

John A. Cassara

Mr. John Cassara retired on March 1, 2005 after a 26 year career in the federal government intelligence and law enforcement communities. His last position was as a Special Agent detailee to the Department of Treasury's Office of Terrorism Finance and Financial Intelligence (TFI). His parent Treasury agency was the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), the U.S. Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU). He worked at FinCEN from 1996-2002 and again in 2004. Mr. Cassara is considered a subject matter expert in anti-money laundering and terrorist financing, with particular expertise in the areas of money laundering in the Middle East and the growing threat of alternative remittance systems and forms of trade-based money laundering and value transfer.

Mr. Cassara invented the concept of international "Trade Transparency Units," an innovative countermeasure to entrenched forms of customs fraud, trade-based money laundering, underground finance and value transfer.

From 2002-2004, Mr. Cassara was detailed to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Anti-Money Laundering Section to help coordinate U.S. interagency international anti-terrorist finance training and technical assistance efforts. He helped managed a \$10 million international training budget. Since his retirement, Mr. Cassara contracted with INL to help write and edit the congressionally mandated annual publication, The International Narcotics Control Strategy Report – Volume II Money Laundering and Financial Crimes.

During his law enforcement investigative career, Mr. Cassara conducted a large number of money laundering, trade fraud, intellectual property rights, smuggling, and diversion of weapons and high technology investigations in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. From 1990-1996, while assigned to the Office of the Customs Attaché in Rome, Italy, he directed the first truly international money laundering task force, called Operation Primo Passo, ("First Step"). The innovative operation combated Italian/American organized crime - the mafia - by examining the movement of money between the two countries and represented an early use of financial intelligence to proactively initiate investigations.

While with U.S. Customs, Mr. Cassara also served two years as an undercover arms dealer. For his efforts in the successful international investigation, he was presented the U.S. Attorney of the District of Columbia "law enforcement officer of the year" award. He began his career with Treasury as a Special Agent assigned to the Washington Field Office of the U.S. Secret Service. He was involved in both protection details and financial crimes investigations.

From 1978-1983, he was a Case Officer for the Central Intelligence Agency and assigned overseas. He resigned his employment due to his marriage to a foreign national (now a U.S. citizen).

Mr. Cassara has been designated a law enforcement “expert” for the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Europe’s Moneyval, and the U.S. government for international anti-money laundering “mutual evaluations.”

Mr. Cassara has lectured around the world on a variety of money laundering and transnational crime related topics. He has addressed the FATF, INTERPOL, the World Bank, the Council of Europe, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Italian Gold Institute, the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, Treasury’s Federal Law Enforcement Training Academy, the FBI Training Academy, the DEA Museum, the U.S. Treasury, Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, CENTCOM, National Ground Intelligence Center, Army’s Asymmetric Warfare Unit, U.S. intelligence agencies including the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the CIA, DIA, and NSA, central banks, customs and police services, World Affairs Councils of America, colleges and universities, and scores of money laundering seminars and conferences around the world. He has testified on numerous occasions before House and Senate Congressional committees on money laundering and terror finance issues.

From 2005-2010, Mr. Cassara worked part-time as an advisor with the Department of Treasury’s Office of Technical Assistance providing anti-money laundering training, counter-terrorism finance training, and developmental assistance overseas, including a 2006 assignment to Afghanistan. In Senegal, Serbia, Jordan, Philippines, and many other countries he has worked with host governments to promote financial crimes and threat finance investigative skills. He continued his training, mentoring, and advisory roles working for the U.S. intelligence community providing insight into money laundering and terror finance for countries’ police, customs, judicial, and intelligence organizations. Working with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau Justice Assistance, Mr. Cassara assists the State and Local Anti-Terrorist Training (SLATT) program for the Institute of Intergovernmental Research based in Tallahassee, Florida. In this position, he provides terrorist finance training to state and local law enforcement officials.

From 2006 -2008, Mr. Cassara was a contractor for Lockheed Martin. He provided expertise on terror finance. He authored a handbook that was published by Lockheed and disseminated within the U.S. military; *Strategic Financial Intelligence: A Primer on Middle Eastern & South Asian Value Transfer Techniques*. From 2008 – 2011, Mr. Cassara was a contractor and “green badge” holder for Spectral and BAE. He provided specialized training in anti-money laundering for the CIA’s Counter Narcotics Center. Mr. Cassara has also assisted the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the FACT Coalition, Global Financial Integrity, and Global Witness in various research projects and public forums.

From 2011 through 2016 Mr. Cassara was a consultant for SAS, a provider of advanced analytics software. Mr. Cassara assisted SAS in a variety of federal government accounts, particularly by providing insight into the federal law enforcement community. He has also written a number of articles for SAS publications, organized seminars, and has made presentations at many SAS forums.

Mr. Cassara is an advisor for the Charles Group. Mr. Cassara is on the Board of Directors for Global Financial Integrity, a Washington D.C. based non-profit that analyzes trade-based value transfer and illicit financial flows from the developing world.

Mr. Cassara wrote *Hide and Seek - Intelligence, Law Enforcement and the Stalled War on Terrorist Financing*. Published by Potomac Books Inc., *Hide and Seek* was released in 2006. He also co-authored *On the Trail of Terror Finance: What Law Enforcement and Intelligence Officers Need to Know*. Published by Red Cell Publishing, the book was released in 2010. He authored *Demons of Gadara*; the first novel that revolves around the theme of terror finance. It was released in September, 2013. In November, 2015 *Trade-Based Money Laundering: The Next Frontier in International Law Enforcement* (Wiley) was released. In 2020, *Money Laundering and Illicit Financial Flows: Following the Money and Value Trails* was published. Mr. Cassara has also written numerous published articles on money laundering and terror finance.

Mr. Cassara received his master's degree in international management in 1977 from the American Graduate School of International Management (Thunderbird campus), in Phoenix, Arizona. In 1976, he graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of California, San Diego, with a bachelor's degree in political science.

Additional information can be found at www.JohnCassara.com