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"People smuggling: national security implications"

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Australian Institute of Criminology



Human Smuggling: a Security Threat to Australia?





Introduction to illegal migration

- The international migration population is estimated to be approximately 100 million people - about 2% of the current world population
- The smuggling and trafficking of human beings has increased throughout the world, owing to globalisation and other factors



- growing involvement of organised crime groups
- illicit migration an issue with major security implications



Definitions

Smuggling: the procurement of illegal entry of a person into a State of which that person is not a national, with the objective of making a profit.

Trafficking: the recruitment, transportation or receipt of persons through deception or coercion for the purposes of prostitution, other sexual exploitation or forced labour.



The Players

- Immigrants
- Smugglers and traffickers
- Law enforcement



Immigrants

- Escape from extreme poverty and unemployment
- Improve earnings and standard of living
- Escape from persecution, conflict or war
- Escape from ecological crisis or degradation
- Human rights abuses



Smugglers

- increasing involvement of transnational organised crime groups
- motivated by profit
- people smuggling is low risk, high gain



✈ characteristics of sophisticated smuggling syndicates:

- ✍ well-equipped forgery workshops
- ✍ flexibility of operations
- ✍ established centres in transit countries
- ✍ well-financed
- ✍ contacts with corrupt officials
- ✍ diverse range of criminal activities
- ✍ use of violence



Law Enforcers

- immigration : DIMA
- customs : ACS
- police : Federal and State police
- Australia has a “whole of government” approach to people smuggling
- law enforcement capacity strengthened by punitive anti-people smuggling legislation



The Australian experience of people smuggling

- thousands of people smuggled here each year, by air and sea
- traditionally, main route was by air:
 - 98/99 unauthorised arrivals: 926 by sea, 2106 by air
- recently, explosion in boat arrivals:
 - 2000/1 unauthorised arrivals: over 4141 by sea; 1508 by air



People smuggling: a security threat to Australia?

- People smuggling is a form of transnational crime
- Nature of threats posed: threats to...
 - ↳ internal order and stability
 - ↳ social harmony
 - ↳ economic stability
 - ↳ international relations



Nature and level of threat

- ✈ Australia's attractiveness as a destination country for smuggling
 - ✍ proximity to SE Asia coupled with Australia's comparative stability
 - ✍ international visibility due to Olympics



- ✈ economic threat posed by illegal migration and work forces
 - ℞ cost of illegal immigration is \$200-300 million annually
 - ℞ cheap migrant labour and avoidance of tax system in certain sectors



- influence on social and ethnic tensions
 - ↳ migrants come from source countries experiencing high ethnic tensions - carryover?
 - ↳ local social and political tensions in response to illegal immigrants
 - ↳ unrest within detention centres
- subversion of government policy on legitimate migration



→ other threats

↳ illegals are of unknown “character”

↳ potential continuation of militant beliefs or insurgency

↳ exploitation of refugee system

↳ increasing involvement of **organised crime** in smuggling and resultant threats posed by these criminal actors and enterprises

→ tensions in international relations as a result of government responses to people smuggling



The Reforms

- “Organised People Smuggling”
- “Slavery and Sexual Servitude”
- Increased Powers for Coastwatch



Global Initiatives

- Australia is actively engaged in international fora as part of its fight against people smugglers
- Ministerial delegations targeting people smuggling and organised crime
- Draft UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its optional Protocols



UN Global Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings

- launched by UNODCCP
- policy oriented research and technical cooperation
- AIC is providing expert research advice to the programme, and is involved in the Demonstration Project in the Philippines
- Future research into trafficking of Filipinos to Australia



Conclusions

- recent rapid acceleration in the rate of people smuggling to Australia is a matter of real concern
- increasing sophistication of people smuggling operations, and involvement of organised crime
- these together pose a number of threats to Australia's security



- threat is enhanced by Australia's attractiveness as a destination country
- Federal government has implemented legislation and various policies
- Human smuggling is, however, a transnational activity, and domestic efforts must be supported by international cooperation