



The W-5 of Human Smuggling to Canada

RCMP Criminal Intelligence Directorate, Unclassified, October 2006

WHO

Migrants

- Improperly documented migrants, economic migrants, criminals and terrorists
- Estimated 2.5 to 4 million migrants cross international borders illegally each year
- Between 1997 and 2002, smugglers assisted almost 12 per cent of improperly documented migrants (14,792), who were intercepted in Canada or en route
- Impossible to accurately determine numbers due to clandestine nature of crime

Smugglers

- Organized crime groups composed of recruiters, transporters and escorts, document suppliers, enforcers, support and debt collection, some of whom are corrupt government officials
- Tend to recruit migrants of the same ethnic background or region
- Groups linked to Italian, Asian, East European and East Indian organized crime recently disrupted

WHAT

- Smuggling is the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national or permanent resident. (*UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, 2000*)
- Differs from human trafficking, which involves exploitation of the migrant primarily in the destination country, often for purposes of forced labour or prostitution
- Can be connected to other serious crimes, such as drug smuggling and money laundering

WHEN

- Ongoing; In the past decade, globalization has resulted in unprecedented migration of individuals seeking better job opportunities abroad and reliance on smugglers
- In Fall 2005, 47 Chinese nationals were smuggled via four cruise ships on the East Coast, marking the first identified use of this mode of transport to Canada
- In February 2006, Asian and East European organized crime groups were disrupted in Central Canada for their role in smuggling about 100 migrants, who were intercepted over the last two years in the Windsor-Detroit area, the majority of whom were Chinese nationals
- In April 2006, an East Indian criminal organization was disrupted for its involvement in the smuggling of dozens of East Indian and Pakistani nationals into Canada and across the border into the United States on the West Coast

IMPLICATIONS

- National security
- Crime
- Border security
- International relations
- Public health
- Immigration system integrity
- Economic/Labour market

- In the last decade, the largest interception involved about 600 Chinese migrants arriving by boat on the West Coast in 1999
- Length of journey varies from one day to months or years

WHERE

- From least developed countries of Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe to Western Europe, Australia and North America
- Direct or circuitous routes, changed frequently to avoid detection
- Common routes from Asia via Eastern Europe, to Western Europe and North America or via Central and South America via Mexico to North America
- Surreptitious two-way traffic across Canada-U.S. border, by land or water, often via southern Ontario or British Columbia, or more rural areas when enforcement is increased
- Can also be routes used for smuggling drugs and contraband
- Arrive at air and land ports of entry, between the ports, and at inland Citizenship and Immigration Canada offices

WHY

Migrants

- Globalization
- Political/Civil instability
- Economic instability
- Desirable destinations
- Ignorance of travel methods, routes, destinations
- Inability to obtain funds in advance
- Inability to obtain travel documents
- Perceived higher chance of gaining permanent residence through refugee determination process
- Restrictive immigration policies
- Increased border security

HOW

- Smugglers market and sell illegal travel to desirable destinations
- Small organizations to maintain flexibility, profitability and security; work often done on a contract basis
- Crime: source region, transportation and destination
- Corrupt officials in source, transit and destination countries
- False travel documents: Imposters, counterfeit, forged or fraudulently obtained passports (particularly visa-free), visas or permits
- Target visa and domestic processes
- All modes of transport

Smugglers

- Huge profits: Fees to reach Canada can range from as high as \$US 20,000 to \$US 60,000 (Down-payments of 10 to 20 per cent, progressive payments throughout journey); Estimated annual profits of \$US 10 billion (smuggling and trafficking); Profits comparable to drugs and arms smuggling; Making higher profits by smuggling greater numbers at the same time
- Relatively low risk of detection, arrest and prosecution, and weak sentences if convicted