

FBI develops cooperative programs between

Statement of Louis J. Freeh, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, before the House Committee on International Relations Hearing on Russian Organised Crime, April 30, 1996.

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FBI Director Louis Freeh

Grave crime is no longer bound by the constraints of borders. Such offences as terrorism, nuclear smuggling, organised crime, computer crime, and drug trafficking can spill over from other countries into the United States.

Regardless of origin, these and other overseas crimes impact directly on our citizens and our economy.

We have developed a variety of anti-crime efforts both here and abroad to combat these dangerous threats. This effort has been undertaken with the support of the President, Attorney-General Janet Reno, and Secretary Warren Christopher. One of the most effective ways to fight international crime is by building cop-to-cop bridges between American law enforcement and our overseas counterparts. Without these relationships, there cannot be the commonality of purpose and open communication required for success. More and more of these bridges are being built, and successes are flowing from them.

We are using a number of approaches to develop cooperative law enforcement programs with other countries. For example, our Legal Attaché Program works closely with a large number of foreign police forces. Not only do they cooperate on specific cases, but our Legal Attachés – who are highly-skilled senior FBI Agents – also form a sort of distant early warning system to alert us to new and emerging crime threats.

Another very powerful tool is training: the FBI places a high priority on assisting our foreign law enforcement counterparts through training courses here and abroad. And just a year ago, we took a major cooperative step with other Federal agencies and other foreign nations with the creation of the International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest.

These and other programs combine to help give the FBI the critical foundation needed to effectively combat international crime.

There is also another vital factor: I want to thank this committee for its crucial recognition of the importance of these issues and for your support in meeting the crime challenges from abroad. This is a rare opportunity to extend the Rule of Law while mobilising law enforcement to meet the explosion of international crime against America. I am exceedingly grateful for the support Congress

West and East to combat international crime

has given us and pledge to continue to work with Congress as we develop a stronger global network of effective law enforcement. Your support of law enforcement training at the Department of State has been critical to the success of our programs.

The international crime problem

The political, social, and economic changes occurring in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Republics have provided significant, unintended opportunities for organised crime groups and criminal enterprises in these countries to expand internationally. Evidence that organised crime activity from these areas is expanding and will continue to expand to the United States is well-documented.

These criminal enterprises are not a new phenomenon to Russia. They existed under Communism. Appropriate legal tools were not created to control organised crime and corruption activities. When Communism declined in the Soviet Union, the organised crime groups quickly expanded their influence in the emerging move toward Capitalism, again because sufficient constraints and law enforcement tools were not present.

The FBI has many years of successful investigative and prosecutorial experience in the battle with La Cosa Nostra and other organised crime groups here in the United States. We view organised crime as a continuing criminal conspiracy having a firm organisational structure, a conspiracy fed by fear and corruption. This definition can also be applied to the organised crime threat facing Russia and many other countries. Members of a typical Russian organised crime group are found at every level of society. Organised crime activity in Russia includes monetary speculation, manipulation of the banking system, and embezzlement of state property, as well as contract murder, extortion, drug trafficking, prostitution, protection rackets, and infiltration of legitimate business activity.

To make matters worse, a number of Russian/Eurasian organised crime groups and criminal enterprises presently operate in the US.

Many of these criminal enterprises active in the US have demonstrated a willingness to work in close concert with other non-Russian/non-Eurasian organised crime groups.

The United States and Russia fully realise the need for joint cooperation against crimes that harm both countries – and other parts of the world as well. That is the reason the FBI has opened a



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Legal Attaché Office in Moscow to work closely with Russian police against a variety of costly crimes. From July 1994 to the present, the number of cases worked by the FBI Agents in Moscow has increased from 20 to over 200.

If Congress agrees, and with the cooperation of the Department of State and the Department of Justice, we hope to expand our network of Legal Attaché Offices around the world. The global needs are great – and many nations, including Russia, are working diligently to fight crime that hurts the law-abiding everywhere.

One of the specific issues of great concern to the FBI and to Russian authorities is the theft and diversion of nuclear materials – and the potential theft of nuclear weapons by terrorists or rogue nations.

Over the past year, legitimate concerns have been raised by the apparent vulnerability of radioactive materials to theft or diversion in several areas of Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The seizure of

significant amounts of cesium in Lithuania and the seizure of uranium in the Czech Republic are examples of the concerns in the international community regarding the threat of nuclear proliferation.

The recent increases in radiological-nuclear material incidents throughout the world have caused the international law enforcement community to communicate better with each other.

Although there have been no seizures of nuclear material in the United States, two recent cases involved conspiracies to import radioactive material into this country. In New York, the US Customs Service arrested foreign nationals attempting to negotiate the sale of radioactive zirconium metal into the US. Ultimately, 45 tons of the material were seized in Cyprus, enroute to the US. In the other case, the Canadian Customs Service intercepted radioactive isotopes originating in Russia being smuggled into the US through Canada. The FBI assisted the Canadian law enforcement agencies in their investigation.

While some crime problems flow from East to West, others flow back from West to East. One of the most difficult law enforcement problems

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facing many of the newly-freed and Eastern European nations is drug trafficking. The scourge of drug trafficking has had a devastating impact on the entire global community. Russia, the Newly Independent States and Eastern Europe are certainly not immune to this epidemic. Criminal organisations in these emerging democracies are taking advantage of the relaxed borders and improved telecommunications systems that have emerged in recent years to facilitate their illegitimate operations. These countries are targets of opportunity for the major drug trafficking organisations, like the Colombian cartels, which seek to establish new and lucrative markets.

International training

The FBI’s international approach in combating Russian and other international organised crime groups includes general and specialised law enforcement training for foreign law enforcement agencies. During Fiscal Year (FY) 1995, the FBI trained 4,400 foreign law enforcement personnel. This training is particularly critical with respect to the police agencies of some of the newly-emerging democracies.

Most of this training is accomplished by funding generously made available by Congress to the Department of State through the Freedom Support Act (FSA) and Support for Eastern European Democracies (SEED) funding. The FBI and the Department of State, working together, are also responsible for the International Law Enforcement Training Academy in Budapest, which functions as the centre for law enforcement training for officers from many Eastern European, Russian and Eurasian nations.

The Academy at Budapest provides an eight-week professional development program similar to our FBI National Academy Program at Quantico. During FY 1995, a total of three classes graduated from the Budapest Academy – each of 33 mid-level police officers. Those officers came from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Estonia, and Lithuania.

For FY 1996, the schedule is much more aggressive, calling for approximately 200 persons to be trained from the following countries: Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

We can be immensely proud of the Academy at Budapest. It is a direct outgrowth of our trip to Eastern Europe in 1994 and President Clinton’s direction to US Government agencies to join together to build the world’s capabilities in fighting international crime. The Academy represents the combined efforts of the Department of State (DOS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the United States Secret Service (USSS), the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre (FLETC), the Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), and other agencies and countries. It is truly a case where all of these law enforcement agencies are working together as partners toward a common goal. I cannot speak highly enough about the contributions ATF, DEA, Secret Service, IRS and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre in the Department of Treasury have made in making the Academy succeed. The academy brings together seasoned investigators as instructors and law enforcement officers from across Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Newly Independent States to learn policing under the Rule of Law. I am especially grateful to our host country, Hungary.

Just last week, I along with my other counterparts from the United States were honoured to attend the dedication of the International Law Enforcement Academy. With

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