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CABLE Gram Volume 2 Issue 78

20 December 2005 *CABLE Gram*™

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Take care,

Zhi Hamby-Nye, Editor

Henry Ziegler, Associate Editor

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The *CABLE Gram* is a weekly publication, distributed in PDF format and is currently included as a benefit of membership in the OPSEC Professionals Society and the National Military Intelligence Association.

Issues covered in the *CABLE Gram* include: Homeland Defense, Homeland Security, Terrorism, Federal Law Enforcement, First Responders, Money Laundering, Identity Theft, NBC Weapons, Cybercrimes, Smuggling, Narco Trafficking, Hazardous Materials and other related topics.

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.

Please forward the *CABLE Gram* to all people you feel will find it useful!

FEDERAL

1. Senate Rejects Extension of Patriot Act (AP, 16 Dec 2005)

WASHINGTON - The Senate on Friday refused to reauthorize major portions of the USA Patriot Act after critics complained they infringed too much on Americans' privacy and liberty, dealing a huge defeat to the Bush administration and Republican leaders. In a crucial vote early Friday, the bill's Senate supporters were not able to get the 60 votes needed to overcome a filibuster by Sens. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., and Larry Craig, R-Idaho, and their allies. The final vote was 52-47. President Bush, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Republicans congressional leaders had lobbied fiercely to make most of the expiring Patriot Act provisions permanent.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://apnews.myway.com/article/20051216/D8EHJ6M81.html>

2. Senator: Bill would prevent chemical plants from becoming WMDs (CNN, 16 Dec 2005)

WASHINGTON - Claiming that chemical plants haven't been able to adequately protect themselves from terrorists, a Maine senator is planning to introduce legislation Monday that would set mandatory security standards and shut down plants that don't comply. Terror experts have long argued that urban chemical plants could be used as stationary weapons of mass destruction, and there are more than 100 plants in the country that could each endanger a million or more residents if breached. The accidental 1984 gas leak in Bhopal, India, killed about 3,800 people. Until now, the U.S. government has depended on the individual companies to assess and address their own vulnerabilities.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/12/16/plant.security/index.html>

3. House Passes Deficit Cuts to End Year (AP, 19 Dec 2005)

WASHINGTON - Republican congressional leaders agreed to trim deficits by \$41.6 billion and sought to unlock the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling Sunday in a frenzied year-end bid to enact the core of a conservative agenda.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.startribune.com/stories/587/5789911.html>

4. House Approves \$29B for Hurricane States (AP, 19 Dec 2005)

WASHINGTON - After securing \$29 billion in aid for hurricane-ravaged states, Gulf Coast lawmakers held their breath Monday as the funds became entangled in a Senate debate over a controversial oil drilling measure. The hurricane aid was part of a massive defense spending bill approved by the House early Monday but that was still awaiting Senate passage. The measure included money to repair levees, spur economic development and rebuild badly damaged roads in the region obliterated by Hurricane Katrina. Congress will likely have to continue annual additional funding _ in the billions of dollars _ in future years to help the region recover, said Senate Appropriations Chairman Thad Cochran, R-Miss.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.federalnewsradio.com/index.php?nid=78&sid=317288>

5. House passes border security bill (FCW, 19 Dec 2005)

The House passed a border security bill designed to reduce illegal immigration by installing more fencing, surveillance cameras and other forms of technology along the southern and northern U.S. borders. Among the measures approved Dec. 16 was the use of satellite communications among Border Patrol agents and other federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies. Another measure would require that secure, machine-readable Social Security cards be issued to immigrants seeking employment in the United States. That would entail creating a unified database comprised of information from the Social Security Administration and maintained by the Homeland Security Department for employment eligibility verification.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fcw.com/article91763-12-19-05-Web>

6. After lobbying to keep the federal terrorism insurance backstop, insurers look to make it permanent (CNN Money, 19 Dec 2005)

With less than two weeks to go before expiration, Congress approved an extension through 2007 of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA) -- a backstop that guarantees the federal government will step in and cover a large percentage of future losses from a terrorist attack. For property-casualty policyholders in high-risk markets such as New York, the extension reduces the likelihood that insurers will either stop providing terrorism coverage for commercial property or raise rates exorbitantly to reflect additional risk. Earlier this year, many insurers placed caveats on their commercial property-casualty policies warning that if TRIA lapsed on Dec. 31, they would no longer provide terrorism insurance.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://money.cnn.com/2005/12/19/news/economy/tria_extension_insurance/index.htm

7. Official: Katrina taught DHS procurement lessons (FCW, 16 Dec 2005)

Hurricane Katrina taught the Homeland Security Department important lessons about procurement, the department's acting chief procurement officer said Dec. 15. The

devastating August storm showed the need for contingency planning within each federal department and across them, Elaine Duke said at a gathering of the Association for Federal Information Resources Management, a nonprofit industry group, in Washington, D.C. Staff members dedicated to contingency planning are essential, Duke added. “Contracting vehicles can’t happen without the people piece,” she said. The hurricane helped the procurement office “recognize the need for planning, preparedness and communication at all levels” within DHS; with federal, state and local partners; and with the acquisition community, Duke said.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fcw.com/article91746-12-16-05-Web>

8. Travelers, not objects, deserve scrutiny (USA Today, OpEd, 18 Dec 2005)

USA TODAY readers critique the decision by the Transportation Security Administration to allow certain small sharp objects onboard aircraft. But TSA Director Kip Hawley has figured out that it's not the objects but the travelers that must be given increased scrutiny (“[Education can lead to secure skies](#),” Letters, Dec. 12). The focus on and the banning of objects offer up little in true security. While people find peace in knowing that certain tools are banned, the bad guys are busy thinking of alternative improvised weapons that are approved by the TSA to carry. Have you ever seen what happens when you snap a CD in half? You're left with two razors. How about drumsticks? Ever seen them snapped in half? In the wrong hands, they can be as lethal as regular knives.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2005-12-18-letters-tsa_x.htm

9. TSA Looks to VA and DoD for “Mental Defectives” (OpEdNews.com by Larry Scott, 18 Dec 2005) Military personnel and veterans with mental health issues could end up on the TSA’s “Watch List” and be denied access to commercial flights – Who has access to the information is a primary concern

How far are we willing to go when it comes to “security” on commercial airline flights? The ugly side of that question came to light on November 15 when the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) posted a “sources sought” inquiry on their web site. The TSA is looking for contractors to build new databases to help screen airline passengers. They want to include information about military personnel from Department of Defense (DoD) files and veterans from Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) files. According to the TSA, here’s what they want: “Examples of new data sources would be DoD files for military service histories or VA files for lists of persons who have been declared mental defectives.”

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.opednews.com/articles/opedne_larry_sc_051218_tsa_looks_to_va_and_.htm

10. ManTech to Screen for TSA (Washington Post, 19 Dec 2005)

The Transportation Security Administration has turned to ManTech International Corp. of Fairfax to help it develop an expanded program to screen noncitizens applying to U.S. flight schools. The training provided to noncitizens at flight schools has come under scrutiny since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Several of the hijackers trained at flight schools in Florida and other states. Zacarias Moussaoui, who pleaded guilty to

conspiring with al Qaeda but denied being part of the Sept. 11 plot, trained at a Minnesota flight school.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?O2C75275C>

11. Federal Investigators Probe High-Tech Explosives Theft - About 400 Pounds of Explosive Material Missing (ABCNews.com, 19 Dec 2005)

About 400 pounds of explosive material was stolen from a research facility in New Mexico, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives confirmed today. The theft was discovered Sunday night by local authorities. ATF agents are investigating the large theft from Cherry Engineering, a company owned by Chris Cherry, for decades the senior explosives scientist at Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico. Also, 2,500 detonators were missing from a storage explosive container, or magazine, in the name of Cherry Engineering.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=1421579>

12. FBI Says Murder Rate Up, Crime Declines (AP, 19 Dec 2005)

WASHINGTON - The nation's murder rate jumped 2 percent during the first six months of this year, with the biggest increases reported by small towns and in the Midwest, the FBI said Monday. The number of rapes, arsons and assaults fell during the same period. After a dramatic 5.7 percent decline in the number of murders last year, the murder rate ticked upward 2.1 percent between January and June. Citing figures collected under its uniform crime reports, the FBI said cities with fewer than 10,000 people saw the largest increases in their murder rates. Murder rates rose across the country, but the Midwest saw the highest increases with 4.9 percent. Kansas City, for example, reported 56 murders in the six months of this year but only 39 during the same time in 2004.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?P5A72175C>

13. Ex-FBI operative pleads guilty in deal (Los Angeles Times, 18 Dec 2005)

LOS ANGELES — Closing its books on a troubled spy case, the federal government allowed a former FBI operative who had been accused of being a Chinese double agent to plead guilty to lying about an affair and filing a false income-tax return. Approving a plea bargain between prosecutors and defense lawyers late Friday, U.S. District Judge Florence Marie Cooper sentenced Katrina Leung, 51, to three years' probation and fined her \$10,000 but spared her from prison.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2002690050_spy18.html

14. Alien smuggler could have been deported ten years ago (UPI, Shaun Waterman, 18 Dec 2005)

WASHINGTON - A naturalized citizen charged as the head of a ring that smuggled 200 mainly Iraqi illegals into the United States since 2001 could have been stripped of her citizenship and deported after an earlier conviction on similar charges more than 10 years earlier. Iraqi-born Neeran Hakim Zaia was indicted in October last year along with her

husband and three others following an undercover investigation spanning three continents that lasted more than three years and cost millions of dollars, according to officials familiar with the case. The case stoked concern that human trafficking routes, including those across the porous southern border, are increasingly being used to smuggle so-called special interest aliens -- those from countries where al-Qaida or other Islamic terrorist organizations are thought to be active -- into the United States.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.upi.com/SecurityTerrorism/view.php?StoryID=20051213-115226-1111r>

STATE AND LOCAL NEWS

15. FL: State of Florida Selects MSA Detection Systems to Enhance Homeland Security/HazMat Response Capabilities (PRNewswire, 19 Dec 2005)

PITTSBURGH - MSA announced today that it has secured a contract to furnish Florida emergency response agencies with a line of hazard detection systems that will be used to enhance the state's already formidable homeland security and HazMat response capabilities. The contract includes the largest order to date for MSA's SAFESITE® Multi-Threat Detection System, a new wireless system designed for perimeter monitoring at public events, as well as monitoring of mass transit systems, shipping ports and other facilities that could be the target of a terrorist incident. As part of this initiative, the state of Florida also will be deploying several Sirius(TM) handheld multi-gas detectors from MSA that will be used by first responder personnel called to emergency situations. The Sirius detectors feature the ability to communicate wirelessly to the SAFESITE System through an innovative Bluetooth® module, providing complete system interoperability.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/051219/clm018.html?.v=32>

16. IL: Local agency promotes safety emergency plans for businesses (Paris Beacon News, 19 Dec 2005)

The message shared with businesses from emergency services at a joint meeting Thursday is, "We're here to help you and we want to know what you need." The meeting of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) was informational and part of the preparedness planning process to address hazardous materials. "Our purpose is to have a plan in place for hazardous materials and to be prepared to exercise it," said Duane Fidler, LEPC coordinator. Ideally, LEPC coordinates information about possible hazardous materials in the community and develops a plan to deal with them in an emergency. A state program, LEPC is assigned to develop a chemical emergency response plan for the county and establish procedures for conducting its public information and education responsibilities, considering the Community Right-to-Know Act. The plan is for businesses to come together and work in tandem with the emergency services on issues of safety and community welfare.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?D2972275C>

17. MA: Break in murder case: Sources: Cops hold 2 men for questioning (Boston Herald, 18 Dec 2005)

Two Boston men were being held for questioning this morning in the brutal murder of four young friends who apparently fought for their lives inside a basement rap studio in Dorchester before their brutal slayings Tuesday night, two sources told the Herald. The sources said a total of six men were inside the Bournside Street home on the night of the massacre. That scenario differs from the initial law enforcement view that four men were in the room when a lone gunman knocked at the door and methodically executed them.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://news.bostonherald.com/localRegional/view.bg?articleid=117612>

18. MA: Agents' visit chills UMass Dartmouth senior (by Aaron Nicodemus, Standard-Times staff writer, 17 Dec 2005, Contributed by Rick Forno)

NEW BEDFORD - A senior at UMass Dartmouth was visited by federal agents two months ago, after he requested a copy of Mao Tse-Tung's tome on Communism called "The Little Red Book." Two history professors at UMass Dartmouth, Brian Glyn Williams and Robert Pontbriand, said the student told them he requested the book through the UMass Dartmouth library's interlibrary loan program. The student, who was completing a research paper on Communism for Professor Pontbriand's class on fascism and totalitarianism, filled out a form for the request, leaving his name, address, phone number and Social Security number. He was later visited at his parents' home in New Bedford by two agents of the Department of Homeland Security, the professors said. The professors said the student was told by the agents that the book is on a "watch list," and that his background, which included significant time abroad, triggered them to investigate the student further.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.southcoasttoday.com/daily/12-05/12-17-05/a091o650.htm>

19. PA: TSA top local managers are paid top dollar (Tribune-Review, 19 Dec 2005)

The top Transportation Security Administration managers at Pittsburgh International Airport earn far more than their counterparts in private industry, and critics say the government salaries are excessive. The top 10 TSA managers based at the Findlay airport earn an average of nearly \$20,000 more than Pittsburgh-area workers in similar positions at private companies, according to a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review analysis of TSA salaries with U.S. Department of Labor data. One employee, Dale Palmer, a training manager, is paid \$48,000 more than the local average for training managers in private industry.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://pittsburghlive.com/x/tribune-review/trib/regional/s_405315.html

KEY PEOPLE

20. Senate OKs Meyerrose as CIO for national intelligence office gen 19 Dec 2005)

Air Force Maj. Gen. Dale Meyerrose has been confirmed by the Senate as the first CIO of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. In August, President Bush nominated Meyerrose for the job. Meyerrose previously served as director of command and control systems at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and director of architectures and integration at the Northern Command. Northcom was established after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to assist in homeland defense missions. In the past

several years, Northcom has mobilized numerous times to aid first responders from many federal, state and local agencies in situations such as Hurricane Katrina and the space shuttle Columbia disaster.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.gcn.com/vol1_no1/daily-updates/37804-1.html

GANG ACTIVITY

21. CA: Attorneys continue to gather evidence for city's gang injunction (The Lompoc Record, 18 Dec 2005)

Attorneys were back in court in Lompoc Friday for a status conference about the city's injunction that prohibits gang members from certain behavior and activities in various sections of town. The conference was continued to 8:30 a.m. Jan. 27, in the Lompoc Division of the Santa Barbara County Superior Court, to allow for more evidence to be submitted. Additional information is needed, including the number of arrests made, opinions from people about the effectiveness of the court order, and other pertinent information, said Santa Barbara County Senior Deputy District Attorney Gene Martinez. "I think it's working very well. The injunction is having the effect that we hoped it would have," Martinez said. "We are trying to nip things in the bud before they get disastrous, should we say." Neil Quinn, a former Ventura County Public Defender who was asked by the Santa Barbara County Public Defender's Office to act as the defense on the injunction, said the status hearing's continuance will allow any additional evidence to be factored into Judge James Iwasko's decisions on the hearing.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.lompocrecord.com/articles/2005/12/18/news/news05.txt>

22. CA: One Dies In Pico Rivera Gang-Related Gun Battle (CBS, 18 Dec 2005)

PICO RIVERA, Calif. A man was found fatally shot following a gang-related gun battle in Pico Rivera, sheriff's deputies said Sunday. The gunfire erupted about 8:40 p.m. Saturday in the 4100 block of Deland Avenue, according to a sheriff's department statement. Investigators said a van stopped in front of a home and at least one of its occupants asked people standing in front of the residence, "Where are you from?" according to the statement. "The occupants of the van immediately fired several rounds from a handgun towards the people in front of the residence," the statement continued. "One of the people from the residence shot back at the van."

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://cbs2.com/topstories/local_story_352122209.html

23. CA: County gang force logs nearly 200 arrests (San Francisco Examiner, 18 Dec 2005)

SAN MATEO - Since its inception in late September, the San Mateo County Gang Task Force has arrested nearly 200 people and impressed upon gang members that they can't move around the county to avoid law enforcement, police officials said Friday. In September, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors authorized and funded two anti-gang efforts to combat the approximately 100 gangs operating locally, from Fogtown in Daly City to the Heller Street Boys in Redwood City and the Midtown gang in East Palo

Alto, County Sheriff Don Horsley said. The first effort, the “face” as Supervisor Jerry Hill calls it, consisted of organizing a task force consisting of officers from every city in the county, as well as the county Sheriff’s Office and other agencies.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.sfexaminer.com/articles/2005/12/19/peninsula/20051219_pe04_gang.txt

24. IL: Gang raids lessen crime (The Beacon News, 18 Dec 2005)

AURORA — On the phone, drug dealers talk in code, a strange mix of word substitutions and abbreviations that they hope clouds their illegal transactions. The phrasing is supposed to protect them from eavesdropping police, so there's some irony that an Aug. 20, 2004, argument about word choice between two alleged Aurora drug dealers was recorded by the FBI. According to a federal affidavit, at 4:34 p.m. on that day, an unnamed caller asked for "Skinny" — a nickname used by Craig Venson, a 32-year-old Auroran federal investigators believe coordinated major cocaine sales in the Fox Valley.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/beaconnews/top/2_1_AU18_GANGS_S1.htm

25. MO: Mafia boss dies in prison (Ireland On-Line, 19 Dec 2005)

US mob boss Vincent “The Chin” Gigante, who avoided jail for decades by wandering Manhattan streets in a ratty bathrobe and slippers as part of an elaborate feigned mental illness, has died in prison. He was 77. Mafioso Gigante died at the US Medical Centre for federal prisoners in Springfield, Missouri, early today, said prison spokesman Al Quintero. “The cause of death is currently unknown. He had a history of coronary disease.”

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://breakingnews.iol.ie/news/story.asp?j=166539046&p=y6653975z>

26. VA: Newport News police see growing gang crime (dailypress.com, 19 Dec 2005)

NEWPORT NEWS - Newport News police are alarmed by recent juvenile crime trends they fear will contribute to more robberies, violent crime and the growth of gangs. Police Chief James Fox recently told School Board members they need to be aware of that, but school officials say their schools are safe and crime doesn't really touch them.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?X2871275C>

NARCO TRAFFICKING

27. CT: Norwich club closes after drug bust (Norwich Bulletin , 18 Dec 2005)

NORWICH - The president of the Sportsmen's Athletic Club on High Street said he plans to keep the bar closed indefinitely after seven drug arrests were made there Thursday. Richard Woodley said Saturday he had no knowledge of illegal activity coming from the bar and has suspended the three members of the club on High Street who were arrested. Police made the arrests after several months of investigation into the sale of cocaine and crack cocaine from the bar. "I'm really upset about what happened," Woodley said. "You just can't watch everybody. I've called the police several times because I thought people

were selling drugs. We have to get rid of the bad apples." Woodley had the club open Friday, but said there were so few customers after Thursday's arrests it doesn't make good business sense to open it until he speaks with his lawyers this week.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?K3C34365C>

28. FL: \$12.5M in cocaine seized (AP, 18 Dec 2005)

BRADENTON - Law enforcement agents seized 500 kilograms of cocaine worth an estimated \$12.5 million in the largest drug bust in Manatee County history. Agents conducting pre-dawn raids Friday made 13 arrests in 13 locations, capping an 18-month investigation. They also seized \$1 million in cash, believed to be drug proceeds, and several firearms. Investigators said the drugs came from Mexico through supply lines in Texas and California. "It is an organization -- a very large group of men and women operating in several states," said E.J. Picolo, special agent in charge of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Fort Myers office.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/13433150.htm>

29. FL: High-Ranking Colombian Drug Traffickers Plead Guilty to Cocaine Charges (New York Jewish Times, 19 Dec 2005)

(FBI) United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, R. Alexander Acosta, Michael S. Clemens, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Mark R. Trouville, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), announced that Colombian North Valley Cartel cocaine traffickers Juan Carlos Montoya Sanchez and Carlos Felipe Toro Sanchez, a/k/a "Felipe Montoya," a/k/a "Pipe," both pled guilty before United States District Judge Cecilia M. Altonaga to conspiring to import cocaine into the United States, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 963. Sentencing is set before Judge Altonaga for February 16, 2006 at 8:30 am. Both defendants were arrested in Colombia on December 29, 2003 by the Colombian National Police. Defendants Montoya Sanchez and Toro Sanchez were subsequently extradited from Colombia on May 4, 2005 and April 25, 2005, respectively.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://nyjtimes.com/cover/12-19-05/HighRankColombianDrugTraffickersGuilty.htm>

30. IL: Gang is swept up in drug crackdown (Chicago Tribune, 18 Dec 2005)

AUBURN GRESHAM - Eight gang members were arrested and seven others have been charged in connection with a drug-peddling operation in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood, police said Friday. The suspects, all males ranging in age from 16 to 31, are members of the Gangster Disciples street gang, said Chicago Police Lt. Robert Cervenka. They are accused of selling crack cocaine in an area roughly bounded by 79th and 80th Streets and Bishop Street and Ashland Avenue. Police seized about 50 grams of crack, \$1,000 in cash and four vehicles in the operation, which began in September, Cervenka said. A team of eight undercover officers taped the suspects and made 17 drug buys, added Lt. John Schulz. Schulz said the suspects concealed drugs in their mouths or ducked into nearby businesses if they saw uniformed officers in the neighborhood.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?E2D31565C>

31. LA: Local drug users, dealers get a rude awakening (Slidell Sentry-News, 19 Dec 2005)

COVINGTON - They dubbed it Jingle Bell Rock II, but there was nothing festive about Thursday morning's drug roundup that resulted in the arrest of 14 area drug users and dealers. Thursday morning's roundup, which had deputies and narcotics officers out on the streets as early as 3 a.m. gathering individuals wanted for various drug crimes, came at the culmination of a 10-month undercover operation. The St. Tammany Parish Narcotics Task Force, which is made up of Sheriff's Office and Slidell Police personnel, worked in conjunction with the Covington Police Department to execute the operation Sheriff Jack Strain said was a "great success."

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.slidellsentry.com/articles/2005/12/19/news/news03.txt>

32. NJ: Vineland shooting leads to multiple arrests (Bridgeton News, 19 Dec 2005)

Police in Bridgeton arrested a Millville man sought in connection with a Saturday night Vineland shooting, then found he and three Bridgeton men in possession of narcotics on Pamphylia Avenue Sunday, authorities said. David Cox, 19, of McNeal Street, Millville, was charged with possession of a weapon, possession of a weapon for unlawful purposes, possession of a defaced handgun, possession of a handgun while possessing narcotics, possession of cocaine, possession of heroin and possession of cocaine and heroin with intent to distribute, according to Lt. Bobby Sawyers of the Bridgeton Police Dept.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?B2773575C>

33. ND: U.S. officials say dope smuggling not up at border (AP, 18 Dec 2005)

GRAND FORKS, N.D. - U.S. border officials say they have not seen a big increase in the amount of Canadian-grown marijuana being smuggled across the North Dakota border. The Drug Enforcement Administration and the National Drug Enforcement Center earlier this year said there was an increase in organized gangs smuggling high-grade marijuana into the United States. The reports prompted Manitoba lawmaker Kelvin Goertzen to call for tougher enforcement, saying officials needed to "clamp down on those (operations) and make sure the drugs are not on the highways."

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/state/13437667.htm>

34. PA: Cocaine worth \$20,000 seized in Clayton; 2 arrested (The Philadelphia Inquirer, 18 Dec 2005)

A pound of cocaine valued at \$20,000 was seized Thursday in a raid on a Gloucester County residence, authorities said. Donald Owens, 34, of Clayton, was arrested at 6:45 a.m. at his home in the 100 block of South Dennis Drive and charged with possession of more than five ounces of cocaine with intent to distribute in a school zone, and several other drug counts. Andrea Williams, 34, of the same address, was arrested later in the day and charged on multiple drug counts, said a spokesman for the Gloucester County Prosecutor's Office.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:
<http://makeashorterlink.com/?M2E32465C>

35. RI: Rhode Island is at the center of a dispute over how to sentence people convicted of offenses involving crack versus powder cocaine. (Projo, 18 Dec 2005)
PROVIDENCE - Rhode Island has become "ground zero" in a national battle about the disparity in prison sentences for crack versus powder cocaine, a federal judge says. The U.S. Supreme Court in January ruled that sentencing guidelines are no longer mandatory. And when the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in a pair of Rhode Island cases on Dec. 7, it became the first federal appeals court in the country to deal with the crack/powder disparity in a sentence imposed under advisory guidelines. Four other circuit courts have similar cases pending, but the 1st Circuit is the first to get to the oral argument stage, according to Circuit Judge Bruce M. Selya, the only Rhode Islander on the Boston-based appeals court.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:
http://www.projo.com/news/content/projo_20051218_crack.333eb96.html

36. WV: Pizza, cocaine, murder - Mingo town quiets after being center of drug ring (Sunday Gazette Mail, 18 Dec 2005)

RED JACKET — Dusty restaurant equipment and dirty walk-up windows tell the tale of a restaurant gone under. One sign still shouts, "Pizza," another "root beer floats and orange cream floats." But the days of pulling up to Porgy's Pizza Plus for a pizza, drink or cocaine have been over since owner George "Porgy" Lecco went to jail, accused of plotting the murder of a federal drug informant. All that remains open is the grocery business hooked to one end of the structure on W.Va. 65. "We had the biggest business and best food around here," lamented 82-year-old Mary Lecco, pointing to the sparse amount of beer, cigarettes and a few canned goods remaining on the shelves. "And we had no choice but to close it."

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:
<http://sundaygazettemail.com/section/News/200512178>

37. WI: Drug suspect apprehended (Journal Times Online.com, 18 Dec 2005)

KENOSHA - A Kenosha man was arrested Thursday for possession with intent to deliver over \$50,000 worth of cocaine at 1925 Sheridan Road. Officers arrested Hugo Flores, 29, of 3204 56th Ave., at 12:30 p.m. Thursday. They had been watching the Sheridan Road location after learning from a confidential source that Flores would be coming to deliver a half kilogram of cocaine. When Flores left his vehicle, an undercover officer approached him, identified himself, and told Flores he was under arrest. Flores attempted to flee.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:
http://www.journaltimes.com/articles/2005/12/18/local/iq_3814880.txt

38. Cocaine fear follows win in Bolivia (Reuters, 20 Dec 2005)

LEFTIST Evo Morales, a former coca leaf farmer who says he will be "a nightmare for the US", is poised to become Bolivia's first indigenous president. Washington considers Morales an enemy in its anti-drug fight in Bolivia, the third-biggest cocaine producer

after Colombia and Peru. Mr Morales wants to end the US-funded eradication of coca, the crop used to make cocaine. His campaign against elites fed hopes among many Indians that one of their own could help reverse what many see as more than 500 years of discrimination under European-descended leaders. The 46-year-old lawmaker admires Venezuela's anti-American President Hugo Chavez.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?I2671575C>

39. Portugal seen as European gateway for cocaine (Mail & Guardian, 19 Dec 2005)

The amount of cocaine seized by police has soared in recent years in Portugal, which officials say has become, along with neighbour Spain, a main gateway into Europe for the narcotic from Latin America. Police seizures of the drug jumped from around three tonnes in 2000 to 7,4 tonnes in 2004, and as of the end of November authorities had discovered more than 17 tonnes of cocaine, more than any other narcotic this year.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?W1572175C>

40. Czech Republic: Police, customs officers nail gang of drug vendors, producers (Czech Happenings, 19 Dec 2005)

CESKE BUDEJOVICE - South Bohemian police and customs officers on Sunday arrested a 5-member drug-manufacturing gang that catered to customers in the Czech Republic, as well as in Austria and Germany, customs office spokesman Jaroslav Vlasek said. Investigators reckon the gang could have earned several million crowns from the drug trade. The police discovered drugs, hundreds of thousands of crowns, firearms and ammunition, and three laboratories for producing pervitine, a methamphetamine drug widely used in the Czech Republic, during subsequent house-searches of the gang members homes.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/index_view.php?id=163537

41. In Afghanistan, Taliban turning to the drug trade (Boston Globe, 18 Dec 2005)

KHANISHIN, Afghanistan - The threatening tracts were pinned on mosque doors and shop windows, the village elder said. Signed "The Taliban," their message was simple. "They said, 'Cultivate the poppy or we will come and kill you,' " said Haji Nazarullah, an elder in Khanishin, a village on the fringe of Afghanistan's lawless southern desert. "A lot of people are very scared." According to farmers, elders, and senior police officials, the Taliban, which condemned the opium trade as "un-Islamic" while in power, has allied with drug smugglers in the southwestern province of Helmand.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://makeashorterlink.com/?A1933165C>

42. Vietnam: Aussie condemned to death for drug smuggling (Thanhien, 19 Dec 2005)

A court in southern Vietnam on Monday sentenced a Australian man to death, with three others from the gang receiving sentences ranging from life to 15 years' in prison for trafficking 1.7 kg of heroin.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/overseas/?catid=12&newsid=11383>

CYBERTHREAT & THEFT

43. Researchers: Flaw auctions would improve security (Robert Lemos, SecurityFocus, 15 Dec 2005, Contributed by Rick Forno)

The auction may have set a record price for a highlighter pen and an 8-by-11-inch sheet of paper. The last reported bid before the listing was deleted without ceremony was \$1,200. The price might seem excessive, but the value lay in what some researchers believed was on the paper: Information about an unpatched vulnerability in Microsoft Excel. This week's understated auction represented the second attempt of an anonymous security researcher to make money from a vulnerability in Microsoft's spreadsheet application, only to be shut down by online auction company eBay within 48 hours. Last week, the seller tried the direct approach--stating that the item for sale was information about the vulnerability--before being shut down for "encouraging illegal activity."

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.securityfocus.com/print/news/11364>

44. Cyber-bullying pops up as a new threat (La Crosse Tribune, 18 Dec 2005)

It's standard fare in school hallways — homophobic teasing of boys, a helping of sexual degradation for girls. That's how bullying can start. It escalates to pushing, shoving, tripping. They're told, "Oh, it's just a push or just a shove, ignore it," said Marilyn Tylka, Holmen Middle School counselor. "It's not that easy." Not easy to escape, either. Bullies track down their victims at home, in the mall, even at church. And now there's a new form: cyber-bullying, which uses Internet chat rooms, Web sites, instant messaging and cell phones as weapons for harassment. Photographs are morphed into obscene pictures and posted on Web sites aimed at students. Online blogs are filled with degrading comments. Troubling text messages are sent.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.lacrossetribune.com/articles/2005/12/18/news/01bully.txt>

TECHNOLOGY

45. IG: Border surveillance tech needs improvement (FCW, 16 Dec 2005)

Despite spending more than \$400 million since 1997 on remote surveillance cameras and sensors along U.S. borders, the technology doesn't integrate well and is largely ineffective in detecting illegal activity, according to a new report by the Homeland Security Department's inspector general. The report states that the cameras and seismic and magnetic sensors, which are widely deployed to detect activity along U.S. borders, aren't automatically linked and cover only about 5 percent of the borders. Although remote surveillance cameras produced 57 percent of all apprehensions along the southwest border, less than 1 percent were from sensors, the report cites as an example. Along U.S. borders, about 90 percent of the responses to sensor alerts resulted in false alarms, "meaning that [Border Patrol] agents spent many hours investigating legitimate activities," the report adds.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fcw.com/article91756-12-16-05-Web>

46. DHS approves new AT&T protégé (FCW, 19 Dec 2005)

The Homeland Security Department has approved a mentor/protégé partnership between AT&T Government Solutions and HCI Technologies. Such arrangements are intended to improve the smaller company's capabilities and make it a more viable contender for DHS information technology business. Bill Polizos, head of AT&T Government Solutions' small-business program, said the company's goal is to help HCI learn to develop new business opportunities and become a reliable supplier of networking and telecommunications services to DHS. The larger firm will help the smaller one in business development, marketing, proposal development and quality management, Polizos said.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fcw.com/article91768-12-19-05-Web>

RESOURCES

47. NIST releases biometric data specs (FCW, 16 Dec 2005)

The National Institute of Standards and Technology has released long-awaited biometric data specifications for secure federal identity cards. Agencies must begin issuing the secure cards to employees and contractors by Oct. 27, 2006. The specifications NIST released yesterday include an interoperable standard for storing fingerprint minutiae, or data extracted from fingerprint images. Fingerprint-matching equipment must be interoperable with fingerprint minutiae stored on the new cards. Traditional fingerprint images will still be required during the registration process that employees and contractors must undergo before they receive the new identity credentials. NIST officials said they created the proposed fingerprint and facial image specifications to ensure the highest possible level of performance and interoperability.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fcw.com/article91747-12-16-05-Web>

48. Identity Theft and US Data Protection Legislation: An Overview - White Paper Offers Clear Snapshot of Current and Pending State and Federal Legislation (PRNewswire, 19 Dec 2005)

SAN FRANCISCO - Identity theft reached epidemic proportions in 2005: businesses and government agencies reported security breaches that affected more than 50 million Americans, and as a result, US lawmakers introduced numerous "get-tough" measures that could severely penalize organizations that fail to protect personal or sensitive consumer information. As a company focused solely on data security for enterprises, GuardianEdge Technologies Inc. -- a market leader in reducing the cost and complexity of enterprise data security -- today released a White Paper for security and network administrators outlining the current legislative landscape for organizations that use personal electronic records and other forms of sensitive consumer information.

Entitled "Identity Theft and US Data Protection Legislation: an Overview," this document presents an survey of current state and federal laws that require organizations to implement data security and privacy programs, and to notify the public in the event of a security breach involving sensitive personal information. Topics include the California SB-1386 legislation and other state notice-of-breach laws; current federal laws such as SOX, GLBA and HIPAA; and pending federal legislation such as the so-called "Specter-Leahy" bill. The white paper is currently available for online viewing on the home page of the GuardianEdge Web site (<http://www.guardianedge.com>).

49. GAO Inventory Of Agency Automated Info Systems (1991) (Contributed by Steven Aftergood, Federation of American Scientists, www.fas.org)

A descriptive inventory of more than one hundred automated information systems and databases used by government agencies in support of counter-drug law enforcement activities was compiled by the General Accounting Office in 1991 at the request of Congress.

The surprisingly expansive 75 page account is mainly of historical interest, though it may also be useful in focusing Freedom of Information Act requests and other research activities.

"Because the agencies consider the information contained in this report to be sensitive," the GAO wrote in 1991, "we have marked the report For Official Use Only."

It is still not included in GAO's public database. But a copy was obtained by Secrecy News.

See "War on Drugs: Inventory of Federal Agencies' Automated Information Systems," U.S. General Accounting Office, GAO/IMTEC-91-28FS, April 1991 (1.8 MB PDF file):

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/gao/ais-1991.pdf>

OPPORTUNITIES

50. TSA solicits feedback on plans for frequent flier program (GovExec.com, 19 Dec 2005)

The Transportation Security Administration is seeking industry and public input on its plan to begin an airline passenger verification program at airports across the country. TSA plans to implement the Registered Traveler program nationwide in 2006, according to a notice in the Federal Register. Under the program, airline passengers can pay a fee and voluntarily give their biographic and biometric information to TSA in exchange for expedited screening at airport security checkpoints. "TSA will use the results of the biographic and biometric data collection to verify an applicant's claimed identity and to perform a security threat assessment on the individual volunteering for the program and check immigration status to ensure eligibility for the program," the notice stated.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/1205/121905c1.htm>

51. DOJ wants new criminal justice tech (FCW, 19 Dec 2005)

The Justice Department's research and development arm may offer as much as \$1 million in awards for evaluations of new criminal justice technologies, the agency has announced. The National Institute of Justice issued a request for proposals Dec. 16 specifically seeking projects that evaluate.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fcw.com/article91764-12-19-05-Web>

52. NRC to publish notice on e-submissions (FCW, 16 Dec 2005)

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) wants to mandate electronic filings for all agency hearings to speed proceedings and reduce costs. NRC is seeking public comment on the proposed rule, which would require electronic submissions to all of the agency's adjudicatory boards and other parties in proceedings, according to an agency press release. The agency would make exceptions to allow paper filings in limited situations. Currently, electronic submissions are required only for applications for high-level radioactive waste repositories.

CABLE Gram Suggested URL:

<http://www.fcw.com/article91743-12-16-05-Web>

FULL REPORTS

53. Domestic Spying Program Is Legal, Vital to Security, Rice Says - Secretary says terrorist threat demands quick action, new approaches (By Ralph Dannheisser, Washington File Special Correspondent, 18 Dec 2005)

Washington - President Bush has acted in accordance with the Constitution and U.S. law in ordering the National Security Agency to eavesdrop within the United States on people with suspected terrorist links, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice says.

And, Rice said on two television interview programs December 18, the approach is vital at a time when any delay in gathering intelligence could make it possible for terrorists to mount another operation like the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"The president is determined that he will have the ability to make certain that... the communications between people, a limited number of people, with al-Qaeda links here and conversations with terrorist activities outside will be understood so that we can detect and thereby prevent terrorist attacks," she said on NBC's *Meet the Press with Tim Russert*.

Bush acknowledged in his weekly radio address on December 17 that he had ordered the policy change, saying the operation was "critical to saving American lives" and "consistent with U.S. law and the Constitution."

The domestic spying operation was first disclosed publicly the previous day in *The New York Times*. The revelation of such a program, run without the court-approved warrants ordinarily required for domestic spying, has raised questions in Congress and elsewhere.

Rice said "the president is acting under his constitutional authority, under statutory authority" and "has gone to great lengths to make certain that he is both living under his obligations to protect Americans from another attack but also to protect their civil liberties." (See [Civil Liberties and Terrorism](#).)

"And that's why this program is very carefully controlled," the secretary continued. "It has to be reauthorized every 45 days. People are specially trained to participate in it and it has been briefed to the leadership of the Congress and including the leadership of the intelligence committees."

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT INADEQUATE

Rice said the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which requires a court order before domestic wiretapping can be undertaken, is no longer adequate to meet today's threats.

That law was passed in 1978 at a time when the main concern was "the activities of people on behalf of foreign governments, a rather stable target," Rice said. That situation was "very different from the kind of urgency of detection and thereby protection of the country that is needed today. And so the president has drawn on additional authorities that he has under the Constitution and under other statutes," she added.

In similar comments on *Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace*, Rice declared, "We simply can't be in a situation in which the president is not responding to this different kind of war on terrorism."

PATRIOT ACT SHOULD BE RENEWED

Responding to a question on the president's push for full renewal of the Patriot Act, passed in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, Rice said Bush remains opposed to the proposal by some members of Congress to extend the law for three months while negotiations continue on some controversial provisions.

"I think the president feels very strongly that we need to do this now and we need to confront this issue now," she said.

BROAD TURNOUT IN IRAQ'S RECENT ELECTIONS ENCOURAGING

In both interviews, Rice expressed pleasure at the broad turnout in the December 15 parliamentary elections in Iraq. (See [Iraq's Political Process](#).)

"The good news is that the Sunnis [many of whom boycotted previous elections] have now demonstrated that they are determined to be a part of the political process," she said.

Rice said she sees a conciliatory attitude among many Sunnis, Shia and Kurds. "I expect that they're going to try to come to a government that is broadly representative and that can send a strong message to the insurgents that the road ahead for Iraq is a political one, not one of violence," she said.

Appearing on another interview program, CNN's *Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer*, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad was similarly optimistic.

Khalilzad, who spoke from Baghdad, stressed the far heavier Sunni turnout in the most recent election, as compared with the one this past January.

FORMATION OF GOOD IRAQI GOVERNMENT WILL REDUCE VIOLENCE

The ambassador said he believes that "if a good government is formed, if Sunnis feel that their concerns are dealt with, I think violence will decrease over time significantly, and terrorists and Saddamists will be increasingly isolated."

Khalilzad defined that good government as one that "has good people in it, technocrats, people who have the confidence of Iraqis broadly."

While speed in forming the emerging Iraqi government is desirable, he said, the nature of that government also is important. Thus, he said, "We will emphasize both factors: a good, moderate cross- sectarian, cross-ethnic government but as soon as possible."

U.S. TROOPS WILL LEAVE IRAQ WHEN COUNTRY IS STABLE

With respect to the prospects for a withdrawal of U.S. and coalition military forces, he said, "I think it is true that Iraqis would like forces to leave. No one likes to have a foreign force in the numbers that we have here on their territory.

"We understand that, and we would like to leave as soon as possible when Iraqis can stand on their own feet," he said.

Khalilzad said he did not know the answer to Blitzer's specific question as to when the U.S. troop presence might fall to below 100,000 from the present 158,000-160,000 level. But, he said, "We see a set of circumstances developing that in the near future will allow for a recalibration and downsizing of the force significantly."

For more on U.S. policy, see [Response to Terrorism](#) and [Iraq Update](#).

The transcripts of Rice's interviews on [Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace](#) and [NBC's Meet the Press with Tim Russert](#) are available on the State Department Web site. Khalilzad's [interview with Wolf Blitzer](#) is available on CNN's Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

54. Bush Proposal for New Orleans Recovery Mounts to \$3 Billion - Rebuilding of levee system called vital to recovery, rebuilding (Dept. of State, 16 Dec 2005)

Washington – The Bush administration is advocating a \$1.5 billion federal commitment to rebuild the levees of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

The funds would pay for repairing hurricane damage and for enhancing the city's protection against future storms.

“The levee system will be better and stronger than it ever has been in the history of New Orleans,” said Donald Powell, the federal coordinator for Gulf Coast rebuilding, at a White House briefing December 15.

The administration already has committed \$1.6 billion to repair the levees in time for the beginning of the next hurricane season June 1, 2006, and to correct design flaws that were discovered after the levees breached and flooded much of the low-lying city. That work already is under way, Powell said.

The additional spending proposed December 15 would take the levees to a higher standard, armoring them with concrete and stone and creating a better pumping system to remove water from the city during storms of the future.

“If a hurricane such as Katrina ever visited New Orleans again, I'm convinced that the work that the [Army] Corps [of Engineers] would be doing as I've described will prevent any catastrophic flooding,” Powell said.

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin also attended the briefing, expressing support for the levee fortification.

“These levees will be as high as 17 feet [5.2 meters] in some areas; we've never had that,” Nagin said. “These levees will be fortified with rock and concrete; we've never had that before.”

Powell said that the levee fortification plan could act as a catalyst for other rebuilding in the battered city. Stronger, higher levees will help ease the fear that New Orleans could suffer another catastrophic flood, a fear that Powell said he found widespread among displaced city residents.

“Everything focused on the levees – jobs, housing, business moving back into the area,” Powell said, adding that the safety of the city in the future is a major concern. “When will the levees be rebuilt, and how will they be rebuilt?”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will lead the levee reconstruction effort. Lieutenant General Carl Strock said the Bush administration proposal also dedicates \$250 million to

the restoration and protection of the wetlands that lie between New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico.

“The reason those are so important is that if we can prevent the waters from surging into those canals, then we can reduce a lot of the stresses on that part of the levee system,” said Struck.

Only in recent decades have environmental scientists come to recognize the critical role that wetlands play in protecting low-lying coastal areas from ocean surges.

For additional information on the storm and its aftermath, see [Hurricane Recovery](#).

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

55. U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency Announces Steroid Arrest - Eighty-two percent of seized steroids manufactured in Mexico (Dept. of State, 16 Dec 2005)

As part of its effort to target illegal Internet drug trafficking, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has carried out the largest steroid enforcement operation in U.S. history, according to a December 15 DEA press release.

Operation Gear Grinder was a 21-month Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation that targeted eight major steroid-manufacturing companies, their owners and their trafficking associates. This operation was a collaborative effort involving DEA, numerous U.S. state and local law enforcement agencies and the Mexican Federal Agency of Investigation (AFI). It resulted in the December 14 arrest of Albert Saltiel-Cohen, owner of three of the world's largest anabolic steroid manufacturers.

The DEA estimated that annual sales via the Internet of these eight businesses generated \$56 million. The DEA also estimated that 82 percent of all seized steroids submitted to their forensic laboratories for analysis are of Mexican origin.

Following is the text of the DEA press release, with further details:

(begin text)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION
(Karen P. Tandy, Administrator)
Washington, D.C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 15, 2005

DEA LEADS LARGEST STEROID BUST IN HISTORY

82 percent of all DEA-seized and analyzed steroids in U.S. are manufactured in Mexico; Large majority of those come from targets in Operation Gear Grinder

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy today announced the arrest of Albert Saliel-Cohen, owner of three of the world's largest anabolic steroid manufacturers, as part of the largest steroid enforcement operation in U.S. history. Operation Gear Grinder is a 21-month Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation that targeted eight major steroid-manufacturing companies, their owners, and their trafficking associates. By reviewing the sources of all seized and analyzed steroids submitted to the DEA's forensic laboratories, DEA intelligence analysts and diversion investigators found that 82 percent of the steroids seized and analyzed are of Mexican origin. A large majority of those 82 percent seized and analyzed steroids originate from the eight companies identified in Operation Gear Grinder. These businesses conducted their sales via the Internet, and DEA estimates their combined total U.S. steroid sales are \$56 million per year.

"Steroid traffickers market their product by luring young people with promises of enhanced performance and appearance," DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy said, "but what they don't say is the illicit use of these harmful drugs can destroy the very bodies that they are supposed to improve. Drug traffickers prey on the belief that steroids enhance ability, but steroids only rob that ability, as we have seen so often from the affected lives of too many youth and professional athletes."

Operation Gear Grinder is part of the Virtual Enforcement Initiative, a coordinated DEA effort to target illegal Internet drug trafficking, which was launched in April with Operation Cyber Chase and continued in September with Operation CYBERx. DEA's cyber initiative acknowledges drug traffickers are embracing the use of 21st-century technology to further spread their virus into U.S. communities.

The steroid manufacturers involved in this investigation tried to mask the true consumers of these products by marketing them as being developed and sold for use in animals. The veterinary manufacturers ("laboratorios") took notice of the demand for anabolic steroids and created a marketing strategy tailored to the needs of the U.S. consumer -- to include high-quality products and Internet websites. Communications via the Internet and parcel distributions were the core of these companies' operations. The websites showcase the products and offer an email address to exchange prices and tracking numbers, and give ordering and payment instructions.

These eight companies used U.S.-based email addresses and listed each manufacturer utilizing a business website to place their products in the hands of American consumers. Some manufacturers provided direct referrals to distributors through the Contact Us section of the websites. The steroids were smuggled into the United States, and shipped to customers. In addition, steroids from the eight companies were also shipped to U.S. traffickers, who re-sold the products to their customers. Financial transactions were

primarily done via Western Union wire transfers, as well as bank transfers and credit card payments.

These groups also supplied numerous pharmacies along the U.S.-Mexico border, where U.S. customers could purchase steroids and smuggle them back across the border into the United States.

In addition to the Saltiel-Cohen arrest and indictments, DEA today arrested 4 steroid trafficking suspects in San Diego and Laredo, Texas. As part of Operation Gear Grinder, DEA also identified over 2,000 U.S. customers that have received steroids from the businesses indicted today. These customers consist of individual users, street-level dealers, and organized trafficking groups in dozens of cities across the country.

The Southern District of California has issued indictments charging the companies and individual defendants with the following: Title 21, U.S.C., Secs. 952, 960 and 963 -- Conspiracy to Import Anabolic Steroids; Title 21, U.S.C., Secs. 846 and 841(a)(1) -- Conspiracy to Distribute Anabolic Steroids; Title 18, U.S.C., Sec. 2; Title 18, U.S.C., Secs. 1956(h) and 1956(a)(1)(A)(I) -- Conspiracy to Launder Money; Title 21, U.S.C., Sec. 853(a), Title 18, U.S.C., Sec. 982 and Title 21, U.S.C., Sec. 853(p) -- Criminal Forfeiture.

Manufacturing Targets

1. Companies: Quality Vet, Denkall, and Animal Power

Owners: Alberto Saltiel Cohen, Joaquin Garcia Rivas, and Javier Garcia de la Pena.
These manufacturers are significant U.S. suppliers of Nandrolone

2. Company: Laboratorios Tornel

Owner: Luis Bravo-Tornel

Manager: Mauricio Bravo-Berentsen

This manufacturer is a top U.S. supplier of Testosterone Decanoate

3. Company: Laboratorios Brovel

Owner: Arturo Bravo-Valdes

This manufacturer is a top U.S. supplier of Nandrolone Decanoate

4. Company: Pet's Pharma

Owner: Ramon Vargas

Co-Owner-Eduardo Hernandez

This manufacturer is a top U.S. source of Testosterone Enanthate

5. Company: Syd Group

Owner: Armando Guzman-Armenta

Associate: Amalia Lara

This manufacturer is a top U.S. source of Stanozolol

6. Company: Loeffler

Officer: Jose Angel Garcia-Hinojosa

This manufacturer is a top U.S. source of Methandrostenolone

Operation Gear Grinder was coordinated by the DEA Special Operations Division. DEA offices in San Diego, Mexico City, Tijuana, New York, Houston, San Antonio, and Laredo, Texas participated in the investigation.

This investigation was a collaborative effort involving DEA, numerous U.S. state and local law enforcement agencies, and the Mexican Federal Agency of Investigation (AFI).

(end text)

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