Spotlight

Department of Homeland Security

Office of Inspector General

Why This Matters

Each year millions of foreign nationals seek entry into the United States at air, land, and ports of entry. DHS uses several automated screening technologies and data systems to support those DHS officers who evaluate immigration and law enforcement information to determine whether the individual poses a risk to the United States.

DHS operational components must be able to access, share, and evaluate information in a timely manner in order to identify, and prevent the illegal entry of, some foreign nationals while facilitating legitimate travel by everyone else.

DHS Response

DHS concurred with five of the eight recommendations.

DHS chose to retain the NSEERS regulatory framework in case it is needed in the future. Management is making a reasonable policy determination to maintain the existing regulatory framework. Although the former program may have had value, advancement in information technologies have rendered it obsolete.

Statute and regulations restrict access by TSA Coordination Centers to federal law enforcement data systems. We determined that within the airport environment, access to law enforcement information on foreign nationals is vital.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov

Information Sharing on Foreign Nationals: Border Security (Redacted)

What We Determined

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has invested resources to improve its ability to share information on foreign nationals who seek entry into the United States at a port of entry, however, additional resources are needed. We determined that fragmented data systems remain a challenge for DHS officers who conduct more in-depth evaluations of foreign nationals at ports of entry. In some instances, resource prioritization by one component affected the efficiency or effectiveness of other DHS components. Continued limitations in infrastructure, coordination challenges, and access to multiple data systems could hinder information sharing efforts.

The report identified measures to enhance the effectiveness of DHS, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) programs.

What We Recommend

The Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General recommended the following:

1) Terminate the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS).

2) Collaborate with commercial airlines to develop solutions to reduce the frequency of duplicate flight manifests.

3) Establish Department-level oversight to address CBP, U.S. Border Patrol, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations operational challenges.

4) Improve technology and data capabilities at several TSA Coordination Centers.

5) Promote more interaction between the Air and Marine Operations Center and some other law enforcement organizations.