



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 22, 2016

Military Concerned About Large Numbers of Individuals From Terrorist Regions Crossing Border

The U.S. Southern Command's (SOUTHCOM) J-2 intelligence directorate reported recently in internal channels that "special interest aliens" are working with a known alien smuggling network in Latin America to reach the United States. The smuggling network was not identified.

SOUTHCOM is a joint command based in Doral, Florida, representing all branches of the military and several other federal agencies. SOUTHCOM is responsible for providing contingency planning, operations, and security cooperation in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.



Army Colonel Lisa A. Garcia, SOUTHCOM's chief of public affairs, told the *Washington Free Beacon*, which broke this story:

Networks that specialize in smuggling individuals from regions of terrorist concern, mainly from the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, the Middle East, and East Africa, are indeed a concern for Southcom and other interagency security partners who support our country's national security.

There are major hubs that serve as entry points into the region for migrants from those areas of concern attempting to enter the U.S. along our border with Mexico.

Garcia did not specifically mention the intelligence report, the *Free Beacon* noted. She continued:

[In 2015, we saw a total of 331,000 migrants enter the southwestern border between the [United States] and Mexico and] of that we estimate more than 30,000 of those were from countries of terrorist concern.

The infiltrators from terrorist states and unstable regions exploit vulnerabilities in commercial transportation systems and immigration enforcement agencies in some of the countries used for transit, Garcia told the *Free Beacon*.

"This makes the case for Trump's wall," an unidentified American security official told the *Free Beacon* of the SOUTHCOM report. "These guys are doing whatever they want to get in the country."

The report also quoted a statement from SOUTHCOM's commander, Admiral Kurt Tidd (shown), who said last week that the lack of information is hampering security efforts to stem alien smuggling. Tidd said:

An element that has been long recognized is that our ability to track people moving through transportation systems is an area that we must continue to devote efforts on, and the ease with which human traffickers are able to use our transportation systems to move people through the networks relatively undetected should give us all concern.



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A news item posted on SOUTHCOM's website last March cited Tidd's testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 10, during which the admiral said that global terrorist and criminal networks are the biggest threat facing SOUTHCOM, "corrosively affecting the stability and security of the United States and every country they infect."

"No two networks are alike," Tidd said, explaining that some are international criminal enterprises focused on transporting any illicit cargo for the right price, while others are small operations engaged in smuggling illegal migrants. The admiral said that other networks support terrorist organizations through financing and the spread of violent extremist ideology.

Tidd noted that security in the Western Hemisphere connects directly to other parts of the world, explaining: "Smuggling networks run through South America directly into our homeland [and] foreign terrorist fighters flow from the Caribbean to Syria and to Iraq."

As we [noted in an article in June](#), documents obtained by Representative Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) revealed that a lengthy route extending from Brazil to the U.S.-Mexican border has been used to transport at least a dozen Middle Eastern aliens into the United States, including an Afghani man with links to the Taliban.

The illegal aliens were smuggled into the United States by means of an elaborate network based in Brazil, which helped them transit to South America from the Middle East. Once there, they were taken on a long, convoluted route going through Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. The roundabout route obviously is meant to make detection of the smuggled aliens by authorities as difficult as possible.

We reported in [another article last January](#) that two Pakistani nationals who had been linked to terrorism were apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) agents south of San Diego and just north of the Mexican border last September. However, details of their capture and interrogation were only made public in late December, when the *Washington Times* broke the story.

The report quoted from a letter that Representative Hunter wrote to Homeland Security Secretary Johnson in December demanding to know how many people listed in the FBI's terrorist screening database have been apprehended at the border. Duncan wrote:

The southern land border remains vulnerable to intrusion and exists as a point of extreme vulnerability.

Evidently there are criminal organizations and individuals with the networks and know-how to facilitate illegal entry into the United States without regard for one's intentions or status on a terrorist watch list. The detention of the two Pakistani nationals underscores the fact that any serious effort to secure our homeland must include effective border security and immigration enforcement.

The recent report from SOUTHCOM indicates that the vulnerability of our southern border noted by Hunter last year continues. As Colonel Garcia noted, almost 10 percent of the 331,000 migrants who crossed our southwestern border last year "were from countries of terrorist concern." With terrorist attacks continuing across Europe, we can ill afford to let down our guard and allow potential terrorists to cross our borders with such ease.

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