

**TESTIMONY OF**

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

**BEFORE**

**HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER AND MARITIME SECURITY**

**ON**

**“USING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY TO SECURE OUR BORDER AT  
THE PORTS OF ENTRY – STOPPING THE ILLICIT FLOW OF MONEY,  
GUNS, AND DRUGS”**

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Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Cuellar, Members of the Subcommittee, 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.

My testimony today focuses on CBP's operational efforts that are leveraged to combat narcotics, weapons, and cash smuggling along our borders.

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.

The creation of CBP, which established a single, unified border agency for the United States, is a profound achievement, and our responsibilities are immense and challenging. CBP is responsible for protecting more than 3,900 miles of border with Canada and 1,900 miles of border with Mexico, and 2,600 miles of shoreline. In fiscal year 2010, CBP officers at 331 ports of entry inspected 352 million travelers and more than 105.8 million cars, trucks, buses, trains, vessels and aircraft. Each day, CBP officers process nearly one million travelers entering the United States at our air, land and sea ports of entry and inspect more than 47,000 truck, rail and sea containers.

In fiscal year (FY) 2010, CBP seized 4.1 million pounds of narcotics, including more than 870,000 pounds seized at the ports of entry, 2.4 million pounds seized between the ports of entry, and 831,000 pounds seized, assisted by CBP Air and Marine. These numbers demonstrate the effectiveness of our layered approach to security. Violent crime in border communities has remained flat or fallen in the past decade, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Report, and some of the safest communities in America are at the border. In fact, violent crimes in Southwest border counties overall have dropped by more than 30

percent, and are currently among the lowest in the nation per capita, even as drug-related violence has significantly increased in Mexico.

Working with our partners, our strategy is to secure our nation's borders by employing and enhancing our layers of defense throughout the entire supply chain (for goods) and transit sequence (for people) – starting from their points of origin, 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. Security and prosperity are mutually reinforcing, and the United States and Mexico are closely linked by a common interest in robust security and growing economies. DHS is committed to continuing to work with Mexico to foster a safe and secure border zone, while facilitating the legal trade and travel that helps our shared border region prosper.

Thanks to the continued support of Congress, CBP now has 293 large-scale Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) systems deployed to our ports of entry. Of the 293 NII systems deployed, 53 are deployed on the northern border and 145 are deployed on the Southwest border. Additionally, CBP has deployed 60 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 also enabled our staff to efficiently process a significant volume of passengers and trade.

NII technologies are the only effective means of screening the large volume of rail traffic entering the United States from Mexico. CBP currently has rail imaging systems deployed to all

eight Southwest border commercial rail crossings. These systems currently provide CBP with the capability to image and scan 100 percent of all commercial rail traffic arriving in the United States from Mexico. The rail NII imaging technology is bi-directional which provides CBP with the added capability to image southbound trains. In March 2009, CBP began conducting 100 percent outbound screening of rail traffic departing the United States for Mexico for the presence of contraband, such as explosives, weapons and currency.

### **Southwest Border Operations**

Over the past two years, DHS has dedicated historic levels of personnel, technology, and resources to the Southwest border. In March 2009, DHS launched the Southwest Border Initiative to bring unprecedented focus and intensity to Southwest border security, coupled with a smart and effective approach to enforcing immigration laws in the interior of our country. Under this initiative we 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; and quintupled deployments of Border Liaison Officers to work with their Mexican counterparts. With the aid of the \$600 million supplemental appropriation 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.

To continue to secure the Southwest Border, CBP must continue to increase the probability of detection and apprehension of people attempting to enter the United States illegally or engaging in cross-border crime. Doing so requires integrated planning and execution of operations across CBP, as well as seamless partnerships with other government agencies and sustained collaboration with Mexico. In recent months, we have taken additional steps to bring greater unity to our enforcement efforts, expand collaboration with other agencies, and improve response times. In February, we announced the Arizona Joint Field Command (JFC)—an organizational realignment that brings together Border Patrol, Air and Marine, and Field Operations under a unified command structure to integrate CBP's border security, commercial

enforcement, and trade facilitation missions to more effectively meet the unique challenges faced in the Arizona area of operations.

In March 2009, under the Southwest Border Initiative, 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 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 outbound security operations have yielded significant results on both borders.

Our partnership with Mexico has been critical to our efforts to secure the Southwest border, and we will continue to expand this collaboration in the coming year. CBP is continuing to assess and refine its outbound enforcement strategy to include coordinated efforts with U.S. law enforcement agencies and the Government of Mexico to maximize southbound enforcement. These activities serve to enforce 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.

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 expand 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 partner with fusion centers in states along the Southwest border and participate in other multi-agency task forces such as 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 along the Southwest border.

CBP's FY 2012 budget request continues these efforts by supporting 21,186 CBP officers 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.

### **Infrastructure**

CBP has long recognized the need to maintain facilities and infrastructure that effectively support our mission requirements. Modern facilities must address our constantly evolving border functions, increasing traffic volumes and staffing levels, and new and updated technologies and equipment. To that end, CBP has implemented a facility investment planning process, and capital improvement plan for land border ports of entry. This process ensures that facility and real property funding is allocated in a systematic and objective manner, and is prioritized by mission critical needs.

While CBP operates 167 land border facilities along the Northern and Southwest borders, CBP owns only 27 percent of these facilities. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) owns 58 percent, and leases the remaining 14 percent from private, state or municipal entities. The average age of our facilities is 42 years old, which when coupled with the rapid and continuing evolution of CBP's mission, has left these vital assets in need of modernization and expansion so that they can continue to support mission-critical operations. The heightened responsibilities of the post-9/11 world are far beyond the legacy missions that the ports were originally designed to support and the capacity that they were designed to accommodate. For example, the majority of these facilities were not built to incorporate all of the enhanced security features that are now present at our ports of entry, including Non-Intrusive Inspection technology (Radiation Portal Monitors, Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System, X-rays) and License Plate Readers.

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), CBP was provided with \$420 million for the modernization of CBP-owned land ports of entry, and GSA was provided with \$300 million for the modernization of GSA-owned land ports of entry. Through the use of innovative and cost-efficient construction management practices, CBP was able to use ARRA funds to modernize 39 CBP-owned land border crossings.

GSA received \$300 million under ARRA for the modernization of GSA-owned land ports of entry. The original GSA spend plan was for seven projects, four on the U.S.-Canada border and three on the U.S.-Mexico border. Due to cost savings, CBP and GSA also used funds to support smaller projects at four additional land ports. With the aid of \$200 million in ARRA funds, the Mariposa Port of Entry near Nogales, Arizona, is currently undergoing renovations to expand capacity and reduce wait times. These improvements will assist our officers in focusing their efforts on finding illegitimate trade and travelers. The Otay Mesa Port of Entry near San Diego is also undergoing a \$75 million upgrade to better facilitate commercial traffic. These are just a few of the many port projects designed to enhance security and support and expand trade and commerce along the border.

### **Staffing and Training**

We have no greater asset than our human resources and we are committed to continuing to recruit, hire, develop and sustain a premier officer corps. To achieve this goal we are currently refining the recruitment and hiring processes, improving our retention capabilities, and enhancing our deployment and staffing processes.

We have developed a Workload Staffing Model (WSM) to better align resource needs and requests against levels of threat, vulnerabilities, and workload. By using the model we can adjust optimal staffing levels to changes in workload, processing times, new technologies and processes, mandated requirements, and threats. The staffing model alone does not determine how our officers are allocated; it is merely a tool to assist us in determining the optimum allocation of officers at each of our land, sea and air ports.

CBP has also implemented numerous programs, initiatives, and training to build our officer corps and enable officers to more effectively respond to threats of terrorism, better utilize intelligence information, and continue to develop skills, streamline processes, and enhance inspection operations.

We have developed and implemented a comprehensive training curriculum for CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists. This training curriculum includes basic academy training, as well as comprehensive, advanced, on-the-job and cross-training courses. CBP continually strives to provide our frontline officers with recurrent and additional training to help them better perform their jobs. For example, CBP has extensive training in place for fraudulent document identification – both in the CBP officer academy and embedded in 40 additional courses.

To make the best use of our training time and resources, we train our officers when they need to be trained, and for the functions they are performing. This means that not every officer completes every cross-training module, but rather each officer receives the training needed to do the job he or she is currently performing. CBP has identified Field Training Officers to ensure that CBP Officers are receiving the training they need to do their jobs, and that internal measures are in place to monitor and assess training needs and accomplishments nationwide. CBP is constantly reviewing and revising its training, in accordance with the ever-changing border enforcement environment.

Recognizing the complexity of our mission and the broad border authorities of our agency, we have established specialty functions and teams that receive additional focused advanced training. For example, counterterrorism response teams were created for deployment within secondary inspection areas. These teams are provided with a new and intense training curriculum that teaches our officers how to detect deception and elicit information. We have also established targeting and analysis units, roving teams, and prosecution units. Our enforcement officers receive additional advanced training to develop expertise in the questioning of individuals suspected of being involved with organized smuggling of aliens or drugs, terrorism, and document fraud.

### **Conclusion**

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Cuellar, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for this opportunity to testify about the work of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. CBP is committed to continuing to secure our nation's borders and safeguard 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.