

Homeland Insecurity: The Year in Review

by Michelle Malkin

The past year was a good year for terrorists, violent gang members, law-breakers and fraud artists seeking safe haven in America. Let's reminisce:

THE RISE OF MS-13. The savage El Salvador-based gang, Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), has now penetrated more than a dozen states. In May, a Fairfax, Va., teenager had his fingers chopped off in an MS-13 machete attack. In November, Washington, D.C.-area police received warning that MS-13 is plotting to ambush and kill them when they respond to service calls. Active in alien, drug, and weapons smuggling, MS-13 members in America have been tied to numerous killings, robberies, carjackings, extortions, and rapes. The gang has also been linked to efforts to help al Qaeda infiltrate the U.S.-Mexico border.

THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE.

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Border Patrol officers and local investigative journalists in the Southwest reported on increasing numbers of Middle Eastern males entering illegally from Mexico. Muslim prayer books and Arabic diaries were discovered on "Terrorist Alley" in southern Arizona. Suspected al Qaeda operative Adnan Shukrijumah, a fugitive Saudi pilot who reportedly met with MS-13 earlier this year, is believed to be in Mexico.

In April, a suspected al Qaeda agent arrested in Queens, N.Y., revealed a scheme to smuggle terrorists across the U.S.-Mexico border. In July, two alert Border Patrol agents apprehended Farida Goolam Mohamed Ahmed at McAllen (Texas) airport. She was carrying an altered South African passport, muddy jeans, and dirty shoes. She confessed to having entered the country illegally by crossing the Rio Grande River. Court documents showed that she was on a government watch list and had entered the United States up to 250 times.

Upon news of Ahmed's arrest, intelligence experts reported that suspected terror agents are acquiring passports from South Africa and other non-suspect countries; flying to the al Qaeda-coddling "tri-border area" in South America; learning Spanish; traveling to Mexico; and doing the backstroke into America.

Lawmakers in Texas warned that the feds are arresting and then releasing thousands of other suspected terrorists classified as "Other Than Mexicans" because of lack of jail space.

President Bush said, "Family values don't stop at the Rio Grande." I repeat: Neither do the Islamofascists.

BUNGLING WASHINGTON BUREAUCRATS. In the skies, federal air marshals continue to be hampered by director Thomas Quinn's moronic "professional" dress code (no athletic socks or jeans allowed). Although he no longer oversees transportation security, underperformin' Norman Mineta remains in charge of the Department of Transportation, where he maintains an absolutist opposition to homeland defense profiling. And kowtowing to civil liberties Chicken Littles and Muslim lobbyists, the Bush administration canceled the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System out of fear of privacy and discrimination lawsuits.

In July, the Department of Homeland Security rebuked Border Patrol agents in Southern California for conducting interior enforcement sweeps because they did not bow down to the "sensitivities" of open-borders radicals. In September, DHS Border Security Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson

stated publicly that it's "not realistic" for his own officers to try to do their jobs and deport law-breakers.

Morale among rank-and-file enforcement officers has plummeted. The botched Bernie Kerik DHS nomination and the refusal of the Bush administration to support common-sense immigration enforcement and secure identity measures in the "intelligence reform" bill (which ended up containing more non-intelligence than intelligence provisions) didn't help.

AMNESTY, SHAMNESTY. The year ended as it began, with President Bush dangling his abominable proposal to grant a mass governmental pardon to millions of illegal alien workers and their employers. First floated in January, the White House also pushed through a Social Security "totalization" program with Mexico, which will dispense billions of dollars to illegal alien workers who used counterfeit Social Security cards and stolen numbers to secure illegal jobs.

Announcement of the Bush plan led to a spike in illegal alien apprehensions at the border during the first three months of 2004 – 25 percent higher compared with last year. Those are just the ones who got caught. T. J. Bonner, president of the National Border Patrol Council, told the Washington Times in April: "People were coming up to our agents and saying, 'Where do we sign up for that guest-worker program, or that amnesty?' Word travels like wildfire down there."

AND AROUND THE WORLD. The

word is we're open. Wide open. What a way to ring in the New Year. •