



Homeland  
Security

FEB 27 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Directors  
Deputy Assistant Directors  
Special Agents in Charge  
Border Enforcement Security Task Force Supervisors

FROM: James A. Dinkins   
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Homeland Security Investigations

SUBJECT: Border Enforcement Security Taskforce (BEST) Strategic Plan

**Purpose**

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform Homeland Security special agents, in furtherance of defining the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the HSI led Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) program, the National BEST Unit (NBU) has developed the five -year BEST Strategic Plan for (FY 2012-2016). This foundational document will enhance the efficacy of the program, and allow for nationwide systematic implementation.

**Issue**

The BEST was created by HSI in 2005 and formally adopted by DHS in 2006 to maximize federal, state, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement resources in an effort to identify, disrupt, and dismantle organizations that seek to exploit vulnerabilities to the overall safety and security of the American public.

Following the creation of the NBU in February 2010, it was determined that a written set of operational principles and guidelines did not exist. As such, the BEST Strategic Plan was created to give BEST field offices a thorough outline regarding BEST management, operational guidelines, and performance indicators. The BEST Strategic Plan will steer future development of the BEST program, provide the necessary framework for future planning, sets strategic objectives, and provides measurable indicators for success.



**BORDER ENFORCEMENT SECURITY TASK FORCE  
(BEST)**

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
Fiscal Years 2012-2016**

**Homeland Security Investigations**

# Table of Contents

<b>I. A Message from Homeland Security Investigations Executive Associate Director.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>II. Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Key components of BEST.....	5
The National BEST Unit.....	6
<b>III. Elements of the Program.....</b>	<b>6</b>
BEST Mission.....	6
BEST Vision.....	6
BEST Strategic Goals.....	7
Established BEST Locations.....	8
<b>IV. BEST Guiding Principle.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Use an All-Threat Approach.....	9
BEST is Built on Partnerships.....	9
Target Discrimination and Risk Mitigation.....	10
<b>V. BEST Five Year Strategic Goals and Objectives.....</b>	<b>10</b>
BEST Strategic Goal 1 (b) (7)(E).....	10
Objective 1.1: (b) (7)(E).....	11
Objective 1.2: (b) (7)(E).....	11
Objective 1.3: (b) (7)(E).....	11
BEST Strategic Goal 2 (b) (7)(E).....	12
Objective 2.1: (b) (7)(E).....	12
(b) (7)(E).....	12
Objective 2.2: (b) (7)(E).....	12
Objective 2.3: (b) (7)(E).....	13
Objective 2.4: (b) (7)(E).....	13
Objective 2.5: (b) (7)(E).....	14
BEST Strategic Goal 3: (b) (7)(E).....	14
Objective 3.1: Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act.....	15
Objective 3.2: Border Tunnel Prevention Act.....	15
Objective 3.3: Develop an HSI Policy to Streamline and Bring Uniformity to the Program.....	15
Objective 3.4: Provide Programmatic Support, and Policy and Planning Oversight.....	15
BEST Strategic Goal 4: Enhance Information Sharing and Intelligence Integration.....	16
Objective 4.1: Empowerment of BEST Field Executive Boards (FEBs) at each BEST.....	16
Objective 4.2: Empowerment of the BEST Executive Steering Committee (ESC).....	16
Objective 4.3: Empowerment of the NBU through Partner Agency Representatives.....	16

## **Table of Contents (Continued)**

<b>VI. Performance Measurement.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix A: BEST Goals and Objectives .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix B: BEST Goals to DHS Mission Comparison.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix C: BEST Stats Since Inception.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix D: BEST Agency Participants .....</b>	<b>22</b>

## I. A Message from the HSI Executive Associate Director

Border related crime, and the violence that is often associated with it, poses a significant risk to border security, public safety and the national security of the United States. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) law enforcement components continue to focus their enforcement efforts toward the disruption of border related criminal activity related to narcotics smuggling, human trafficking & smuggling, money laundering, bulk cash smuggling, weapons trafficking & smuggling and other crimes.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(c)

In 2005, in response to the significant increase in violence along the Southwest Border in Mexico, the U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), in partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), as well as other federal, state, local and international law enforcement officials created the Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) in Laredo, Texas.

In January 2006, DHS recognized the BEST initiative as a DHS task force in order to leverage federal, state, local, tribal and international law enforcement and intelligence efforts against Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and provide enhanced border security. DHS designated HSI as the "executive agent" for the development, establishment and management of the BEST program. In this capacity, HSI leads a collaborative campaign to manage and establish these investigative task forces in locations most affected by transnational crime.

BEST units employ a threat-based/risk mitigation investigative task force model that recognizes the unique resources and capabilities of all participating law enforcement partners. This partnership enables each unit to apply a comprehensive approach to combating TCOs, while recognizing the distinctive circumstances and threats facing the various border environments.

Since inception, BEST units have produced a remarkable record of success. This is testament to the commitment of over 750 law enforcement officers representing over 100 agencies to include federal, state, local and international law enforcement working together to investigate transnational border-related activity. I would like to recognize the tremendous efforts of all of the BEST partners whose daily contributions help to keep this Nation secure. I am pleased to present this Strategic Plan as we strive to build upon our collective efforts.

James A. Dinkins  
Executive Associate Director  
Homeland Security Investigations



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## **II. Introduction**

The BEST consists of federal, state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement and intelligence resources, and enables HSI and its partner agencies to identify, disrupt, and dismantle existing and emerging threats at our land, sea and air borders. BEST is built on the unique guiding principles of co-location and cross designation. BEST provides access to a full-range of enforcement tools to facilitate investigating and dismantling TCOs.

As we enter 2012, there are 30 authorized BEST units, comprised of approximately 750 members representing 104 state, local, federal, and international law enforcement agencies who work jointly in a variety of capacities to investigate transnational criminal activity along our shared borders and in major seaports.

### **There are three key components to all BEST Units:**

- 1) Investigations - BEST combines and leverages intelligence and interdiction successes in a comprehensive approach to investigate, disrupt and dismantle those transnational criminal organizations involved in border related crime.
- 2) Interdiction - BEST proactively uses actionable intelligence and investigative leads to target, intercept, and disrupt the illicit actions of transnational criminal organizations that attempt to exploit vulnerabilities in our border security.
- 3) Intelligence - BEST applies a risk-based approach to identify targets for disruption and dismantling. Targets identified as posing the most significant risk to border security, public safety, and national security are prioritized accordingly.



# *Border Enforcement Security Task Force Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



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## **The National BEST Unit (NBU)**

The NBU located in Washington, DC at HSI Headquarters, serves as the programmatic lead on establishment, deployment, and oversight of BEST units nationwide. NBU has primary responsibility to set and oversee policy and implementation of the BEST program. NBU will further oversee the National budget for BEST units thru HSI, the Treasury Executive Office for Asset Forfeiture (earmarked for BEST), and other appropriated funds.

The NBU is currently comprised of members and liaisons from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Coast Guard Investigative Services (CGIS), and state and local agency members on a rotating temporary duty status. NBU welcomes membership of any of the full time BEST task force participating agencies.

## **III. Elements of the Program**

### **BEST Mission**

The BEST will combat existing and emerging transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) by employing the full range of federal, state, local, tribal and international law enforcement resources on the fight to identify, investigate, disrupt and dismantle the organizations posing the greatest threat to border security, public safety and the national security.

### **BEST Vision**

The BEST is a comprehensive response to the growing threat to border security, public safety and national security from TCOs that seek to exploit our borders. HSI and its partner agencies strive to make BEST the premiere task force in leading the effort to combat TCOs throughout the world. We seek to create task forces free of the challenges often associated with multi-agency efforts, by empowering our partners and our employees to work in a truly "joint" effort, fighting a common enemy, without the restrictions and challenges normally encountered in a single agency endeavor. BEST units should eliminate the lines between state and local investigations; close the gap with international partners, in multinational complex criminal investigations; and otherwise create an environment that removes the vulnerabilities in our operations that TCOs have traditionally capitalized on to exploit our borders.

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Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



**BEST Strategic Goals**

This plan consists of four strategic goals that provide focus for achieving the BEST mission and vision. The strategic goals below broadly define what steps BEST will take to increase effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the program:





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Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



(b) (7) (E)

**Established BEST Units**

(b) (7) (E)

# Border Enforcement Security Task Force Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016



## IV. BEST Guiding Principles

The BEST National Program and this strategic plan are based on the following guiding principles that should be the foundation for the various BEST Units worldwide:



### **BEST is Built on Partnerships**

BEST can only exist and succeed through partnering at all levels of government, both domestic and international. This partnership must be based on mutual trust between the collaborating entities and reinforced through successful joint operations and empowerment of all of the partner agencies. HSI serves as the "Executive Agent" for BEST and provides a standardized platform of policy and procedure for the units, as well as primary resourcing. However, it is the joining of goals and priorities, of all of the participating agencies that will ensure the most complete success and longest lasting partnerships that will prevail in this fight against TCOs. BEST is a platform for all of the partners to bring their cases forward for consideration, as a joint BEST effort.





(b) (7) (E)



**V. Strategic Goals and Objectives**

(b) (7) (E)

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Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



Objective 1.1: (b) (7)(E)

- (b) (7)(E)
- (b) (7)(E)
- (b) (7)(E)

Objective 1.2: (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

Objective 1.3: (b) (7)(E)

- (b) (7)(E)



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Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



**BEST Strategic Goal 2: Fully resource and empower existing units**

Objective 2.1: (b) (7)(E)  
(b) (7)(E)



- (b) (7)(E)
- (b) (7)(E)

Objective 2.2: Dedicated specialized office space for each unit

- (b) (7)(E)

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**Objective 2.3: Fully cross-designated membership**

- *Cross-Designation: Title 19, "Customs Officer" Cross-Designation training and certification should be completed for all eligible state, local, tribal and International members.*

**Objective 2.4: Establish Criteria and place priority of effort to Fully-Operational Teams**

- *In FY2012, the NBU shall establish protocols to evaluate the level of implementation of each BEST unit. The criteria shall, at a minimum, include the objectives listed above (2.1 through 2.3 and objective 2.5, below). This protocol will specifically delineate the requirements of a Tier classifications based on these objectives; these criteria shall be applied effective October 1, 2012 (FY2013). All BEST units should strive to achieve the highest level of implementation.*

- A large black rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the page content. At the top left of this box, the text "(b) (7) (E)" is written in large, bold, red font. Below this, there are two small black dots, one on the left margin and one further right, indicating the continuation of a list.

*Border Enforcement Security Task Force  
Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



Objective 2.5: (b) (7)(E)

- (b) (7)(E)
- 
- 

(b) (7)(E)

## ***Border Enforcement Security Task Force Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016***



### **Objective 3.1: Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act**

- *The passage of the proposed H.R. 915, Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act, would secure dedicated funding through Congress to provide for operational, administrative, and technological costs to federal, state, local, tribal and foreign law enforcement agencies participating in BESTs; and to investigate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals engaged in drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal alien trafficking and smuggling, violence, and kidnapping along and across the international borders of the United States.*

### **Objective 3.2: Border Tunnel Prevention Act**

- *The goal of the Border Tunnel Prevention Act of 2011 is to reduce the trafficking of drugs and to prevent human smuggling across the Southwest Border by deterring the construction and use of border tunnels.*

### **Objective 3.3: Develop an HSI Policy to Streamline and Bring Uniformity to the Program**

- *NBU will be the proponent for an internal HSI policy delineating preferred practices in the creation and maintenance of BEST Teams within HSI field office that encourages uniformity in reporting, structure and implementation of new and existing units. This policy shall include the tier system outlined in Objective 2.4.*

### **Objective 3.4: Provide Programmatic Support, and Policy and Planning Oversight**

- *Establish the NBU structure necessary to provide strategic direction, as well as, manage, support and coordinate the BEST units throughout the world, in current day to day operation. To carry out both of these critical tasks, the NBU must restructure to meet the requirements.*
- *NBU will explore a new section to provide direct support to the field and operational matters, as well as a second distinct section dedicated to training, policy and planning that focuses on the strategic direction of the program. These sections should each include representation from partner agencies.*
- *NBU will work with the appropriate HSI Units to incorporate these standards into the Self-Inspection Program (SIP) and will implement a BEST Unit field assessment program.*



## ***Border Enforcement Security Task Force Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016***



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### **BEST Strategic Goal 4: Enhance Information Sharing and Intelligence Integration**

The management, structure, and organization of the BEST program must be aligned and given the necessary support to develop and maintain a premier, results-driven initiative. The BEST will strive to achieve sustainable information sharing with partner agencies to enhance operation coordination capabilities.

#### **Objective 4.1: Empowerment of BEST Field Executive Boards (FEBs) at each BEST**

- *Field Executive Boards: FEBs will be chaired by the local HSI Special Agent in Charge (SAC), or his/her designee, and additionally comprised of a single senior management representative from each participating agency, with at least one full-time member on the local BEST. Additional representatives with an interest in the BEST mission may observe and participate, in an advisory role. The FEBs will meet twice annually, or more often as needed. The Board shall receive an update on current and past operations, investigations and results; they shall establish priorities, provide coordination and ensure mission implementation, and address issues and concerns. It is in the interests of the program, that the board be empowered to the fullest extent in order to maintain a unified vision that sets the local BEST priorities and meets the needs of all of the partner agencies.*

#### **Objective 4.2: Empowerment of the BEST Executive Steering Committee (ESC)**

- *The ESC is comprised of senior level managers capable of committing component resources from the headquarters elements of participating agencies in the BEST program. The ESC will meet annually, or more frequently as needed, to provide headquarter-level coordination, administration and oversight of the BEST program. NBU will strive to ensure there are multiple representatives from state and local agencies participating on BESTs, at each meeting as well. Additionally, a management representative from one of the BEST units will be invited to attend and provide a brief of their unit to the ESC.*

#### **Objective 4.3: Empowerment of the NBU through Partner Agency Representatives**

- *Strengthen the NBU and BEST platform, by further empowering the partner agencies through the NBU, by fully incorporating the partner agencies in the day-to day implementation of the program. Fully vest HSI's partners in the NBU by recruiting personnel from the partner agencies to work side-by-side with and as "National BEST Program Managers."*
- *Partner agency representatives assigned to NBU shall have full access and participate in BEST field assessments (objective 3.4).*



## VI. Performance Measurement

BEST units will be evaluated annually on the overall performance, including their effectiveness and efficiency of operations, based on established criteria (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

Field Metrics: Critical Success Factors

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)



## *Border Enforcement Security Task Force Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



### **Programmatic Metrics: Evaluation of the Implementation this Strategy**

Programmatic measures will be evaluated at the end of each fiscal year, to determine and evaluate the implementation of this strategy and its provisions. Each objective shall be reviewed and progress toward its achievement shall be determined and explained.

### **Performance Reporting**

An evaluation shall be provided in writing, from NBU, to the HSI Executive Associate Director and the ESC, within 90 days following the end of each of the fiscal years. This evaluation shall take place each fiscal year, starting at the end of FY2012 and continuing through the period of this strategy (FY2016). The report shall include an evaluation of the field metrics, as well as the implementation of this strategy by HQ, and the field offices and their BEST units.



*Border Enforcement Security Task Force  
Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



**Appendix A: BEST Goals and Objectives at a Glance**

Strategic Goal	Objective
<b>(b) (7)(E)</b>	1.1 1.2 1.3 <b>(b) (7)(E)</b>
<b>(b) (7)(E)</b>	2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5 <b>(b) (7)(E)</b>
<b>(b) (7)(E)</b>	3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 <b>(b) (7)(E)</b>
Goal 4 <b>(b) (7)(E)</b> <b>(b) (7)(E)</b>	4.1 4.2 4.3 <b>(b) (7)(E)</b>

# Border Enforcement Security Task Force Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016



## Appendix B: BEST Goals to DHS Mission Comparison



# Border Enforcement Security Task Force Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016



## Appendix C: BEST Statistics Since Inception

### Border Enforcement Security Task Force

#### Yearly BEST Statistics Since Inception

July 1, 2005 - January 31, 2012

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total Since Inception
<b>Contraband</b>	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	
Cocaine	43.83	647.79	3,132.06	2,168.55	4,863.88	16,037.01	36,700.78	3,205.63	66,799.53
Ecstasy	64.77	35.54	391.34	948.49	350.48	1,284.07	699.75	20.73	3,795.17
Heroin	30.86	57.95	130.29	75.21	117.21	91.76	387.08	232.81	1,123.17
Marjuana	396.93	26,999.23	52,200.34	71,671.77	90,343.18	98,995.27	256,873.30	144,930.47	742,410.49
Methamphetamines	1.10	76.95	222.09	141.94	796.93	1,193.87	940.33	286.74	3,659.95
Currency	\$850,113	\$7,542,167	\$5,207,136	\$10,213,932	\$20,430,462	\$20,152,884	\$23,022,962	\$7,732,343	95,151,999.00
Ammunition	0	6,122	117,498	174,943	102,981	123,591	2,085,667	67,531	2,678,333.00
Vehicles	16	91	331	326	497	828	939	185	3,213.00
Weapons	10	611	209	441	1,590	1,064	2,052	461	6,438.00
<b>Case Statistics</b>	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total Since Inception
Cases Initiated	7	98	463	668	930	1,568	1,991	785	6,510
Criminal Arrests	37	205	633	1,074	1,238	1,762	2,223	630	7,802
Indictments	31	155	389	497	687	1,175	1,251	234	4,419
Convictions	9	108	254	444	645	944	1,136	278	3,818
Administrative Arrests	0	0	1,193	1,291	1,129	917	1,134	248	5,912

\* The Border Enforcement Security Task Force, "Yearly BEST Statistics Since Inception July 1, 2005- January 31, 2012", were reported by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

*Border Enforcement Security Task Force  
Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



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**Appendix D: BEST Agency Participants**

**DHS AGENCIES**

- Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)
- ICE Enforcement & Removal Operations (ERO)
- CBP Office of Field Operations (OFO)
- CBP Office of Border Patrol (USBP)
- CBP Officer of Air and Marine (OAM)
- United States Coast Guard (USCG)
- USCG Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS)
- Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit (CGMSU)
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- United States Secret Service (USSS)

**OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES**

- Arizona National Guard
- US Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID)
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Defense Security Service (DSS)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Criminal Investigation (CI)
- Marine Resources Officers
- National Guard
- Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS)
- New Mexico National Guard
- New York Army National Guard
- United States Attorney's Office (USAO)

**INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES**

- Abbotsford, British Columbia PD
- Canadian Border Service Agency
- Niagara Regional Police
- Ontario Provincial Police
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Mexican Secretariat of Public Security (SSP)
- Colombian National Police

*Border Enforcement Security Task Force  
Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2012-2016*



**STATE & LOCAL AGENCIES**

- Akwesasne Mohawk Tribal PD
- Alabama Marine PD
- Alabama State Docks Port PD
- Albuquerque PD
- Albuquerque Aviation PD
- Arizona Department Public Safety
- Arizona Attorney General's Office
- Arizona Department Public Safety
- Bernalillo County SO
- Broward County SO
- Buffalo PD
- California Highway Patrol
- Charleston PD
- Chula Vista PD
- Coronado PD
- Detroit PD
- Dona Ana SO
- El Paso County SO
- Essex County SO
- Farmington PD
- Florida Highway Patrol
- Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- GA Dep. Nat. Res., LE Division
- GA Ports Authority, Port Police
- Glynn County PD
- Jackson County, MS SO
- Jefferson Parish SO
- Lordsburg PD
- Los Angeles PD
- Los Angeles Port Police
- Los Angeles SO
- Los Luna PD
- Luna County SO
- Malone PD
- Massena PD
- McIntosh County SO
- Mesa PD
- Miami Dade
- Mobile County SO
- Monroe County
- MS Bureau of Narcotics
- New Jersey State Police
- New Mexico State Police
- New Orleans Harbor Police
- NJ Dept. of Homeland Security
- NM Attorney General Office
- North Charleston PD
- NY/NJ Waterfront Commission
- NY State Police
- Ogdensburg PD
- Plaquemine Parish SO
- Port Authority Police
- Port of Seattle PD
- Puerto Rico PD
- Rio Rancho PD
- San Diego Harbor PD
- San Juan County SO
- Savannah-Chatham (CNT)
- Savannah-Chatham Metro PD
- Seattle PD
- Silver City PD
- South Carolina LE Division
- St. James Parish SO
- St. Lawrence County SO
- St. Regis Mohawk PD
- St. Tammany Parish SO
- Texas Rangers
- Thomasville PD
- Trenton PD
- Troy PD
- Tucson PD
- Whatcom
- Yuma PD