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# Fiscal Year 2015 Six Month Border Security Update Statement by Secretary Johnson

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Today I report on the status of our border security efforts mid-way through Fiscal Year 2015. This status update is part of our continuing effort to provide regular updates on our border security efforts.

Border security is a core mission of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Department has deployed historic levels of front-line personnel, technology, and infrastructure to the border to reduce the flow of illegal immigrants and illicit contraband while, at the same time, fostering legal trade and travel.

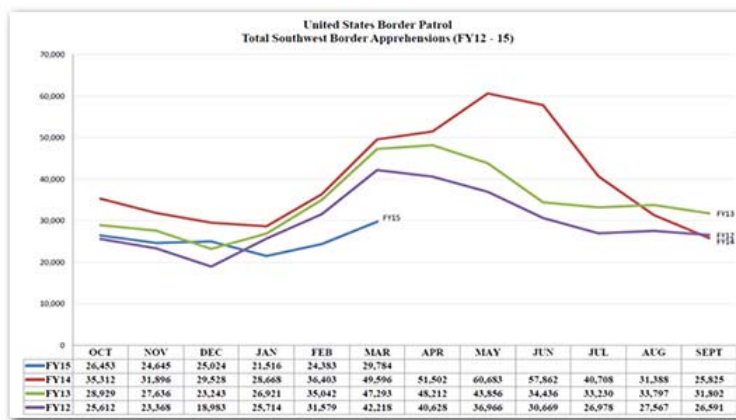
To more effectively secure our borders and enhance public safety, in November 2014, at the direction of the President, I announced a number of administrative actions. As part of these actions, DHS established new Department-wide enforcement priorities focused on securing our southern border as well as the apprehension, detention, and removal of recent border crossers, convicted criminals, and threats to national security. DHS has continued to make significant progress in securing the southwest border through the dedication of unprecedented resources, implementation of our new U.S. Southern Border and Approaches Campaign, pursuit of threat-driven border security and enforcement operations, and as a result of increased cooperation with foreign governments.

During the first six months of Fiscal Year 2015, the number of total apprehensions along the southwest border, which is a strong indicator of total attempts to cross the border illegally, was 28 percent lower than total apprehensions during the same period in Fiscal Year 2014. Longer term, border apprehensions in the first six months of Fiscal Year 2015 are a fraction of where they were fifteen years ago, when, in Fiscal Year 2000, a total of 1.6 million people were apprehended attempting to cross the southern border.

As the chart below illustrates, total apprehensions along the southwest border – comprised of apprehensions of unaccompanied children, family units, and single adults – for Fiscal Year 2015 are at their lowest point in the past four fiscal years. Through March 31, 2015, apprehensions this Fiscal Year are 151,805, down nearly 60,000 (or 28 percent) compared to the same period in Fiscal Year 2014. (For the month of April 2015, we project similarly reduced numbers.)

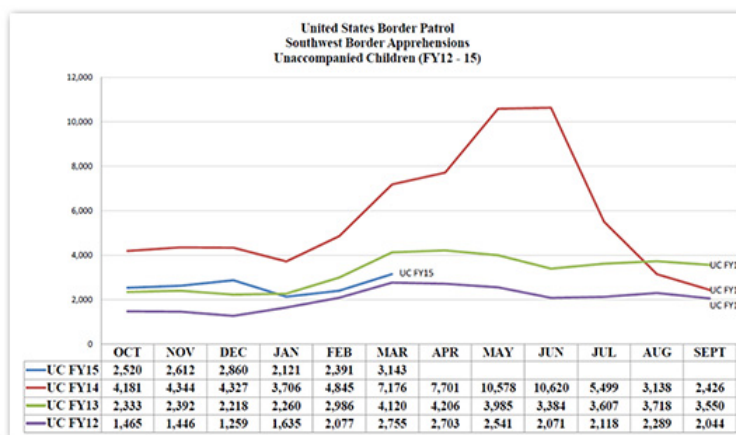
And, compared to the same time periods in Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013, apprehensions are down 15,669 and 37,259, respectively – despite an improving economy in the United States which has historically been considered a “pull” factor for illegal migration.

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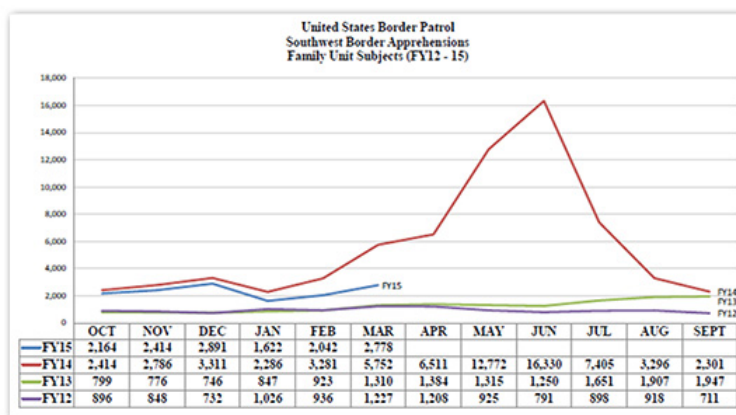


This overall downturn in apprehensions on the southwest border is manifesting itself in specific regions as well.<sup>[1]</sup> For example, Texas, which represents approximately 61 percent of total southwest border apprehensions, experienced a dramatic decrease in apprehensions across the board, including a 50 percent decrease in apprehensions of unaccompanied children when compared to the first six months of Fiscal Year 2014. Apprehensions in Arizona, which account for approximately 23 percent of total southwest border apprehensions, were 32 percent lower during the first six months of Fiscal Year 2015 than in the first six months of Fiscal Year 2014.

Apprehensions of unaccompanied children across the southwest are down significantly as well. Last summer we responded aggressively to stem the tide of unaccompanied children and families illegally migrating to the United States, and the numbers of unaccompanied children declined sharply beginning in mid-June 2014. During the first six months of Fiscal Year 2015, apprehensions of unaccompanied children along the southwest border were 15,627. This number is 45 percent lower than at the same point in Fiscal Year 2014.

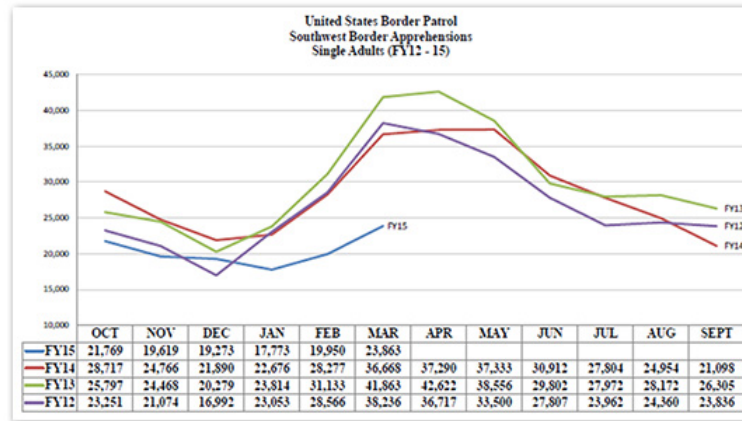


Family unit apprehensions recorded in each month for the past six months are also lower when compared to the same period last year. For Fiscal Year 2015, family unit apprehensions along the entire southwest border were 13,911 individuals, 30 percent lower than the 19,830 individuals apprehended in the same period in Fiscal Year 2014.



With respect to single adults, the first six months of Fiscal Year 2015 saw the fewest number of apprehensions over the same six month period in the past four fiscal years. Through March 31, 2015, adult apprehensions this fiscal year are 122,247, down 40,747, or 25 percent,

from the same period in Fiscal Year 2014. And, compared to the same period in Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013, apprehensions of single adults are down 28,925 and 45,307, respectively.



The Department's investment in border security capabilities, resources, and technology has grown considerably in recent years. Today's Border Patrol has the largest deployment of people, vehicles, aircraft, boats and equipment along the southwest border in its 90-year history:

- DHS investments in every aspect of border security -- from personnel, to border surveillance technology, to air and marine assets, to fencing -- have more than doubled since the beginning of the last decade, and in some cases more than quadrupled. Moreover, key investments in areas such as mobile surveillance systems and unattended sensors have doubled during this Administration.
- The Border Patrol is better staffed today than at any time in its history, having doubled the number of agents from approximately 10,000 in 2004 to nearly 21,000 today.
- The Administration has maintained these historic levels of Border Patrol personnel. In fact, today approximately 2,348 more Border Patrol agents patrol our southwest border than at the end of the Fiscal Year 2008.
- There are 702 miles of total fencing across the southwest border, compared to just 77 miles in the year 2000.
- Fourteen years ago Customs and Border Protection (CBP) had few, if any, unattended sensors to detect illegal migration at the southwest border; today CBP has nearly 12,000 of these devices.

DHS continues to invest in detection assets and portable imaging capabilities that increase situational awareness of the Border Patrol. Fiscal Year 2015 investments include:

- Approximately 75 percent—or an additional 352—more Imaging Sensors on the southwest border.
- Approximately 70 more Remote Video Surveillance System towers and 20 new Integrated Fixed Towers in Arizona over the next few years that will provide increased situational awareness, early detection of border incursions, enhanced identification and classification of threats, and the ability to track items of interest through to a law enforcement resolution.
- \$46 million to conduct site preparation (including environmental assessment, border patrol station modifications, real estate acquisition, and pre-construction activities) to enable future deployment of approximately 70 new Remote Video Surveillance Systems in Texas.
- \$44 million will be used to deploy 39 additional Mobile Video Surveillance Systems that will provide both day and night surveillance capability that can be deployed on Border Patrol vehicles.
- \$11 million to develop a National Border Geo-Intelligence Strategy and establish a Southwest Border Tracking System which will enhance the Border Patrol's ability to identify traffic patterns, improve data collection on key performance measures, and inform daily decisions on deployments of personnel and equipment. This capability is especially useful in remote locations in New Mexico and Texas.
- \$43.7 million for two King Air Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft, the most capable new, twin-engine aircraft which support Border Patrol agents and improve air-to-ground surveillance capabilities.
- 95,000 total flight hours to support the highest priority border security operations. CBP has already expanded flight operations on the southwest border, with 2,805 more flight hours executed in Fiscal Year 2015 to date when compared to the first six months of Fiscal Year 2014.

Our progress in securing the southwest border is further evidenced by the collaboration we see with our regional partners. The President, the Vice President, I, and others have all engaged the Governments of Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to improve collaboration and effectiveness of overall enforcement efforts, increase border management and investigative capacity, and to support awareness campaigns in the region which highlight the dangers of crossing the border illegally.

Our public awareness campaigns in the region provide widespread messages on the dangers of the journey as well as the facts regarding our new enforcement focus on recent and future border crossers. In Fiscal Year 2015, DHS and the Department of State created an aggressive campaign to dispel potential misinformation about our immigration laws and policies in Mexico and Central America, and to dissuade illegal migration to the United States. Our notices could be seen at bus stops throughout Central America.

But, as I have said many times before, we are not declaring mission accomplished when it comes to border security. There is more work to be done as there are still individuals crossing our border illegally. The Department will continue to focus our enforcement resources on recent border crossers, along with public safety and national security threats. We are working to sustain and strategically deploy the added border security that we have put into place and are able to do so more effectively in light of the President's November actions.

The Administration's Fiscal Year 2016 budget request continues our commitment to maintaining historic levels of personnel, technology, and infrastructure to leverage CBP capabilities and resources to better secure our southwest border. The budget request includes:

- Funding for 21,370 Border Patrol Agents and 23,871 Customs and Border Protection Officers.
- \$85.3 million for the Non-Intrusive Inspection program at Ports of Entry.
- \$373.5 million to maintain and recapitalize border infrastructure and technology (fencing, surveillance systems, sensors, and towers).

In addition to these investments, we have also shifted existing resources to intensify enforcement operations against human smugglers along the border. Beginning in June 2014, DHS and the Department of Justice announced "Operation Coyote." Focused on combatting, disrupting, and dismantling human smuggling networks that facilitate illegal migration, Operation Coyote targets transnational criminal organizations that prey upon migrants by tracking, interdicting, and seizing their illicit profits.

To date, Operation Coyote has resulted in:

- The arrest of 1,356 smugglers and their associates on criminal charges;
- 870 indictments leading to 643 convictions related to human smuggling investigations, with additional cases pending final disposition;
- The seizure of 39 firearms, 190 vehicles and \$1,306,540 in U.S. currency.

In Fiscal Year 2015, our strategy to fundamentally alter the way we plan and marshal resources along our southern border moved from concept to reality. On February 6, 2015, our three new Joint Task Forces achieved their initial operational capability. Led by operators experienced in their unique land, maritime, and investigative operating environments, we now have in place an actionable, joint operational approach along the southwest border that moves away from stovepipe operations and employs DHS assets—CBP, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Coast Guard, and others—in a strategic way to provide effective enforcement of our laws and interdict individuals seeking to illegally cross land, sea, and air borders.

### Joint Task Force-East

JTF-East is primarily responsible for the U.S. southeast and its maritime approaches, and is led by Vice Admiral William "Dean" Lee, U.S. Coast Guard

### Joint Task Force-West

JTF-West is primarily responsible for the southwest land border and its land approaches and is led by Commander Robert Harris, U.S. Border Patrol

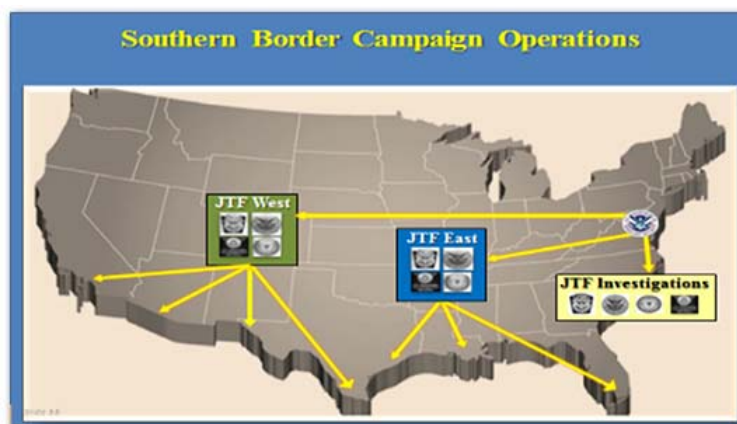
### JTF Investigations

JTF-Investigations focuses on investigations throughout the nation and with our foreign partners and supports the work of the other two Task Forces. This JTF is led by ICE-HSI Special Agent in Charge David Marwell

### DHS Coordinator

DHS Coordinator is responsible for implementation of the Joint Task Force model and serves as primary coordinator on behalf of the Secretary. Peter Verga serves as DHS Coordinator.

Through these new Joint Task Forces, we will integrate capabilities across DHS to interdict individuals seeking to illegally enter our country by land, air, or sea; degrade transnational criminal organizations; decrease the terrorism threat to the Nation without impeding the flow of lawful trade, travel, and commerce; and enforce our Nation's immigration laws.



Our continued message to those who are considering crossing our border illegally is this: Our borders are not open for illegal migration and dangerous criminals. In fact, because of the actions taken by the President and the Department last year, we have made the removal of illegal border crossers a top priority. And we will continue to spread our message which we know is resonating in Central America, where more people are learning that now is not a time to illegally migrate to the United States.

DHS is committed to transparency in its effort to improve border security and reduce illegal migration. This update illustrates the progress made in the first six months of 2015 in accordance with the Department's priorities and the President's Immigration Executive Actions. DHS continues to evaluate its methodology for assessing operational effectiveness of security and enforcement programs and these measures will continue to evolve over time, enabling DHS to more effectively manage operations and answer key questions regarding inflow, interdiction rates, consequences, and deterrence.

Much progress has been made in the months since the President announced his executive actions. DHS will continue to prioritize these efforts to prevent potential border crossers and convicted criminals from entering the country illegally while providing a homeland that is safe and secure, where American interests, aspirations, and way of life can thrive.

**Texas** - Border Patrol apprehensions in Texas, representing approximately 61 percent of total Southwest Border apprehensions, were 31 percent lower during the first six months of FY 2015, compared to the first six months of FY 2014. Apprehensions of unaccompanied children in Texas were 50 percent lower through March of FY 2015, compared to the same period in FY 2014. Both family units and single adult apprehensions were lower during the first six months of FY 2015, compared to FY 2014 (down 33 and 26 percent respectively).

**California** - Border Patrol apprehensions in California, representing approximately 13 percent of total Southwest Border apprehensions, were 11 percent lower during the first six months of FY 2015 compared to the first six months of FY 2014.

**Arizona** - Border Patrol apprehensions in Arizona, representing approximately 23 percent of total Southwest Border apprehensions, were 32 percent lower during the first six months of FY 2015 compared to the first six months of FY 2014 and were the lowest in more than 20 years.

**New Mexico** - Border apprehensions in New Mexico, representing approximately 3 percent of total Southwest Border apprehensions, were 19 percent higher during the first six months of FY 2015 compared to FY 2014.

*Review Date: April 24, 2015*