

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~**MEXICO PRIORITIES****Voluntary Return of Unaccompanied Children (UAC) to Mexico****ISSUE:**

- Commissioner Bersin has designated San Diego Sector's procedures to facilitate Voluntary Return of Unaccompanied Children (UAC) to Mexico as a "Best Practice" and has requested OBP duplicate this program throughout the southern border sectors.

U.S. OBJECTIVES:

- Expand the UAC program currently in place in San Diego Sector to all southern border sectors.
- Create a coordinated Juvenile Repatriation procedure between the Border Patrol, Field Operations and the Mexican Consulates.

CBP LEAD:Office:

OBP/IPCC

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Operations Officer

OBP/Integrated Planning and Coordination Cell

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- Mexican Consulate
- TBD

START DATE:

- 06/28/2010

END DATE:

- TBD

TIMELINE:To be accomplished in the next 15 days:

- Contact southern sectors/ports in charge of juvenile voluntary return program.
- Determine sectors/ports current UAC program.
- Meet with Repatriation Technical Working Group (RTWG) to revisit repatriation agreement.
- Receive further familiarization on program from SDC.

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To be accomplished in the next 30 days:

- Determine GoM POC involved in UAC program.
- Determine sector/ports needs
 - Personnel
 - Resources
 - Funds
- Meet with sectors, port, GoM POC's to determine a plan of action.

To be accomplished in the next 45 days:

- Formulate implementation plan for sectors/ports.
- Present plan to RTWG for review.
- Determine training required for sectors and ports.

To be accomplished in the next 60 days:

- Procure necessary equipment if any.
- Implement training.
- Create guidance to the field.

To be accomplished in the next 90 days:

- Review of proposed plan to implement to RTWG, sectors, ports and GoM
- Implement UAC program through out the sectors.
- Report of status of implementation.
- Distribute guidance to the field.

To be accomplished in the next 120 days:

- Report status of UAC program.

CURRENT STATUS:

- The standard OBP UAC procedure is not uniformed through out the sectors.
- Mexican Repatriation Agreement in affect.

NEXT STEPS:

- Contact SDC program POC.
- Contact southern sector/ports POC's
- Contact GoM POC's

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS:

TBD

Other:

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CHALLENGES / OBSTACLES TO BE POTENTIALLY RAISED TO MANAGEMENT:

- (b)(5) (b)(7)(E) [REDACTED]
- (b)(5) (b)(7)(E) [REDACTED]
- Concurrence of Repatriation Technical Working Group (RTWG) to approve the process throughout the southern border sectors/ports.
- (b)(5) (b)(7)(E) [REDACTED]

**CBP Meeting with U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Women's Refugee Commission,
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

CBP Headquarters:

11/19/10

Purpose of the Meeting: To discuss CBP's interactions with Unaccompanied Alien Children (UACs), in the areas of screening, apprehension process, handling of family units, repatriation/removal, NGO involvement.

CBP/DHS Participants: BP Office of Field Operations (OFO), CBP Office of Border Patrol (OBP), CBP Office of Public Affairs (OPA), CBP Office of the Commissioner (OC), DHS Office of Policy.

NGO Participants: CBP Meeting with U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

CBP Intro:

OBP and OFO began by laying out their general roles in handling UAC's.

- o UAC issues have become more complex over the years through the DHS Authorization Act, and TVPRA.
- o CBP has worked to:
 - o Keep up its annual Officer/Agent training on UAC issues.
 - o Improve tracking capabilities for UACs being processed.
 - o Responding to recommendations made by the DHS OIG Report on UACs.

NGO Intro:

Referenced previous meetings with S2, C1, OBP field offices on UAC issues. NGOs had had previous relationships with INS; some current relationships with HHS.

- o NGOs would like to provide assistance/expertise in screening for asylum seekers, trafficking victims, expedited removal proceedings, etc.

Screening Process:

- o Establish legal status; Are they with the parent? Where is the parent?
- o Key indicators: Previous victim, does the UAC know they're a victim? Desire or fear to return to home country?
- o **Referrals:** CBP will refer to other agencies when necessary
 - o Human Trafficking or Smuggling investigations are referred to ICE
 - o Credible Asylum seekers are referred to CIS
 - o Mexican Consulates are consulted when seeking contact with the parent.
- o NGOs should keep in mind that CBP's time (compared to ICE or CIS) with UACs is relatively short for the investigation purposes of any details surrounding the minor.
- o NGOs have questions on how CBP has come up with its criteria for identifying UACs who may be victims of smuggling/trafficking.

Family Reunification:

NGOs had questions on:

- How documentation for parental custody is established?
- Procedures for a parent picking up a child at CBP facility?
- Tracking these processes? Any Statistics available?

CBP is strict on identifying documented parents/guardians before re-unification.

Keeping Minors out of Smuggling/Trafficking Rings

- CBP continues to work more and more closely with other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to identify criminal elements that minors may become victimized by, or involved with.
- CBP conducts its 'Operation Detour' program in different sectors along the border to reach out through schools to local youth to warn them on the dangers of becoming involved with smuggling/trafficking criminal elements.

Deliverables:

NGOs

- NGOs will request statistics on UACs- smuggling vs. trafficking, family reunification, voluntary returns, referrals by CBP to other agencies, etc.
 - CBP will provide what we can, but explained that tracking is difficult and is an area we are trying to improve upon.
 - Some statistics may need to come from ICE, ORR.
- NGOs can submit proposals for ideas and best practices on how they can assist law enforcement in screening and providing care for UACs.

CBP

- CBP will deliver information on complaint procedures to the NGOs.
- CBP OPA will send additional information on its Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign.
- CBP will discuss a visit to the border for the NGOs to view any practical applications for UAC protocols.

Will attempt to set up a follow up meeting in early CY2011.



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Thurs., Feb. 14, 2013

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Curbing 'Voluntary Return'

by Chief Robert W. Gilbert (Published 01/25/2009 in the Arizona Daily Star)

02/03/2009 - The U.S. Border Patrol hopes to eliminate the use of "voluntary return" for illegal aliens in the Tucson Sector, replacing it with prosecution and removal initiatives that will have an important and lasting impact.

Voluntary return, often dubbed "catch and release," is an administrative action that began about three decades ago and involves arresting Mexican illegal aliens who do not have criminal backgrounds. They are processed and dropped off at the border, often within hours.

The only penalty is a quick non-judicial return to Mexico. In contrast, formal removals and deportations carry penalties ranging from bans on legal re-entry to felony prosecution for subsequent illegal re-entries.

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National Security Mission

In addition to our traditional role in border enforcement, the U.S. Border Patrol is charged with preventing the entry of terrorists and terrorist weapons into the United States. Our agency works to stem the flow of drugs, weapons, criminal aliens and violence into our country. Approximately 10 percent of all illegal aliens arrested have criminal records for felony offenses involving drugs, violent crimes and sex offenses. When entries are at their lowest, agents are better able to focus on the true threats to national security.

While working to control our borders, we also remain dedicated to ensuring that the rights of all arrested aliens are respected. Every effort is made to protect family unity during detention and repatriation. Medical, health and safety needs are immediately addressed. Legal and consular rights are respected and preserved throughout the custody process.

An essential point that often seems diluted is that entering the United States illegally is a crime. Those who commit this crime are susceptible to the consequences set forth under federal laws. It is these laws that the employees of the Tucson Sector work to enforce every day.

Border security is a complex issue and as such requires an unwavering commitment to strategies that will have the largest effect. Smuggling is no longer a mom-and-pop operation, it has become organized crime.

The largest impact can only be made by breaking the smuggling cycle, by putting up barriers and checkpoints that make the business of smuggling humans and narcotics unprofitable and unattractive.

Only as the smuggling cycle is disrupted do we see consistent decreases in arrests and increases in drug seizures. Efforts to increase prosecution rates have had a dramatic effect on arrest totals and rates of recidivism (those who are arrested, repatriated, re-enter and then are arrested again).

These Initiatives Include:

- The Arizona Denial Prosecution Initiative assures that each defendant prosecuted faces a maximum sentence of up 180 days in jail, a formal removal and a bar on legal re-entry for five years. During fiscal 2008, more than 13,000 illegal aliens were successfully prosecuted in the first year of this program. Furthermore, illegal aliens prosecuted under the initiative had a recidivism rate of only 21 percent, compared with historical rates as high as 70 percent.
- The Alien Transfer Exit Program directly breaks the smuggling cycle by repatriating aliens into regions further east or west of their entry location. This prevents them from immediately reorganizing with smugglers for re-entry. During 2008, more than 10,000 illegal aliens were removed through the Alien Transfer Exit Program, which was also a new program. Those illegal aliens had a recidivism rate of 28 percent.
- The Mexican Interior Repatriation Program returns illegal aliens who are citizens of Mexico back to their cities of origin. This program not only acts as a deterrent to illegal re-entry, but also mitigates the health and safety risks of crossing in the deserts of the Tucson Sector for women, children and families. Combined with our humanitarian efforts, deaths declined by 19 percent during 2008. More than 18,000 aliens were repatriated in 2008. Recidivist rates for those involved in this program were only 10 percent.
- The Quick Court is an initiative that works to ease the dockets of the traditional immigration judge. The process expedites the formal removal proceedings of illegal aliens arrested within the Tucson Sector, providing additional avenues to maintain effective levels of prosecution independent of cases handled by the United States Attorney's Office. More than 800 cases were prosecuted under this initiative within the sector during 2008.
- The Operation Against Smugglers Initiative on Safety and Security allows the Tucson Sector to work closely with Mexican officials to secure the prosecution in Mexico of guides and smugglers arrested in the United States.

While these cases are being adjudicated, the suspects are jailed in Mexico, at no expense to U.S. taxpayers. During 2008, more than 374 principal subjects were prosecuted through the program, up from 20 in recent years.

Measuring Success

There are many measurable indicators of our achievements. More than 300,000 illegal aliens were arrested within the Tucson Sector during 2008. Approximately 71,000 were not repatriated via voluntary return within the Tucson Sector. This equates to about 23 percent of all arrests.

In 2007, there were about 378,000 illegal-alien arrests and 45,000, or about 11 percent, were not repatriated through voluntary return. This left 89 percent to potentially attempt re-entry.

Our progress within one calendar year has made a huge statement to smugglers and their customers. Since the implementation of our prosecution initiatives, nearly 85 percent of all illegal aliens arrested within our "priority areas" have been prosecuted, removed and/or repatriated via one of the initiatives.

This is a major step forward in stopping the revolving door of voluntary return. These cases have resulted in more than 270,000 days of jail time for those who have broken immigration laws.

The gains made within the Tucson Sector are the result of focused efforts, adjustments to operations and realignment of resources. I believe that maintaining transparency is vital for healthy operations and strong community relationships. I hope my efforts to enlighten the public will foster a well-rounded perception of our enforcement initiatives and intentions to improve the quality of life in communities across Arizona.

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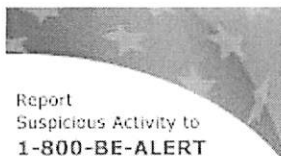
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Border Patrol Chief Fisher Testifies on Border Security

(02/15/2011)

Testimony of Michael J. Fisher, Chief, United States Border Patrol, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, Before the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security

February 15, 2011

[As Prepared]

Introduction

Chairwoman Miller, Ranking Member Cuellar, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today to discuss U.S. Customs and Border Protection's efforts to secure our nation's borders. I am Michael J. Fisher, Chief of the United States Border Patrol.

As America's frontline border agency, CBP's priority mission is to protect the American public, while facilitating lawful travel and trade. To do this, CBP has deployed a multi-layered, risk-based approach to enhance the security of our borders while facilitating the flow of lawful people and goods entering the United States. This layered approach to security reduces our reliance on any single point or program that could be compromised. It also extends our zone of security outward, ensuring that our physical border is not the first or last line of defense, but one of many.

Overview of Border Security Efforts

Over the past two years, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has dedicated historic levels of personnel, technology, and resources to the Southwest border. We have more than doubled the size of the Border Patrol since 2004; quintupled the number of Border Liaison Officers working with their Mexican counterparts; doubled personnel assigned to Border Enforcement Security Task Forces; and began screening southbound rail and vehicle traffic for the illegal weapons and cash that are helping fuel the cartel violence in Mexico. CBP also received approval from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration to increase the miles of airspace available for Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) operations, enabling CBP to deploy UASs from the eastern tip of California extending east across the border into Texas – covering the entire Southwest border for the first time. Further, in January of this year, CBP's operational airspace along the Northern border expanded by nearly 900 miles, allowing CBP UAS operations from the Lake-of-the-Woods region in Minnesota, to the vicinity of Spokane, Washington.

In addition, we have now constructed 649 miles of fencing out of nearly 652 miles where Border Patrol field commanders determined it was operationally required, including 299 miles of vehicle barriers and 350 miles of pedestrian fence. We have also improved our technological capabilities, including by installing remote video surveillance cameras in the Detroit and Buffalo Sectors, among other technologies.

Further, the Southwest border security supplemental legislation that based on the Administration's recommendations and was signed into law in August 2010 provided DHS additional capabilities to secure the Southwest border at and between our ports of entry and reduce the illicit trafficking of people, drugs, currency, and weapons. Specifically, this bill provided funding for improved tactical communications systems along the Southwest border; two additional CBP unmanned aircraft systems; 1,000 new Border Patrol agents; 250 new CBP officers at ports of entry; and two new



see also:

in Securing our Borders - Operational Control and the Path Forward:

Video: Border Patrol Chief Fisher Testifies on Border Security, Part 1

Video: Border Patrol Chief Fisher Testifies on Border Security, Part 2

Video: Border Patrol Chief Fisher Testifies on Border Security, Part 3

Video: Border Patrol Chief Fisher Testifies on Border Security, Part 4

Video: Border Patrol Chief Fisher Testifies on Border Security, Part 5

forward operating bases to improve coordination of border security activities.

In addition, President Obama agreed to the temporary deployment of up to 1,200 National Guard troops to the Southwest border to contribute additional capabilities and capacity to assist law enforcement agencies as a bridge to longer-term enhancements in the efforts to target illicit networks' trafficking in people, drugs, illegal weapons, money, and the violence associated with these illegal activities. These National Guard troops are providing Entry Identification Teams and criminal investigation analysts in support of these efforts.

Beyond these measures, in recent months we have taken additional steps to bring greater unity to our enforcement efforts, expand coordination with other agencies, and improve response times. In Arizona, CBP created a joint command to bring together Border Patrol, Air and Marine, and Field Operations under a unified command structure. We are improving coordination with supporting military forces on the Southwest border. In partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration, and with support from the Department of Defense, we are standing up the new Border Intelligence Fusion Section in the El Paso Intelligence Center, which will develop and disseminate a comprehensive Southwest Border Common Intelligence picture, as well as real-time operational intelligence, to our law enforcement partners in the region—further streamlining and enhancing coordinated federal, state, local, and tribal operations along the border.

Additionally, we are continuing to work with Mexico to develop an interoperable, cross-border communications network that will improve our ability to coordinate law enforcement and public safety issues.

In addition, the Border Patrol has increased partnerships with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, as well as with the public and private sectors. Coordination and cooperation among all entities that have a stake in our mission has been, and continues to be paramount. CBP is working closely with federal, state, local, tribal, and international partners to increase intelligence and information sharing. This information sharing increases understanding of evolving threats and provides the foundation for law enforcement entities to exercise targeted enforcement in the areas of greatest risk. As actionable intelligence indicates that there may be a shift in threat and smuggling activity from one geographic area to another, CBP will adapt and shift resources to mitigate the threat. This intelligence-driven approach prioritizes emerging threats, vulnerabilities and risks—greatly enhancing our border security efforts.

Along the Northern border, the Border Patrol has partnered with the Canadian law enforcement community as well as other federal and state partners through Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBET). The mission of the IBETs is to enhance border security by identifying, investigating, and interdicting individuals and organizations that pose a threat to national security or are engaged in other organized criminal activity. In the maritime sphere, CBP, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the U.S. Coast Guard coordinate integrated operations to combat illegal maritime smuggling through the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

An example of our collaborative efforts along the Southwest border is the Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats (ACTT) in Arizona. ACTT utilizes a collaborative enforcement approach that leverages the capabilities and resources of the Department of Homeland Security in partnership with more than 70 law enforcement agencies in Arizona and the Government of Mexico to deter, disrupt, and interdict individuals and criminal organizations that pose a threat to the United States. Through ACTT, we work with our federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners to increase collaboration; enhance intelligence and information sharing; and develop coordinated operational plans that strategically leverage the unique missions, capabilities and jurisdictions of each participating agency.

Results

Since 2004, CBP has used "operational control" to describe the security of our borders. However, this measure did not accurately represent the Border Patrol's significant investments in personnel, technology, and resources or the efforts of other DHS Components who are engaged in border security such as ICE and the U.S. Coast Guard. Operational Control as applied by the U.S. Border Patrol is the ability to detect, identify, classify, and then respond to and resolve illegal entries along our U.S. Borders. The term is tactical in nature and by current use can only be achieved by incrementally applying resources to a point where field commanders can consistently respond to and resolve illegal entries. Operational as a measure however does not accurately incorporate the efforts of CBP partners and the significance of information and intelligence in an increasingly joint and integrated operating environment. The Border Patrol is currently taking steps to replace this outdated measure with performance metrics that more accurately depict the state of border security.

In fact, the application of these resources has allowed CBP to make significant strides in effectively managing our nation's borders, and the numbers are indicative of the success of our efforts. The border is different today than it was ten years ago. Border Patrol apprehensions of illegal aliens decreased from more than 1.6 million in FY 2000 to approximately 463,000 in FY 2010—a more than 70 percent reduction—indicating that fewer people are attempting to illegally cross the border. We have matched these decreases in apprehensions with increases in seizures of cash, drugs, and weapons over the past two years - seizing 35 percent more illegal currency, 16 percent more illegal drugs, and 28 percent more weapons compared to the previous two years. There have been isolated incidents of violence near our Southwest border, however, violent crime as a whole, in border communities has remained flat or fallen in the past decade, and some of the safest communities in America are at the border. In fact, violent crimes in Southwest border counties 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.'

Nonetheless, we still face significant challenges. We remain concerned about the drug-cartel violence taking place in Mexico and continue to guard against spillover effects into the United States. Working with Congress and our partners across federal, state and local law enforcement, we will continue to assess the investments in the manpower, technology and resources that have proven so effective over the past two years in order to keep our borders secure and the communities along it safe.

Targeted Enforcement

We know from experience that targeted enforcement works. Over the past few years, we have developed effective strategies to disrupt and dismantle smuggling organizations and distribution networks, leading to a safer border. Operations and initiatives such as Operation Streamline; the Alien Transfer Exit Program (ATEP); the Mexico Interior Repatriation Program (MIRP); and Operation Against Smugglers Initiative on Safety and Security (OASISS) are focused on delivering targeted consequences to offenders and breaking the smuggling cycle. Collectively, they represent the Consequence Delivery System that aids the overarching effort to improve the safety and security of the border.

Streamline is a consequence-based prosecution program designed to help CBP in its efforts by conducting focused criminal prosecutions of selected aliens within a defined geographic enforcement areas. ATEP is an ongoing program which moves Mexican nationals apprehended in one Border Patrol Sector to another Sector before removing them to Mexico. ATEP breaks the smuggling cycle by physically separating aliens from the smuggling organizations that will repeatedly attempt to bring guide them into this country. ATEP was initiated in the San Diego, Yuma and El Centro Sectors in February 2008 and has since expanded to the Tucson and El Paso Sectors. In FY11, as of February 2, 18,257 apprehensions have been transferred as part of ATEP, and only 3,558 subjects have been encountered after illegally re-entering the United States – less than 24 percent MIRP is a joint CBP and ICE initiative established in coordination with the Government of Mexico under which aliens apprehended in high risk areas of the Sonora Desert are voluntarily repatriated to the interior of Mexico. OASISS is a bi-national effort designed to coordinate prosecution of alien smugglers in the Mexican judicial system.

Collective understanding of where the greatest risks lie along our borders is critical to our flexibility in addressing these risks. As CBP applies targeted enforcement to areas of evolving threat, mobile response capability is critical to timely and effective resolution. This mobile response capability must actively engage all CBP components and our partners in order to ensure proper synchronization and effectiveness.

Conclusion

Chairwoman Miller, Ranking Member Cuellar, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify about the work of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and our efforts in securing our borders.

The Obama Administration has asserted that border security alone will not address the country's broken immigration system and is committed to reforming our immigration laws. In addition, we currently have immigration laws, and these laws can't be ignored. The law is the law—and our law enforcement officers and agents are bound by duty to enforce them. We must employ a commonsense approach to immigration enforcement. We should place our resources and allocate our time in those areas that give us the biggest return for our investment—money wise and resource wise. Effective border management is critical to our nation's security, and I appreciate the continued support of this Committee and Congress.

I look forward to answering your questions at this time.

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Thu May 24 07:38:55 EDT 2012

DHS Announces Long-Term Border and Immigration Strategy **Secure Border Initiative Targets Control of Border and Reducing Illegal Migration**

11/02/2005

WASHINGTON D.C. – Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff announced today a comprehensive multi-year plan to secure America's borders and reduce illegal migration, entitled the Secure Border Initiative (SBI).

"We will address all aspects of the border security problem across the board – deterrence, detection, response, apprehension, detention, and removal," said Secretary Chertoff. "The goal of SBI is to transform the way immigration issues have been viewed. We will address the challenges in each of these areas with an integrated mix of increased staffing, new technology, and enhanced infrastructure investment, as well as a new regime of regulations and legislative proposals."

Since the events of 9/11, President Bush has placed ever-increasing importance on immigration control, including border security, and has devoted significant resources to the stark challenge of illegal migration. Every day, DHS agencies take significant steps to secure our borders and enforce immigration laws. DHS currently has more than 11,000 Border Patrol agents along nearly 7,000 miles of northern and southern border, an increase of 15 percent over 9/11 levels. An additional 18,000 officers are posted at our Ports of Entry (POE), and over 8,000 agents and officers are working to apprehend criminals, absconders, and other individuals illegally in the United States.

"Despite our substantial progress, we still face a substantial problem. The ability of individuals to enter our country outside legal channels is a threat to our homeland security. Flagrant violation of our borders undercuts the rule of law, undermines our security, and imposes particular economic strains on our border communities," said Secretary Chertoff.

SBI is designed to enable DHS to achieve operational control of both the northern and southern border within five years. Key elements of SBI include:

- More agents to patrol our borders, secure our ports of entry and enforce immigration laws;
- Expanded and more efficient detention and removal capabilities to eliminate "catch and release" once and for all;
- A comprehensive and systemic upgrading of the technology used in controlling the border, including increased manned aerial assets, expanded use of UAVs, and next-generation detection technology;
- Increased investment in infrastructure improvements at the border – providing additional physical security to sharply reduce illegal border crossings; and
- Greatly increased interior enforcement of our immigration laws – including more robust worksite enforcement.

Staffing

The President recently signed the DHS Appropriations Bill which provides funding for an additional 1,000 Border Patrol agents and includes roughly \$3.9 billion in funding and fees for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement this fiscal year. Included are significant funding increases for ICE criminal investigators, detention beds, fugitive operations teams, and Immigration Enforcement agents.

Detention and Removal

DHS will eliminate completely the "catch and release" enforcement problem. DHS is developing the capability to return every single illegal entrant amenable to removal -- no exceptions. The goal is to achieve significant progress on this capability in less than a year. The detention and removal process will be re-engineered to create an efficient system that will always have available detention capacity, and will have a streamlined process for removal while minimizing an alien's time in detention. This will be achieved through greater efficiencies in the removal process, cooperation with foreign governments, increasing detention capacity and expanding expedited removal.

Technology & Infrastructure

DHS will field the most effective mix of current and next generation technology with trained personnel. Our goal is to ultimately have the capacity to integrate multiple state of the art cameras and sensors into a single comprehensive detection system and expand infrastructure systems throughout the border where appropriate to strengthen our efforts to reduce illegal entry.

Interior Enforcement

DHS will strengthen interior enforcement efforts to target those who enter illegally by unequivocally enforcing our laws and making sure that removal is achieved. Strong worksite enforcement is key to effective interior enforcement. DHS must be able to ensure that employees are in our country legally and are properly authorized to work.

DHS also plans to strengthen interior enforcement by expanding state and local partnerships with existing state and local law enforcement personnel through the creation of DHS sponsored task forces focused on border enforcement; improving the Criminal Alien Program to identify and remove all incarcerated criminal aliens in federal and state prisons; and increasing Fugitive Operations until all aliens who received orders of removal are actually removed.

International

Border-related crime affects communities on both sides of our land boundaries, and a shared approach is imperative to disrupting criminal groups and saving lives. SBI will be implemented in a way that entails an appropriate dialogue with the Governments of Mexico and Canada.

DHS will work with other foreign governments to ensure they provide timely travel documents in order to remove the backlog of their nationals in our detention facilities. We will also ensure we maintain a productive dialogue in order to safely and quickly repatriate migrants back to their nations at the same rate at which they are arriving.

Temporary Worker Program

SBI will serve as the enforcement complement to the Temporary Worker Program that President Bush proposed last year. The Temporary Worker Program will have the effect of enabling migrants to pursue work in regulated, legal channels -- and will increase safety and security by giving us a better idea of who is entering our country and for what purpose.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control, and protection of our Nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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on cbp.gov:

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Initiative pledges to support CBP at and inside borders

Apprehending illegal immigrants coming across our borders is the first of three key elements of the Secure Border Initiative and one in which the Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol is a key player.

In a well-attended December press conference, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff detailed the strategy for securing America's borders. Echoing President Bush's speech on immigration reform, Chertoff said, "The problem of immigration is one that's been with this country for 20 years. So, we are digging ourselves out of a hole that took 20 years to dig ourselves into. And it's not going to happen overnight."

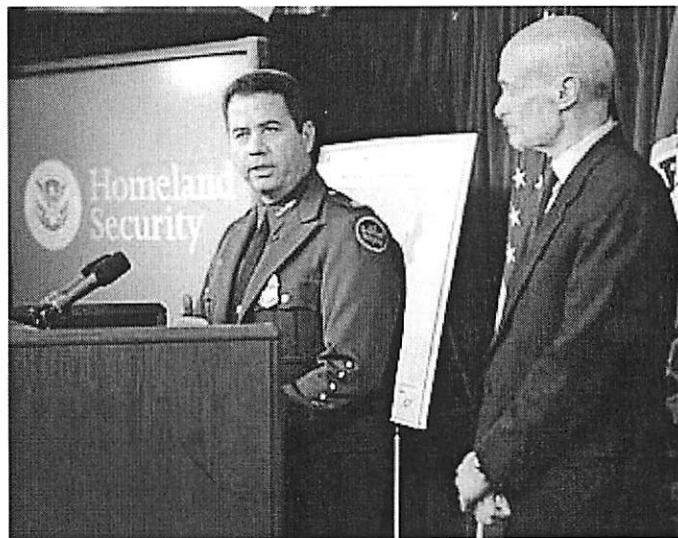


Photo Credit: James Tourtellotte

Border Patrol Chief David V. Aguilar, left, and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff answer questions at a December press conference to explain details of the Secure Border Initiative.

Chertoff described the different components that make up border enforcement and stressed that the key was viewing the border as an entire system. At our borders, the critical element is to "apprehend and intercept, detain, and then remove illegal immigrants." As the

- Initiative pledges to support CBP at and inside borders

U.S.-Canada patrol agents brave winter cold to secure border year-round

CBP top dogs play Big Apple role

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rate of interception and removal grows, people are deterred from attempting illegal entry. The recipe for gaining control of our borders is a mix of increased manpower, low-tech infrastructure such as vehicle barriers and fences and high-tech components like unmanned aerial vehicles, underground sensors, and remote cameras. There is not a single formula for the border—each differing terrain or operational environment requires a different blend of these components.

Enforcement at the workplace

Interior enforcement is the second element of the strategy. The goal is to get employers to thoroughly screen their employees and not hire anyone in the country illegally.

The initiative outlined by Chertoff and President Bush also calls for a guest worker program to allow temporary status to those filling jobs Americans are not. Chertoff compared trying to stop the flow of migrants looking for work in this country to damming a rising river. Without a channel to relieve the pressure, in this case economic pressure, the dam will break.

The Secure Border Initiative also addresses a policy quirk that allows Mexican detainees to be returned to Mexico immediately while those from other countries are detained. This becomes an issue when there is insufficient holding space for detainees and they are released and asked to report for a future court date. This “catch and release” pattern undermines law enforcement efforts and sends a message that encourages illegal crossing attempts. To transform the “catch and release” policy into “catch and remove,” detention centers have been expanded and processing is being expedited, resulting in higher turnover rates.

Another innovation to be used is “expedited removal.” People in this country illegally had been brought before an immigration judge, a process that had taken 90 days or more. Expedited removal omits the judicial process, cutting processing time by half or two-thirds. This policy allows an officer or agent to send an illegal migrant back immediately if they can establish that the migrant is in this country illegally. John Torres, Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s acting director of the Office of Detention and Removal, explained that at the inception of SBI a working group

studied the process of removal and determined that expedited removal was effective and should be expanded.

Increasing removals

During fiscal years 2002 to 2004 there was an average of 40,000 removals through expedited removal per year at the ports of entry. During fiscal year 2005, the use of expedited removal was expanded to Border Patrol apprehensions between the ports of entry, resulting in more than 71,000 removals in one year.

To further expand this policy, CBP has to negotiate country by country to reach agreement on the process for returning nationals. Currently, Hondurans, Brazilians and Nicaraguans are subject to expedited removal and the processing time has been reduced from an average of 90 days to 32 days. CBP has also just added Guatemala to the list of countries with agreements. Since SBI's inception, CBP had removed more than 3,000 non-Mexican illegal aliens using expedited removal, Chertoff reported.

CBP Border Patrol Chief David V. Aguilar provided perspective for the scope of the SBI. During fiscal year 2005 the Border Patrol apprehended more than 1.1 million total illegal migrants between the ports of entry. Within that group, there were more than 165,000 foreign residents from countries other than Mexico coming into the country.

SBI also will take advantage of CBP's Arizona border control initiatives that started in March 2004. The Arizona efforts are increasing personnel, technology and infrastructure in high-risk areas. Last year, CBP added more than 500 agents to the west Arizona border and more than doubled air support to 40 aircraft in the area. Tighter control over the Tucson Sector successfully disrupted normal alien smuggling routes and shifted them to alternative routes.

Success of border efforts is often measured by apprehensions, but there are other measures known as third party indicators that also gauge performance—police calls from other agencies regarding illegal alien incursions, number of crimes associated with elevated levels of illegal immigration, the number of stolen vehicles, and narcotics trafficking.

All of these dropped significantly during fiscal year 2005.

Going high-tech

Improved technology is another facet of this initiative. CBP tested unmanned aerial vehicles last year, and this year purchased a Predator B. These drone are able to be an "eye in the sky" to monitor desolate, rough and inaccessible terrain. Since October 1, UAVs flying in the Tucson area have been involved in the apprehension of more than 1,000 illegal aliens and in the interdiction of more than 400 pounds of narcotics.

"There is no single magic bullet that's going to take care of the problem," said Secretary Chertoff. "Illegal immigration is a complex issue that requires multifaceted solutions. It requires a systems approach, a carefully measured approach, and an approach that uses all our tools. Interception, detention, removal is the recipe for getting us to control the border." **LK**

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