



Inside ICE

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Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers announcing BEST seizures at a February 3 press conference in San Antonio. At left is Alonzo Pena, special agent-in-charge for ICE in San Antonio.

ICE-led Border Task Force Seizes IEDs, Weapons In Major Arrest

SAN ANTONIO—Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers announced on February 3 that ICE agents and other officers assigned to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) in Laredo, Texas, had seized materials for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and large quantities of automatic and semiautomatic weapons, ammunition, narcotics and cash.

On January 27, BEST task force officers from ICE, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Laredo Police Department executed a search warrant at a location in Laredo. The search revealed two completed IEDs and materials for making

approximately 33 more IEDs. Agents found 300 primers, 1,280 rounds of ammunition, five grenade shells, nine pipes with end caps, 26 grenade triggers (14 with fuses and primers attached), 31 grenade spoons, 40 grenade pins, 19 black powder casings, as well as 65 firearm magazines, a silencer and other firearms components.

“Keeping explosives and other high-powered weaponry out of the hands of violent criminal organizations is a central focus of the new Border Enforcement Security Task Force in Laredo. As these seizures and arrests demonstrate, ICE is working day-and-night with its task force partners to stem the tide of violence that has been ravaging border communities in South

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Border Task Force Makes Impact

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Texas in recent months,” said ICE Assistant Secretary Myers.

Formerly known as “Operation Black Jack,” BEST is a Homeland Security-led, intelligence-driven task force that was created in Laredo in July 2005. Officers from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies are collocated in the task force to share information and target the leadership and supporting infrastructure of violent criminal organizations operating in the Laredo/ Nuevo Laredo area.

Since its inception, BEST has arrested 28 individuals and seized numerous assault rifles, handguns, silencers, a large quantity of weapons components and ammunition, as well as roughly 700 pounds of marijuana, 336 pounds of cocaine, 1.5 pounds of methamphetamine and roughly \$1.14 million.

The day before the seizure of the IEDs, members of the BEST task force arrested an accused weapons dealer/manufacturer in Laredo and found a weapons cache at his home. Agents arrested the 30-year-old man for federal firearms violations after he allegedly sold a fully automatic AK-47 assault rifle and cocaine to an undercover ICE agent. A search of his home revealed six kits to assemble fully automatic weapons and at least 20 assembled firearms, including AK-47 and AR-15 assault rifles. Agents also found 26 firearm magazines, two silencers, two bullet-proof vests, sniper scopes, police scanners, pin-hole cameras, 2,600 rounds of ammunition, quantities of cocaine, methamphetamine and cash.

In addition, on January 12, BEST team members arrested another Laredo resident after executing a search warrant on his home where they found firearms and narcotics. Agents seized roughly 400 pounds of marijuana, two AK-47 assault weapons, two Uzi assault weapons, a silencer and approximately \$5,000.



Assault rifles, hunting rifles, pistols, silencers, ballistic vests, ammunition, narcotics and currency, and (above) materials for improvised explosive devices seized by BEST task force officers in Laredo, Texas.

BEST in Laredo is comprised of agents and officers from ICE, ATF, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the FBI, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Laredo Police Department and other state and local law enforcement agencies. The United States Attorney’s Office and the District Attorney’s Office also provide significant support to BEST.

In January, DHS announced that several new BEST task forces would be created along the border based on the Laredo BEST model. The new task forces will focus on every element of the enforcement process, from interdiction to prosecution and removal, with the goal of eliminating the top leadership and supporting infrastructures that sustain cross-border criminal organizations. The next BEST will be stood up in Arizona, after DHS conducts a threat assessment of that area. DHS will conduct similar assessments as it moves forward in establishing more task forces and will constantly measure results in order to refine and focus its enforcement actions. ■

Inside ICE is an e-newsletter produced by the ICE Office of Public Affairs to inform the public about the mission, operations and activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

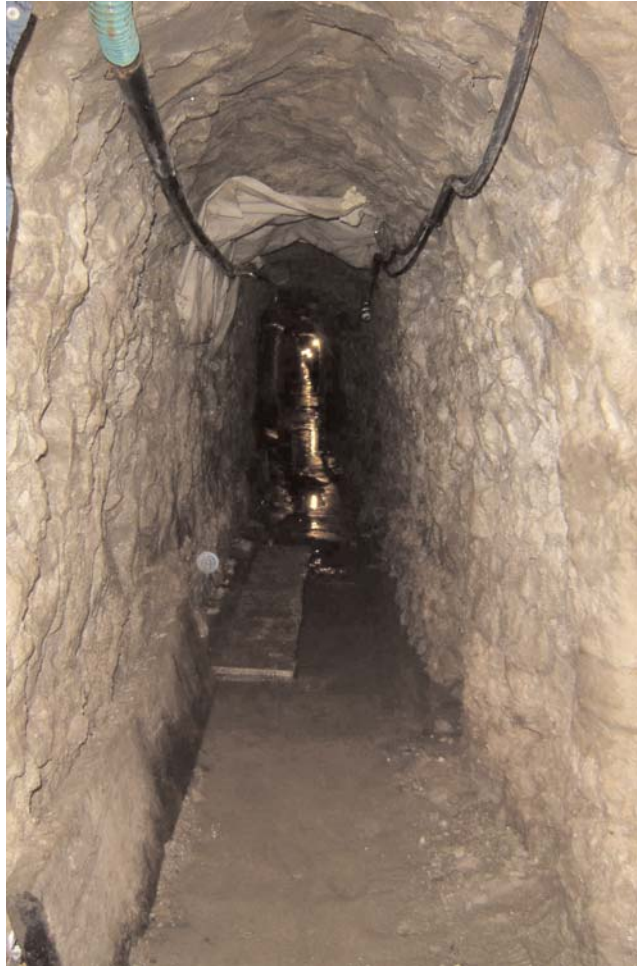
ICE Makes Arrest In Probe Of Major Southwest Border Tunnel

SAN DIEGO—ICE agents arrested a suspect January 28 in connection with an ongoing investigation into a major drug tunnel linking warehouses in Otay Mesa, Calif. and Tijuana, Mexico. The tunnel is one of the largest and most sophisticated ever discovered on the Southwest border.

The suspect, a Mexican national, faces charges of conspiracy to import a controlled substance. Investigators say the allegations stem from the man's ties to the Otay Mesa warehouse that concealed the U.S. access point for the highly sophisticated passageway.

The arrest came less than 24 hours after ICE issued an alert, warning that case leads indicated persons who had been in the tunnel or were responsible for its design or construction might be in imminent danger. ICE urged those individuals to come forward and contact ICE at any port of entry along the Mexican border. The agency pledged it would do everything in its power to ensure their safety.

The ongoing investigation is being carried out by the San Diego Tunnel Task Force, made up of agents and officers from ICE, the Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Since the existence of the passageway was confirmed on January 25, task force investigators have been working round-the-clock following up a wide variety of leads.



A lighted, ventilated tunnel stretches the length of eight football fields across the U.S.-Mexico border. The tunnel, which has professional engineering features and a concrete floor, was discovered by members of the San Diego Tunnel Task Force. Inside the tunnel on the U.S. side, ICE agents and other investigators discovered several hundred pounds of marijuana.

“As this weekend’s arrest demonstrates, our investigation is progressing very quickly,” said Miguel Unzueta, special agent-in-charge for ICE in San Diego. “The task force is working tirelessly to bring those responsible for this audacious crime to justice.”

The task force is receiving substantial support in the investigation from CBP’s forensic lab, which is conducting advanced fingerprint analysis and DNA sampling. In addition, ICE’s Cybercrimes Unit is assisting with computer forensics.

The tunnel discovery is the result of a long-term investigation by the San Diego Tunnel Task Force. It is using an array of high-tech equipment and intelligence information to pinpoint the location of underground passageways along the border in the region. Since 9/11, federal authorities have discovered more than 20 cross-border tunnels along the U.S.-Mexico border in California and Arizona. ■



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

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**Toll-Free Tip Line
1-866-DHS-2ICE**

ICE MOST WANTED

This Week's Featured Fugitive:

Juan Carlos Arboledar



ALIASES: Juan Carlos

HEIGHT: 5'07"

DATE OF BIRTH: 03/14/1957

WEIGHT: 153 lbs.

PLACE OF BIRTH: Colombia

HAIR: Black

SCARS/MARKS: Unknown

EYES: Brown

LAST KNOWN WHEREABOUTS: Unknown

BACKGROUND: Wanted for international drug smuggling. Arboleda is believed to be in Colombia and remains a fugitive.

If you have any information on the whereabouts of the above fugitive, please call **1-866-DHS-2ICE**
View more ICE Most Wanted online at: www.ice.gov/graphics/investigations/wanted/

Always On Duty



FPS Police Inspector Paul McManus assists members of a local rescue squad recently following a rollover crash on I-89 in Vermont. FPS officers around the country typically assist local public safety officials when the need arises. Inspector McManus was the first officer on the scene. He was traveling between federal buildings in Montpelier and Burlington when the crash occurred during a winter storm. An Associated Press photographer, a volunteer fireman who also assisted at the scene, took the photo. In rural areas like Vermont, citizens from different professions and walks of life often come together to help out when lives are at risk. (Photo courtesy Associated Press)