse practitioners, physicians, and residents. However, only 9.5% of the hospitals in the survey were not accredited.

Eighty-eight percent of the hospitals said their nurses had been trained in recognizing and treating patients exposed to at least one of seven diseases potentially associated with bioterrorism (smallpox, anthrax, plague, botulism, tularemia, viral encephalitis, and hemorrhagic fevers) or to chemical or radiological attacks.

In hospitals that had 24-hour emergency departments or outpatient clinics, 86% of clinical staff members were trained to recognize and treat smallpox, and 82% were trained to recognize and treat anthrax infections.

One unexpected finding was that staff physicians were far more likely than residents to have received training (75.1% versus 39.3%), a gap that was wider in nonteaching hospitals than in teaching hospitals.

"The original assumption was that physicians in the midst of their specialty education would be more likely to have received training in the current medical issues," the authors

wrote. Though they noted the residents may have received preparedness training at their home teaching hospital, they said more efforts are needed to implement recommended bioterrorism content into medical school curricula.

The survey showed that more than three quarters of hospitals had taught their key personnel how to implement a "Hospital Emergency Incident Command" system or similar program. But the authors voiced concern that a quarter of the nation's hospitals are unprepared for a "chaotic event."

"This study presents baseline data for terrorism preparedness training, with respect to various hospital characteristics, to help inform emergency physicians and other healthcare professionals for future planning efforts," the report says.

The survey also included questions about other preparedness variables such as emergency response plans, surge capacity, equipment, and collaboration with outside organizations. Officials said future bulletins will detail those findings.

Niska RW, Curt CW. Training for terrorism-related conditions in hospitals: United States, 2003-04. Advance data from vital and health statistics, no 380. Hyattsville, Md., National Center for Health Statistics, 2006 [[Full text](#)]

See also:

Dec 11 CDC press release on hospital training for terrorist attacks
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/06facts/terrorism2003-04.htm>

66. United States Helping To Build Flu-Fighting Capacity Overseas - World now better positioned to confront reality of disease, State's Lange says (By Cheryl Pellerin, USINFO Staff Writer, 08 Dec 2006)

Bamako, Mali -- The most urgent action the United States can take to fight avian influenza and a potential human pandemic is to strengthen capacity in individual countries and in international and regional organizations, a U.S. official said December 7.

Ambassador John Lange, the State Department's special representative on avian and pandemic influenza, addressed representatives from more than 20 countries who gathered in Mali at the Fourth International Conference on Avian Influenza to share information and boost financial support for preparedness and response efforts worldwide. (See [related article](#).)

"Our efforts are aimed at urgently building systems that can serve long-term purposes," Lange said, "and our work and resources are building systems to address not only H5N1, but other highly infectious and zoonotic diseases" -- those that pass from animals to people.

H5N1 is a highly pathogenic avian influenza strain that has reached pandemic level among birds in Asia, causing the deaths of more than 200 million birds. The virus also

has been transmitted to people in 10 countries, resulting in 154 deaths, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The meeting, hosted by the African Union and Mali in conjunction with the European Union, is the latest in a series of high-level gatherings intended to focus the attention of the international community and galvanize government action.

President Bush announced the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza at the U.N. General Assembly in September 2005, and the international partnership met for the first time in Washington in October 2005. (See [fact sheet](#).)

The meetings held since then have help raise awareness of the pandemic threat and advance international cooperation to mitigate that threat.

“As a result of the global, cooperative nature of our response,” Lange told attendees in Bamako, “the world is now better positioned to confront the reality of the disease -- with better communication programs, improved data sharing and increased public-health preparedness.”

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY

Preparedness for a pandemic requires establishing infrastructure and capacity, Lange said, a process that can take years.

Regarding animal health, the United States seeks to strengthen national veterinary services. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided expertise and funding to establish the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/World Organization for Animal Health Crisis Management Center.

“As the center grows,” Lange said, “it will serve global needs for immediate response support for avian influenza and other zoonotic diseases.”

USDA has trained 500 veterinarians and diagnosticians from 96 affected and high-risk countries in veterinary epidemiology and avian influenza diagnostic protocols to support disease surveillance and control measures. The United States is devoting almost \$400 million to bolster preparedness in vulnerable countries.

Through FAO, USAID is developing participatory disease surveillance/participatory disease response teams with the government of Indonesia. The project established 12 pilot districts on Java Island and will expand to 159 districts on Java, Bali and Lampung to enhance rapid response to poultry outbreaks at the district level.

The World Bank will fund districts on Sumatra Island, with AusAid -- the Australian government’s overseas aid program -- funding programs in south Sulawesi Province.

POTENTIAL PANDEMIC

To address a potential human pandemic, the United States is researching and developing vaccines and anti-viral medications and amassing and pre-positioning stockpiles of medical and logistical supplies.

“We are collaborating with international partners to enhance early-warning and clinical surveillance systems,” Lange said, “including building and improving infrastructure at the central, provincial and local levels to provide timely notification of suspected outbreaks.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has given the WHO funding to strengthen its Global Outbreak and Response Network to support surveillance and response in nations worldwide.

The department also established a fund to ensure laboratory specimens are shipped quickly to special “reference” laboratories for further diagnostic work and disease confirmation.

“We are pleased to be working cooperatively with the member states of the African Union, as U.S. government programs for avian influenza and pandemic preparedness continue and expand on this continent,” Lange said.

“We also consider it important,” he added, “for governments to collaborate within their regions on pandemic preparedness.”

In North America, he said, Mexico, Canada and the United States work collaboratively through the Security and Prosperity Partnership to prepare the North American Plan for Avian and Pandemic Influenza. (See [related article](#).)

In this plan, chapters will cover pandemic influenza, avian influenza, emergency coordination, borders and transportation, and critical infrastructure protection.

“Preparedness and long-term capacity building requires collaboration on the international, regional, national and community levels,” Lange said. “As this conference demonstrates, global cooperation is essential to global success.”

For ongoing coverage of the disease and efforts to combat it, see [Bird Flu \(Avian Influenza\)](#).

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