

TESTIMONY OF

MICHAEL J. FISHER
Chief
U.S. Border Patrol

and

KEVIN MCALEENAN
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Office of Field Operations

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Department of Homeland Security

BEFORE

House Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security

February 26, 2012
Washington, DC

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Jackson-Lee, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is an honor to appear before you today to discuss the role of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in securing America's borders, a role that we share with our federal, state, local, tribal, and international partners.

We are here today to discuss what a secure border looks like. Some have suggested that it can be described in terms of linear miles of "operational control," a tactical term once used by the Border Patrol to allocate resources among sectors and stations along the border. We do not use this term as a measure of border security because the reality is that the condition of the border cannot be described by a single objective measure. It is not a measure of crime, because even the safest communities in America have some crime. It is not merely a measure of resources, because even the heaviest concentration of fencing, all weather roads, 24-hour lighting, surveillance systems, and Border Patrol Agents cannot seal the border completely.

For border communities, a secure border means living free from fear in their towns and cities. It means an environment where businesses can conduct cross-border trade and flourish. For other American communities, it means enjoying the benefits of a well-managed border that facilitates the flow of legitimate trade and travel. Our efforts, combined with those of our international, federal, state, local, and tribal partners, have transformed the border and assist in continuing to keep our citizens safe, our country defensible from an attack, and promote economic prosperity.

For CBP, securing our borders means first having the visibility to see what is happening on our borders, and second, having the capacity to respond to what we see. We get visibility through the use of border surveillance technology, personnel, and air and marine assets. Our ability to respond is also supported by a mix of resources including personnel, tactical infrastructure, and air and marine assets.

Unprecedented Resources at Our Borders

Thanks to your support, the border is more secure than ever before. Since its inception, DHS has dedicated historic levels of personnel, technology, and infrastructure in support of our border security efforts. Today CBP is the largest law enforcement agency in the United States.

Law Enforcement Personnel

Currently, the Border Patrol is staffed at a higher level than at any time in its 88-year history. The number of Border Patrol agents has doubled, from approximately 10,000 in 2004 to over 21,000 agents today. Along the Southwest border, DHS has increased the number of law enforcement on the ground from approximately 9,100 Border Patrol agents in 2001 to nearly 18,500 today. At our Northern Border, the force of 500 agents that we sustained ten years ago has grown to over 2,200. Law enforcement capabilities at the ports of entry have also been reinforced. To support our evolving, more complex mission since September 11, 2001, the number of CBP officers ensuring the secure flow of people and goods into the nation has increased from 17,279 customs and immigration inspectors in 2003, to over 21,000 CBP officers and 2,400 agriculture specialists today. These frontline employees facilitated \$2.3 trillion in trade in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, and welcomed a record 98 million travelers – a 12 percent

increase over FY 2009, further illustrating the critical role we play not only with border security, but with economic security and continued growth.

Infrastructure and Technology

In addition to increasing our workforce, DHS has also made unprecedented investments in border security infrastructure and technology. Technology is the primary driver of all land, maritime and air domain awareness—and this will become only more apparent as CBP faces future threats. Technology assets such as integrated fixed towers, mobile surveillance units, and thermal imaging systems act as force multipliers increasing agent awareness, efficiency, and capability to respond to potential threats. As we continue to deploy border surveillance technology, particularly along the southwest border, these investments allow CBP the flexibility to shift more Border Patrol agents from detection duties to interdiction and resolution of illegal activities on our borders.

At our ports of entry, CBP has aggressively deployed Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) and Radiation Portal Monitor (RPM) technology to identify contraband and weapons of mass effect. Prior to September 11, 2001, only 64 large-scale NII systems, and not a single RPM, were deployed to our country's borders. Today CBP has 310 NII systems and 1,460 RPMs deployed. Upon arrival into the United States, CBP scans 99 percent of all containerized cargo at seaports and 100 percent of passenger and cargo vehicles at land borders for radiological and nuclear materials.

The implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) involved a substantial technology investment in the land border environment; this investment continues to provide both facilitation and security benefits. For example, today, more than 19 million individuals have obtained Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology-enabled secure travel documents. These documents are more secure as they can be verified electronically in real-time back to the issuing authority, to establish identity and citizenship; they also reduce the average vehicle processing time by 20 percent.

The implementation of WHTI in the land border environment, and the increased use of RFID-enabled secure travel documents, has allowed CBP to increase the national law enforcement query rate, including the terrorist watch list, to over 98 percent. By comparison, in 2005, CBP performed law enforcement queries in the land border environment for only five percent of travelers. In terms of facilitation, CBP has also capitalized upon these notable improvements to establish active lane management at land border ports; this process is analogous to the management of toll booths on a highway. Through active lane management, CBP can adjust lane designations as traffic conditions warrant to better accommodate trusted travelers and travelers with RFID-enabled documents.

CBP continues to optimize the initial investment in the land border by leveraging new technologies and process improvements across all environments. Since 2009, a variety of mobile, fixed, and tactical hybrid license plate readers (LPR) solutions have been deployed to 40 major southern border outbound crossings and 19 Border Patrol checkpoints. These capabilities have greatly enhanced CBP's corporate ability to gather intelligence and target

suspected violators by linking drivers, passengers and vehicles across the core mission areas of inbound, checkpoint and outbound. In the pedestrian environment, automated gates coupled with self-directed traveler kiosks now provide document information, query results and biometric verification in advance of a pedestrian's arrival to CBP officers.

CBP not only supports security efforts along the nearly 7,000 miles of land borders, but also supplements efforts to secure the Nation's 95,000 miles of coastal shoreline. CBP has over 268 aircraft, including 10 Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), and 293 patrol and interdiction vessels that provide critical aerial and maritime surveillance and operational assistance to personnel on the ground. Our UAS capabilities now cover the Southwest border all the way from California to Texas – providing critical aerial surveillance assistance to personnel on the ground. Our UAS flew more than 5,700 hours in 2012, the most in the program's history. Over the last eight years, CBP transformed a border air wing composed largely of light observational aircraft into a modern air and maritime fleet capable of a broad range of detection, surveillance and interdiction capabilities. This fleet is extending CBP's detection and interdiction capabilities; broadening the "border" and offering greater opportunity to stop threats prior to reaching the nation's shores. Further synthesizing the technology, CBP's Air and Marine Operations Center (AMOC) integrates the surveillance capabilities of its federal and international partners to provide domain awareness for the approaches to the U.S. borders, at the borders, and within the interior of the United States.

CBP is also looking to the future by working closely with the DHS Science & Technology Directorate to identify and develop technology to improve our surveillance and detection capabilities in our ports and along our maritime and land borders. This includes investments in tunnel detection and tunnel activity monitoring technology, low-flying aircraft detection and tracking systems, maritime data integration/data fusion capabilities at AMOC, cargo supply chain security, and border surveillance tools tailored to Southern and Northern borders (e.g., unattended ground sensors/tripwires, upgrade for mobile Surveillance System, camera poles, and wide-area surveillance).

Indicators of Success

This deployment of resources has, by every traditional measure, led to unprecedented success. In FY 2012, Border Patrol apprehension activity remained at historic lows with apprehensions in California, Arizona and New Mexico continuing a downward trend. In FY 2012, the Border Patrol recorded 364,768 apprehensions nationwide. In FY 2012 apprehensions were 78 percent below their peak in 2000, and down 50 percent from FY 2008. An increase in apprehensions was noted in south Texas, specifically of individuals from Central American countries, including El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. However, significant border-wide investments in additional enforcement resources and enhanced operational tactics and strategy have enabled CBP to address the increased activity. Today, there are more than 6,000 agents in South Texas, an increase of more than 80 percent since 2004.

At ports of entry in FY 2012, CBP officers arrested nearly 7,900 people wanted for serious crimes, including murder, rape, assault and robbery. Officers also stopped nearly

145,000 inadmissible aliens from entering the U.S. through ports of entry. As a result of the efforts of the CBP National Targeting Center and Immigration Advisory Program, 4,199 high risk travelers, who would have been found inadmissible, were prevented from boarding flights destined for the U.S., an increase of 32 percent compared to FY 2011.

We see increasing success in our seizures as well. From FY 2009 to 2012, CBP seized 71 percent more currency, 39 percent more drugs, and 189 percent more weapons along the Southwest border as compared to FY 2006 to 2008. Nationwide, CBP officers and agents seized more than 4.2 million pounds of narcotics and more than \$100 million in unreported currency through targeted enforcement operations. On the agricultural front, from FY 2003 to FY 2012, CBP interceptions of reportable actionable plant pests in the cargo environment increased over 48 percent to 48,559 in FY 2012. In addition to protecting our Nation's ecosystems and associated native plants and animals, these efforts are important to protecting our Nation's economy as scientists estimate that the economic impacts from invasive species exceed \$1 billion annually in the United States.

Reduced crime rates along the Southwest border also indicate success of our combined law enforcement efforts. According to 2010 FBI crime reports, violent crimes in Southwest border states have dropped by an average of 40 percent in the last two decades. More specifically, all crime in the seven counties that comprise the South Texas area is down 10 percent from 2009 to 2011. Between 2000 and 2011, four cities along the Southwest border – San Diego, McAllen, El Paso, and Tucson – experienced population growth, while also seeing significant decreases in violent crime.

These border communities have also seen a dramatic boost to their economies in recent years. In FY 2012, over \$176 billion in goods entered through the Laredo and El Paso, Texas ports of entry as compared to \$160 billion in FY 2011. Additionally, the import value of goods entering the United States through Texas land ports has increased by 55 percent between FY 2009 and FY 2012. In Laredo alone, imported goods increased in value by 68 percent. Arizona is also a significant source for the flow of trade. In both FY 2011 and FY 2012, \$20 billion entered through Arizona ports of entry.

Communities along the Southwest border are among the most desirable places to live in the nation. Forbes ranked Tucson the number one city in its April 2012 "Best Cities to Buy a Home Right Now" and in February, 2012, the Tucson Association of Realtors reported that the total number of home sales was up 16% from the same month the previous year. Tucson also joins Las Cruces, New Mexico on Forbes' list of "25 Best Places to Retire." These Southwest border communities are also safe. In fact, *Business Insider* published a list of the top 25 most dangerous cities in America, and again, none of them is located along the southwest border. In fact, El Paso was named the second safest city in America in 2009 and the safest in 2010 and 2011. This is in dramatic contrast to Ciudad Juarez, just across the border, which is often considered one of the most dangerous cities in the Western Hemisphere.

The successes of a secure border are also reflected in key national economic indicators. In 2011, secure international travel resulted in overseas travelers spending \$153 billion in the United States – an average of \$4,300 each – resulting in a \$43 billion travel and tourism trade

surplus. In addition, a more secure global supply chain resulted in import values growing by five percent and reaching \$2.3 trillion in FY 2012 and is expected to exceed previous records in the air, land, and sea environments this year. CBP collects tens of billions of dollars in duties, providing a significant source of revenue for our Nation's treasury. These efforts compliment the strategies implemented by the President's National Export Initiative (NEI) which resulted in the resurgence of American manufacturers, who have added nearly 500,000 jobs since January 2010, the strongest period of job growth since 1989. Additionally, other efforts to boost trade and exports are producing results. In 2011, U.S. exports have reached record levels, totaling over \$2.1 trillion, 33.5 percent above the level of exports in 2009. U.S. exports supported nearly 9.7 million U.S. jobs in 2011, a 1.2 million increase in the jobs supported by exports since 2009. Further, over the first two years of the NEI, the Department of Commerce had recruited over 25,000 foreign buyers to U.S. trade shows, resulting in about 1.7 billion in export sales. The Administration's National Travel and Tourism Strategy calls for 100 million international visitors a year by the end of 2021, bringing over \$250 billion in estimated spending.

Protecting America from Afar: Secure Borders Expanded

While enforcement statistics and economic indicators point to increased security and an improved quality of life, CBP uses an intelligence-based framework to direct its considerable resources toward a dynamic and evolving threat. CBP gathers and analyzes this intelligence and data to inform operational planning and effective execution.

CBP's programs and initiatives reflect DHS's ever increasing effort to extend its security efforts outward. This ensures that our ports of entry are not the last line of defense, but one of many.

Securing Travel

On a typical day, CBP welcomes nearly a million travelers at our air, land, and sea ports of entry. The volume of international air travelers increased by 12 percent from 2009 to 2012 and is projected to increase four to five percent each year for the next five years. CBP continues to address the security elements of its mission while meeting the challenge of increasing volumes of travel in air, land, and sea environments, by assessing the risk of passengers from the earliest, and furthest, possible point, and at each point in the travel continuum.

As a result of advance travel information, CBP has the opportunity to assess passenger risk long before a traveler arrives at a port of entry. Before an individual travels to the U.S., CBP has the opportunity to assess their risk via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization for those traveling under the Visa Waiver Program, or as part of the inter-agency collaborative effort to adjudicate and continuously vet visas, which are issued by the Department of State. CBP has additional opportunities to assess a traveler's risk when they purchase their ticket and/or make a reservation, and when they check-in.

Before an international flight departs for the U.S. from the foreign point of origin, commercial airlines transmit passenger and crew manifest information to CBP. CBP's National Targeting Center then reviews traveler information to identify travelers who would be determined

inadmissible upon arrival. As part of its Pre-Departure and Immigration Advisory/Joint Security Programs, CBP coordinates with the carriers to prevent such travelers from boarding flights bound for the U.S. From FY 2010 through FY 2012 CBP prevented 8,984 high risk travelers from boarding as a result of these programs.

CBP also continues to expand Trusted Traveler Programs such as Global Entry. More than 1.7 million people, including over 223,000 new members this fiscal year, have access to Trusted Traveler Programs, which allow expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk air travelers upon arrival in the United States. CBP processed 500,000 more Global Entry passengers, with over 689,000 more kiosk uses in 2012, compared to the same time in 2011.

These efforts not only allow CBP to mitigate risk before a potential threat arrives at a port of entry, but they also make the travel process more efficient and economical by creating savings for the U.S. Government and the private sector by preventing inadmissible travelers from traveling to the United States.

Securing Trade and the Supply Chain

In FY 2012, CBP processed 25.3 million cargo containers through the Nation's ports of entry, an increase of four percent from 2011, with a trade value of \$2.3 trillion. The United States is the world's largest importer and exporter of goods and services. To address increasing travel volumes, CBP assesses the risk of cargo bound for the United States, whether by air, land, or sea, at the earliest point of transit.

Receiving advanced shipment information allows CBP to assess the risk of cargo before it reaches a port of entry. Since 2009, the Importer Security Filing (ISF) and the Additional Carrier Requirements regulation have required importers to supply CBP with an electronically-filed ISF consisting of advance data elements 24 hours prior to lading for cargo shipments that will be arriving into the U.S. by vessel. These regulations increase CBP's ability to assess the scope and accuracy of information gathered on goods, conveyances, and entities involved in the shipment of cargo to the U.S. via vessel.

Since 2010, CBP has implemented the Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS) pilot, which enables CBP and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to receive advance security filing cargo data and help identify cargo shipments inbound to the United States via the air environment that may be high risk and require additional physical screening. Identifying high-risk shipments as early as possible in the air cargo supply chain provides CBP and TSA an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review of cargo data while facilitating the movement of legitimate trade into the United States. Benefits to ACAS pilot participants include: efficiencies by automating the identification of high risk cargo for enhanced screening before it is consolidated and loaded on aircraft and reduction in paper processes related to cargo screening requirements which may increase carrier efficiency.

CBP also has a presence at foreign ports to add another layer of security to cargo bound for the United States. The Container Security Initiative (CSI) launched in 2002 by the former U.S. Customs, places CBP officers on the ground at foreign ports to perform pre-screening of

containers before they placed on a U.S.-bound vessel. The CSI program has matured since its inception in 2002, through increased partnership with host country counterparts and advances in targeting and technology, allowing CBP to decrease the number of CBP officers on the ground at CSI ports, while still screening more than 80 percent of cargo destined for the U.S. prior to lading on a U.S.-bound vessel.

Securing the Source and Transit Zones

The effort to push out America's borders is also reflected by CBP's efforts to interdict narcotics and other contraband long before it reaches the United States. Since 1988, CBP OAM and the former U.S. Customs Service, has provided Detection and Monitoring capabilities for the Source and Transit Zone mission. The CBP OAM P-3 Orion Long Range Tracker (LRT) and the Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircraft have provided air and maritime surveillance, detecting suspect smugglers that use a variety of conveyances. Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) smuggle various contraband towards the U.S. Borders and Arrival Zones. The CBP P-3 aircraft have been instrumental in reducing the flow of contraband from reaching the Arrival Zones, by detecting the suspect aircraft and vessels while still thousands of miles away from the U.S. border. In FY 2012, P-3 crews were involved in the seizure of 117,103 pounds of cocaine and 12,824 pounds of marijuana. In the first quarter of 2013, P-3 crews have been involved in the seizure of 33,690 pounds of cocaine and 88 pounds of marijuana. Providing direction to interdiction assets and personnel to intercept suspects long before reaching the U.S., the CBP P-3 aircraft and crew provide an added layer of security, by stopping criminal activity before reaching our shores.

Conclusion

CBP has made significant progress in securing the border with the support of the U.S. Congress through a multi-layered approach using a variety of tools at our disposal. CBP will continue to work with DHS and our federal, state, local, tribal, and international partners, to strengthen border security and infrastructure. We must remain vigilant and focus on building our approach to position CBP's greatest capabilities in place to combat the greatest risks that exist today, to be prepared for emerging threats, and to continue to build a sophisticated approach tailored to meet the challenges of securing a 21st century border. At the same time, the Secretary has made it clear that Congress can help by passing a commonsense immigration reform bill that will allow CBP to focus its resources on the most serious criminal actors threatening our borders.

Chairwoman Miller, Ranking Member Jackson-Lee, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify about the work of CBP and our efforts in securing our borders. We look forward to answering your questions.