

**TESTIMONY OF**

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**BEFORE**

**SENATE CAUCUS ON INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL**

**ON**

**“MONEY LAUNDERING AND BULK CASH SMUGGLING ALONG THE  
SOUTHWEST BORDER”**

**March 9, 2011  
Washington, DC**

Chairman Feinstein, Co-Chairman Grassley, Members of the Caucus, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today to discuss the work of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), particularly the tremendous dedication of our men and women in the field, both at and between our ports of entry. In the two years since the Southwest Border Initiative was implemented, we have strengthened the security of the Southwest border in a way that many would not have thought possible. This approach to border security, along with the tireless efforts of our officers and agents in the field, has achieved historic decreases in illegal immigration; unprecedented increases in the seizure of drugs, weapons, and contraband; and strengthened and increased partnerships with Mexico on trade and travel.

My testimony today focuses on CBP's outbound operational efforts that we leverage to combat narcotics, weapons, and cash smuggling along the Southwest border.

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Congress for its continued support of the mission and people of CBP. It is clear that Congress is committed to providing CBP with the resources we need to increase and maintain the security of our borders. We greatly appreciate your efforts and assistance, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues in the future.

With over 58,000 employees, CBP is the largest uniformed federal law enforcement agency in the country. During fiscal years 2009 and 2010, CBP along with our counterparts at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement seized more than \$282 million in illegal currency, more than 7 million pounds of drugs, and more than 6,800 weapons along the Southwest border – increases of more than \$73 million, more than 1 million pounds of drugs and more than 1,500 weapons compared to 2007-2008. These numbers demonstrate the effectiveness of our layered approach to security.

### **Southwest Border Operations**

#### *Southwest Border Initiatives*

In March 2009, in support of the President's Southwest Border Initiative, Secretary Napolitano unveiled efforts designed to support three goals: reduce movement of contraband

across the border, support Mexico's campaign to crack down on drug cartels in Mexico, and guard against the spillover of violent crime into the United States. This initiative called for additional personnel, increased intelligence capability, and better coordination with state, local and Mexican law enforcement authorities. Since the Secretary's announcement, DHS has continued working with federal, state, local and tribal authorities and the Government of Mexico to secure the Southwest border. Since the implementation of the Southwest Border Initiative, we have increased the size of the Border Patrol to more than 20,700 agents today, which is more than double the size it was in 2004. We have also begun screening southbound rail and vehicle traffic looking for the illegal weapons and cash that are helping fuel the cartel violence in Mexico. Additionally, with the aid of the \$600 million supplemental appropriation that was requested by President Obama and passed by Congress in the summer of 2010, we are continuing to add technology, manpower, and infrastructure to the border. This includes the addition of 1,000 new Border Patrol agents and 250 new CBP officers; improving our tactical communications systems; adding two new forward operating bases to improve coordination of border security activities; and adding additional CBP unmanned aircraft systems.

CBP's FY 2012 budget request continues these efforts by supporting 21,370 Border Patrol agents between the ports of entry and 21,186 CBP officers at our ports of entry who work around the clock with state, local, federal, and tribal law enforcement in targeting illicit networks trafficking in people, drugs, illegal weapons and money. Included in the request is funding to support the deployment of 300 new CBP officers and additional canine assets to port of entry operations that have recently come online. The additional CBP officers and canines will increase our enforcement capabilities to prevent the entry of unlawful people and contraband while enhancing our ability to process legitimate travelers and cargo. This reflects the largest deployment of law enforcement officers to the front line in the agency's history.

In March 2009, CBP created the Outbound Programs Division within its Office of Field Operations. This division is focused on stemming the flow of firearms, currency, stolen vehicles, and fugitives out of the United States. CBP also began scanning 100 percent of southbound rail shipments for the first time ever and increased its use of "pulse and surge" strategies for outbound operations on the Southwest border. In FY 2011, we have continued to strengthen the

use of these operations along the Southwest border and to enhance our cooperative efforts with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. These increased Southwest border outbound security operations have yielded significant results. In fiscal years 2009 and 2010, CBP seized more than \$104 million in southbound illegal currency – an increase of approximately \$28 million compared to 2007-2008. In addition, in FY 2010 CBP seized more than 1,900 southbound weapons—nearly double the approximately 1,000 seized in FY 2008.

Thanks to the continued support of Congress, CBP now has 290 large-scale Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) systems deployed to our ports of entry. Of the 290 NII systems deployed, 53 are deployed on the northern border and 142 are deployed on the Southwest border. Additionally, CBP has deployed 57 backscatter X-ray vans to Southwest border land ports of entry. To date, CBP has used the deployed systems to conduct over 32 million examinations resulting in over 7,600 narcotic seizures with a total weight of 2.4 million pounds of narcotics, and the seizure of over \$19.2 million in undeclared currency. Used in combination with our layered enforcement strategy, these tools provide CBP with a significant capability to detect contraband, including illicit nuclear or radiological materials. The deployment of NII technologies has enabled our staff to efficiently process a significant volume of passengers and trade.

#### *Increased Partnerships in Support of Southwest Border Initiatives*

Working with our partners, our strategy is to secure our nation's borders by employing and enhancing our layers of defense throughout the continuum of both travelers and trade that seek to cross our borders – starting from their points of origin, through transit to the United States, arrival and entry at our borders, routes of egress, and ultimately to final destination in the United States. This strategy relies upon increased intelligence and risk-management strategies regarding the movement and flow of both travelers and trade. We accomplish our mission of expediting legal trade and travel by separating the knowns from the unknowns. This risk segmentation allows us to enhance security by focusing more attention on stopping illegitimate trade, while at the same time facilitating legitimate travel and commerce.

To further secure the Southwest border, CBP must continually increase the probability of detection and apprehension to disrupt transnational criminal organizations' ability to move drugs, weapons and illicit proceeds into and out of the United States. Doing so requires integrated planning and execution of operations across CBP, as well as seamless partnership with other government agencies and sustained collaboration with Mexico. CBP continues to assess and refine its outbound enforcement strategy to include coordinated efforts with U.S. law enforcement agencies and the Government of Mexico. These collaborative efforts assist us in enforcing U.S. export laws while depriving criminal organizations in Mexico of the illicit currency and firearms that fuel their illegal activities. In FY 2010, CBP and Mexican Customs participated in 22 joint operations along the Southwest border that resulted in the seizure of over \$113,000 in currency, 23.75 kilograms of narcotics and the recovery of five stolen vehicles.

In 2003, CBP opened an Attaché office at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City to oversee CBP operations in Mexico, including border operational support at and between the ports of entry, bilateral coordination to secure the shared border, and training for Mexican government agencies. In addition to supporting our Mexican counterparts, the Attaché's office provides subject matter expertise to the Ambassador and U.S. interagency groups within the U.S. Embassy in support of the U.S. government's trade, travel and security agendas.

Interagency cooperation at the Embassy level is essential to ensure that the right structures and mechanisms are in place to oversee the implementation of Mérida programs. DHS components have participated in the Mérida Initiative since its inception in 2007 and continue to participate in Mérida-funded programs during FY2011. DHS has a central role in Mérida implementation in Mexico, and prioritizes support on dismantling transnational criminal organizations, securing the Southwest border, training and assisting vetted units, and bulk cash smuggling. DHS participation in the Mérida Initiative supports the provision of equipment, training, and other capacity building efforts in Mexico.

As we have enhanced our collaboration with our neighbors to the south, CBP also has continued to build upon our partnerships within the United States. In September 2009, we initiated the Operation Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats (ACTT)—a collaborative

enforcement effort to leverage the capabilities and resources of more than 60 federal, state, local and tribal agencies in Arizona and from the Government of Mexico to combat individuals and criminal organizations that pose a threat to communities on both sides of the border. While ACTT's initial focus is on Arizona, as it continues to evolve, focused operations will transition to other operational corridors.

CBP continues to work with its partners in the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program to expand the national License Plate Reader (LPR) initiative to exploit intelligence on drug traffickers and drug trafficking organizations. The LPR initiative utilizes established locations to gather information regarding travel patterns and border nexus on drug traffickers for intelligence-driven operations and interdictions. We have also established positions at the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Fusion Center, and the DEA Special Operations Division and continue to participate in other multi-agency task forces such the ICE Border Enforcement Security Teams and Border Intelligence Centers targeting drugs, weapons and currency across the Southwest border.

These partnerships enhance interaction with the Intelligence Community and law enforcement agencies to more effectively facilitate the collection, analysis, and dissemination of actionable intelligence in support of drug trafficking and money laundering investigations all along the Southwest border.

#### *Intelligence and Operational Coordination*

CBP, in cooperation with the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis, continues its work to become a more integrated, intelligence-driven organization. Intelligence gathering and predictive analysis require new collection and processing capabilities. CBP's Office of Intelligence and Operations Coordination (OIOC) is designing systems to process and analyze imagery collected from aircraft and other platforms. Though not specific to Southwest border security efforts, CBP is also developing the Analytical Framework for Intelligence, a set of data processing tools that improves the ability of CBP and other DHS analysts to effectively detect, locate, and analyze terrorist networks, drug trafficking networks, and other transnational threats.

These intelligence and operational coordination initiatives complement our existing technology programs.

In March 2010, CBP opened the first Intelligence and Operations Coordination Center (IOCC) in Tucson, Arizona. The IOCC serves as the development platform for CBP to operate joint intelligence operations that include coordination with our other federal, state and local law enforcement partners. CBP is building more focused discipline into our intelligence operations by incorporating post-seizure analysis techniques and interagency coordination efforts to link intelligence and law enforcement information for our operations and interdictions into our training and standard operating procedures. These efforts are helping CBP develop into a more fully integrated, intelligence-driven organization.

### **Conclusion**

Chairman Feinstein, Co-Chairman Grassley, and members of the Caucus: thank you again for this opportunity to testify about the work of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and particularly about our efforts to increase security along the Southwest border. CBP is committed to aggressively and proactively securing our nation's borders and safeguarding our way of life. Your continued support of CBP has led to significant improvements in the security of our borders, and made our nation safer. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.