



**(S//SI//REL) SIGINT Reporting Leads to Rescue at Sea of 128
Desperate Migrants**

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(S//SI//REL) In October, SIGINT reporting alerted US officials to the plight of 128 Peruvian and Chinese migrants adrift in the Pacific Ocean, setting the stage for an international rescue operation. Events unfolded as follows:

(S//SI//REL) On 4 October 2006, ICN* Human Smuggling Branch analysts reported on a routine maritime migrant event -- a human smuggler in Peru had sent a vessel from Lima, Peru en route to Guatemala on 2 October filled with Chinese and Peruvian migrants. Events changed when, on 10 October, reports indicated that the migrant vessel was adrift in the Pacific Ocean, over 200 miles off the Costa Rican coast.

(S//SI//REL) The migrant smuggling network attempted to provide assistance, but either due to weather conditions or the distance offshore, none of the supply vessels was able to help. Over the next few days, conditions on the migrant vessel deteriorated significantly: there was no food or water available to the Peruvian migrants, the Chinese were reportedly threatening the Peruvians, and the captain was hitting some of the passengers.

(S//SI//REL) ICN analysts worked with CSG San Francisco to provide intelligence updates to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Pacific Area throughout the case. NSA approved the release of the migrant vessel's position at the unclassified level, and the USCG in turn notified Costa Rican authorities and merchant vessels in the area. Two merchant vessels responded to the notice, but were unable to locate the migrant vessel. Following additional ICN reporting on 12 October that identified the migrant boat as the Peruvian fishing vessel Nalu, a US Navy P-3 aircraft and Costa Rican units conducted searches for the vessel.



(U//FOUO) The Nalu, used for human smuggling

(S//SI//REL) The Nalu was located on 12 October by Costa Rican patrol units with 128 migrants on board (73 Chinese and 55 Peruvian) about 220 NM west of Costa Rica. The USCG Cutter Boutwell was diverted from a narcotics patrol to assist in the case. While the Costa Rican Coast Guard towed the Nalu back to Punta Arenas, Costa Rica, the Boutwell transported the migrants (with Costa Rican authorities embarked to retain custody) to Puerto Caldera, Costa Rica. According to foreign press, the Peruvian authorities flew all the migrants back to Peru on 17 October.



(U//FOUO) Nalu with Costa Rican Coast Guard vessel

(U) Subsequently, on 16 December, Peruvian press announced that Peruvian intelligence agents captured at least six of the smugglers involved in the fishing vessel Nalu smuggling case during operations conducted in Lima, Trujillo, and Chimbote, Peru.

(S//SI//REL) Congratulations to all who played a role in this success. Sole-source SIGINT reporting in this case helped safeguard US borders, saved the migrants from a potentially dire fate, and contributed to the arrest of human smugglers, putting them out of business.

(U//FOUO) Notes:

* ICN = International Crime and Narcotics (S2F)

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