

STATEMENT OF

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U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

BEFORE THE

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER, MARITIME AND GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT**

REGARDING

**THE FUTURE OF BORDER SECURITY: CAN SBINET SUCCEED?
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2007**

ROOM 311, CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

CHAIRWOMAN SANCHEZ, CHAIRMAN CARNEY, RANKING MEMBERS

SOUDER AND ROGERS, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS: My name is Robert Gilbert, and I am the Chief Patrol Agent of the Border Patrol's Tucson Sector. I am honored to appear on behalf of the Border Patrol as we share your interest in the safety of U.S. citizens, as well as the 2845 great and dedicated agents that serve along the border in the Tucson Sector. I am pleased to discuss the enforcement efforts that have taken place in my area of responsibility and update you on the status of Project-28.

The Border Patrol is the primary enforcement agency responsible for protecting America's border between the ports of entry. We are the first line of defense in DHS' multi-agency effort to secure the border of our great country and dismantle the violent smuggling organizations that threaten the American quality of life. This is especially true in Arizona where the Tucson Sector is the most active corridor of illegal border activity in the Nation. In FY 2007, the Tucson Sector arrested 378,239 illegal aliens, 43% of the national apprehension total and made 3340 marijuana seizures totaling 897,288 pounds, which represents 48% of the 1,852,525 pounds seized nationally by the Border Patrol.

In the past year, we have added 3 Ground Surveillance Radars, utilized the Interior Repatriation Program, added a focused Targeted Prosecution Program, and conducted remote camp details in Sells, Bates Well, Papago Farms, Sasabe, and Camp Desert Grip to maximize the resources we have available. Tucson has benefited from national programs such as Operation Jump Start, utilizing the National Guard as an interim force multiplier as we increase our enforcement resources. Another national program is Operation Stone Garden which provides state, local and tribal agencies funding through DHS' Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention

Program to enhance border security. A total of Twenty-one law enforcement agencies participated in Operation Stone Garden in Tucson Sector this last fiscal year.

The Border Patrol, as part of our National Strategy will continue to assess, develop, and deploy the appropriate mix of technology, personnel, and infrastructure to gain, maintain, and expand coverage of the border in an effort to use our resources in the most efficient fashion. As an example, the use of technology, including the expansion of camera systems, biometrics, sensors, air assets, and improving communications systems, can act as a force multiplier that helps Border Patrol to be more effective.

One national example of beneficial technology is the IDENT/IAFIS integrated system, which captures a single set of fingerprints and submits them simultaneously to DHS' Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT) and DOJ's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) for identity checks. With immediate access to IAFIS nationwide, Border Patrol agents have identified thousands of egregious offenders in FY 2007, including over 300 homicide suspects, 460 sex crime suspects, 130 kidnapping suspects, and 11,600 suspects involved in dangerous drugs or trafficking, all of whom otherwise may have gone undetected. With 18,800 major crime hits and over 143,000 IAFIS hits through fiscal year 2007, we have made significant strides towards improving national security and greatly enhancing our ability to secure our Nation's borders through the development of better technology.

The Border Patrol anticipates that Project-28 will be a tremendous force multiplier to our overall operating capabilities. We expect that Project-28 is going to be an important part of an overall array of technology that will enhance and accelerate the Border Patrol's ability to secure our borders and maintain national security. The technological capabilities that Project-28 will bring to the Border Patrol, along with the additional personnel and tactical infrastructure that are

being added, will give us the means to expand our operational control of the border. As customers of *SBI*net and Boeing, DHS/CBP/Border Patrol have not yet accepted this project and are eagerly awaiting its initiation.

The Border Patrol's objective is nothing less than securing operational control of the border. We recognize the challenges of doing so, as we have dealt with them for many years. Challenges continue to lie ahead and the need for a comprehensive enforcement approach remains. Our national strategy gives us the means by which to achieve our ambitious goal. We face these challenges every day with vigilance, dedication to service, and integrity as we work to strengthen national security and protect America and its citizens. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony today and for your support of CBP and DHS. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you might have at this time.