Homeland Security

IT Program Assessment
CBP- Automated Targeting System (ATS) (2010)

Review

The DHS Chief Information Officer conducted a comprehensive program review of the U. S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Automated Targeting System (ATS) on April 29, 2010. CBP has the primary responsibility for securing the United States domestic borders. The large volume of passengers, cargo and conveyances crossing the U. S. Borders requires CBP to use risk management to identify and target high risk passengers, conveyances and cargo, using a combination of rule based and analytical approaches provided by ATS. Identifying and targeting high risk passengers, conveyances, and cargo for more intensive inspection enhances border security, while at the same time facilitating legitimate travel and trade for low-risk passengers, conveyances, and cargo.

ATS is a mission critical intranet-based enforcement and decision tool and the cornerstone for all CBP targeting efforts. ATS is used to improve the collection, use, analysis, and dissemination of information gathered from other source systems for the primary purpose of targeting, identifying, and preventing potential terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the US. The system standardizes names, addresses, and similar data so these data elements can be associated with other business and personal data to form a more complete picture of a traveler, import, or export. ATS uses sophisticated automated techniques and algorithms to perform risk-based analysis of anomalies and strategic intelligence. Every international traveler and all international shipments are processed through ATS and are subject to a real-time enforcement evaluation.

ATS effectively supports over 42,000 users allowing CBP officers and other government agencies 24/7/365 screening capability, using a combination of off-the-shelf software and custom built software. ATS is a large-scale system, analyzing approximately 5.5 million transactions per day, with Oracle production databases and data warehouses holding about 100 terabytes of data.

Assessment

The CBP ATS program is a mature program that is effectively supporting CBP in accomplishing its mission. CBP is in the process of upgrading ATS, including strategic performance improvements, security enhancements, implementation of Single Sign-on capabilities, integration with the CBP Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), and migration to DHS Data Centers. The ATS program appears to be effectively managed and low risk.

Score: 5