



Homeland
Security

Office of Intelligence and Analysis

REFERENCE AID

3 April 2015

(U//FOUO) Indicators of Purchases and Exports Potentially Linked to Terrorism

(U//FOUO) Prepared by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI). Coordinated with the FBI.

(U//FOUO) This Reference Aid provides indicators of suspicious purchase and export methods potentially used to support terrorist organizations. It is intended to inform state, local, tribal, and territorial governmental authorities, law enforcement officials, and private sector security partners of potential threats and assist them in developing and prioritizing protective and support measures.

IA-0148-15

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(U//FOUO) Indicators of Suspicious Purchases, Exports, and Buyers Potentially Linked to Terrorism Support

(U//FOUO) Supporters of terrorist groups in the United States and overseas have attempted to exploit potential vulnerabilities in US retail markets to covertly purchase and export various products, including non-export-controlled computers, electronics, and consumer aviation equipment. DHS I&A and ICE-HSI developed the following indicators to help identify, interdict, and encourage reporting of potential terrorist acquisitions of sensitive materials that can be bought from US retailers.

(U//FOUO) These activities are general in nature—some may be constitutionally protected, and any determination of possible illicit intent must be supported by additional facts justifying reasonable suspicion. Any one of these activities may be insignificant on its own, but when observed in combination with other indicators, may reveal a potential terrorist related activity or acquisition.

(U//FOUO) Indicators of Suspicious Purchases Potentially Linked to Terrorism Support

- » (U//FOUO) Customer is evasive when questioned, especially on whether the purchased product is for domestic use, export, or re-export without a reasonable explanation;
- » (U//FOUO) Customer requests vendors to devalue items significantly when declaring costs for customs authorities;
- » (U//FOUO) Customer appears unfamiliar with the product, its application, or performance without a reasonable explanation; and
- » (U//FOUO) Customer offers to barter with vendors to hide financial information to frustrate customs or counterterrorism efforts.

(U//FOUO) Indicators of Suspicious Exports Potentially Linked to Terrorism Support

- » (U//FOUO) Customer requests that an order be shipped by a circuitous or economically illogical route without a reasonable explanation;
- » (U//FOUO) Customer requests that vendors mislabel shipments as alternative or generic goods (e.g. “mechanical equipment,” “spare parts,” “toy parts,” etc.);
- » (U//FOUO) End-use receiver is based in different country than the ordering customer, such that a reasonable person would suspect possible criminal or terrorist activity without a reasonable explanation;
- » (U//FOUO) Customer is willing to pay in excess of item’s market value without a reasonable explanation; and
- » (U//FOUO) Customer is either hesitant to provide end-use information, or provides end-use information that is incompatible with the customary purpose of the product without a reasonable explanation.

(U//FOUO) Indicators of Suspicious Buyers Potentially Linked to Terrorism Support

- » (U//FOUO) Customer misrepresents identity to targeted vendors on specific technology forums and websites to cover possible illicit activity;
- » (U//FOUO) Customer provides a cover (false) shipping address to vendors;
- » (U//FOUO) Customer uses an alias and cover e-mail address when communicating with vendors to cover possible illicit activity; and
- » (U//FOUO) Customer has no apparent connection to the final consignee, such that a reasonable person would suspect possible criminal or terrorist activity.

(U) Report Suspicious Activity

(U) To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, Fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement. Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit <http://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>.

(U) Tracked by: HSEC-4.1, HSEC-4.2, HSEC-4.3, HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.2, HSEC-8.3