

Statement for the Record

The Honorable Michael Chertoff

Secretary

United States Department of Homeland Security

Before the

**United States House of Representatives Committee on Homeland
Security**

July 17, 2008

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to testify today before this Committee about the progress of our efforts to secure our homeland and protect the American people. I'd like to thank the Committee for its past support of our Department and for your continued guidance as we take aggressive steps to advance our mission.

Today I would like to discuss the Department's efforts to secure the homeland through protecting our borders and ports of entry and enhancing interior enforcement.

In the course of this testimony, I will outline the substantial progress we have made over the past year, reflecting our determination to make the progress expected by the American people in our pursuit of a sustained border security strategy.

But I want to remind this Committee at the outset that despite our solid gains over the past year, enforcement alone is not enough to address our immigration challenges. As long as the opportunity for higher wages and a better life draws people across the border illegally or encourages them to remain here illegally, we will continue to face a difficult battle. For this reason, I remain hopeful that Congress will resume its efforts to arrive at a solution that will address this long-standing problem.

I. STRENGTHENING BORDER SECURITY

I would like to begin by discussing our strategy to secure the border through installation of tactical infrastructure, including pedestrian and vehicle fencing; hiring and training new Border Patrol agents; and deploying a range of technology to the border, including cameras, sensors, unmanned aerial systems, and ground-based radar.

As part of this discussion, I will also talk about maritime security and the security measures we are implementing at our ports of entry.

Pedestrian and Vehicle Fencing

We made a commitment to have in place a total of 670 miles of pedestrian and vehicle fencing -- including 370 miles of pedestrian fence and 300 miles of vehicle fence -- on the southern border by the end of this calendar year to disrupt the entry of illegal immigrants, drugs, and vehicles. We are on track to meet that commitment. As of July 11, we have built over 335 miles of fence, including more than 182 miles of pedestrian fence and nearly 153 miles of vehicle fence.

In building this fence, we have sought the cooperation of land owners, state and local leaders, and members of border communities. We are willing to listen to any concerns communities have with respect to fence construction and we are willing to seek reasonable alternatives provided the solution meets the operational needs of the Border Patrol.

Though we will try to accommodate landowner concerns, we cannot indefinitely delay our efforts or engage in endless debate when national security requires that we build the fence. Moreover, in areas where we use our authority to waive certain environmental laws that threaten to impede our progress, we do so in conjunction with appropriate environmental studies so that we can take reasonable steps to mitigate the environmental impact of our construction. Of course, we will provide appropriate compensation for any property the federal government acquires through the process of eminent domain.

Boots on the Ground

Fencing is an important element of a secure border, but it does not provide a total solution. For this reason, we also have continued to expand the Border Patrol, which is part of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The Border Patrol defends our nation's frontline between the ports of entry and responds to incursions with speed and agility.

Over the past year, we have accelerated recruitment, hiring, and training of Border Patrol agents. Approximately 16,690 Border Patrol agents are currently on board and we are on track to meet our commitment of having more than 18,000 agents by the end of this year – more than twice as

many as when President Bush took office. This represents the largest expansion of the Border Patrol in its history, and we have grown the force without sacrificing the quality of training the Border Patrol Academy prides itself on delivering.

We have benefited substantially from the support of the National Guard under Operation Jump Start. We are grateful to the Department of Defense as well as governors across the United States for allowing us temporarily to leverage the National Guard in support of our border security mission.

Technology and SBInet

A third critical element of border security is technology. While not a panacea, technology allows us to substantially expand our coverage of the border, more effectively detect and identify incursions, and improve Border Patrol response time.

Over the past year, as part of our Secure Border Initiative (SBI), we have deployed additional technology through our SBInet program which includes the development of the Project 28 (P-28) prototype in Arizona to test our ability to integrate several border technologies into a unified system. There has been some confusion about the purpose of the P-28 prototype and its role in the Department's larger efforts at the border. Allow me to put P-28 into its appropriate context.

P-28 was designed to be a real-world test of critical technologies and system integration under the broader SBInet program. Specifically, its purpose was to demonstrate the feasibility of the SBInet technical approach developed by the contractor, Boeing, and to show that this type of technology could be deployed in a demanding environment to help secure the southwest border. After successful field testing, we formally accepted P-28 from Boeing on February 21st of this year. We have a system that is operational and has already assisted in identifying and apprehending more than 3,500 illegal aliens trying to cross the border since September 2007.

It is important, however, to recognize that one of the key benefits of any prototype or demonstration concerns the lessons learned that can be applied to future concepts. These lessons

learned are part of the true value of the technology demonstration and P-28 is no exception. Accordingly, we are building upon lessons learned to develop a new technology architecture, based on open standards for maximum interoperability that will incorporate upgraded software, mobile surveillance systems, unattended ground sensors, and an improved communication system to enable better connectivity and system performance. We will incorporate this new architecture in SBInet's first production system which will be deployed to two sites in Arizona this year.

As part of our broader efforts, we are continuing to deploy additional assets and technology along both our southern and northern borders. This includes a fourth unmanned aircraft system, with plans to bring two more on-line this fiscal year. One of these systems will be deployed on the northern border. We also anticipate expanding our ground-based mobile surveillance systems from four to 40. And we will acquire 2,500 additional unattended ground sensors this fiscal year, with 1,250 of those planned for deployment on the northern border and 1,250 on the southwest border. These will supplement the more than 7,500 ground sensors currently in operation. To continue to support our investment in border security, we have requested \$775 million in funding as part of the President's Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

We are also mindful of the need to coordinate these strategies with our operational components in order to achieve effective situational awareness along the border. Intelligence and information integration is a priority for the President and Congress, and we have taken steps to achieve this goal. The Department's Office for Intelligence and Analysis, working with DHS operational components, is ensuring that intelligence supports the application of the strategic fencing, Border Patrol personnel, and technology that form the foundation strategies of our Secure Border Initiative. The Homeland Intelligence Support Team (HIST), an initiative co-located at the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), will coordinate the delivery of national intelligence and information-sharing capabilities in support of operational objectives along the border. The HIST will work directly with our Border Patrol, law enforcement personnel, and intelligence analysts to identify how intelligence can strengthen our enforcement activities and ensure information is coordinated with key stakeholders quickly and accurately. We also created a Border Security

Branch that merges intelligence community information with DHS component reporting to produce border products for our frontline operators.

Metrics of Success

Have our efforts achieved their desired impact? If we look at the decline in apprehension rates over the past year and third-party indicators such as a decrease in remittances to Mexico, the answer appears to be yes.

For Fiscal Year 2007, CBP reported a 20 percent decline in apprehensions across the southern border, suggesting fewer illegal immigrants are attempting to enter our country. This trend has continued into this fiscal year. During the first half of Fiscal Year 2008, southwest border apprehensions were down 17 percent, and were down nationwide by 16 percent over the same period the previous year.

In its June 4, 2008 issue, the *Financial Times* noted that following nearly a decade of double-digit increases, remittances reported to the Bank of Mexico fell to \$7.3 billion in the first four months of this year, 2.4% less than in the equivalent period last year. The article went on to say that “it...appears that the laws to crack down on illegal workers are having an impact.”

Through programs like Operation Streamline, we have achieved even greater decreases in apprehension rates in certain sectors. Under Operation Streamline, individuals caught illegally crossing the border in designated high-traffic zones are not immediately returned across the border. Instead, they are detained and prosecuted prior to removal. In the Yuma sector, for example, apprehension rates dropped nearly 70 percent in Fiscal Year 2007 after we initiated Operation Streamline. In the first quarter of this year, the Department of Justice prosecuted 1,200 cases in Yuma alone. And in Laredo, we experienced a reduction in apprehensions of 33 percent in the program’s first 45 days.

In addition to the decline in apprehensions, our frontline personnel also prevented record amounts of illegal drugs from entering the United States last year. In Fiscal Year 2007, CBP

officers and agents seized 3.2 million pounds of narcotics at and between our official ports of entry. Keeping these drugs out of our country not only protects the border, but our interior as well, including our cities and communities where these drugs may have ultimately been sold or distributed.

There is another sign that our efforts at the border are succeeding. It is, unfortunately, an increase in violence against CBP officers, and in particular, agents of the Border Patrol, up 31 percent in Fiscal Year 2007. Earlier this year, for example, the Border Patrol agents discovered a piece of wire that had been stretched across a road between double fencing so it could be pulled tightly to harm or kill an agent riding on an all-terrain vehicle. Criminals and other dangerous people are engaging in desperate attempts to derail our successful efforts, but we will not be deterred, nor will we tolerate violence against our agents. Our CBP officers and agents are authorized to use force as necessary and appropriate to protect them.

The Merida Initiative

Much of this upsurge in violence is specifically the result of our disrupting the operations of narcotics and human traffickers through our security successes along our southern border.

At the same time, on the other side of this border, President Felipe Calderon of Mexico has continued to wage a vigorous battle against these criminal organizations. The Merida Initiative proposal will enable the United States to form a real partnership with the Government of Mexico and bolster its efforts to confront criminal organizations whose activities significantly affect our country. The Merida Initiative will provide hardware, training and technical assistance from our country to help this critical fight.

Congressional funding of Merida sends a clear message to transnational criminal organizations that border security is a key element of a comprehensive national security strategy and that the actions of cross-border criminal organizations will be met with a coordinated, multinational response. We look forward to working with Congress to continue to provide full funding for this important initiative consistent with President Bush's request.

Maritime Security

The past year has seen a number of new threats and challenges within the maritime domain that have required not only innovative thinking, but also an approach to maritime security that requires true cooperation both within and outside the Department.

In the ongoing campaign against narco-traffickers, it is no secret that our adversaries are resourceful and adaptive. While our Coast Guard continues to stop high-speed boats, fishing vessels and commercial vessels carrying narcotics, it now faces traffickers who are using self-propelled, semi-submersible (SPSS) vessels that are more difficult to detect. The Coast Guard is working very closely with the Colombian Navy and the Department of Defense through Joint Interagency Task Force South developing new SPSS boarding protocols. The Coast Guard has also opened a dialogue with the Mexican Navy which is very interested in partnering to address this emerging threat.

The Administration strongly supports legislation to make the operation of or embarkation in a stateless self-propelled semi-submersible (SPSS) vessel on international voyages a felony. In June 2008, legislation was introduced in both the House and the Senate that would enable U.S. prosecutions of SPSS smugglers and crew members even if they successfully scuttle the vessel and all drug evidence is destroyed. Similar legislation was included in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2008. Each of these measures enjoyed strong bipartisan support. Along with Attorney General Mukasey and Director Walters, I recently signed a letter expressing our concerns about the SPSS threat, and urging Congress to enact anti-SPSS legislation immediately. We strongly support these provisions and applaud the Committee's efforts to ensure that these measures are enacted this session.

In addition to this initiative, the Department is committed to securing our maritime domain through the implementation of an at-sea biometrics collection capability. Since November 2006, the Coast Guard and US-VISIT have implemented a program to collect biometrics on individuals intercepted in the Mona Passage near Puerto Rico, a high-threat area for illegal migration. Between November 2006 and July 2008, the Coast Guard collected biometrics from more than

1,800 foreign nationals interdicted at sea. This new capability resulted in the prosecution of over 150 felons, many with extensive criminal records.

Since this program was established, there has been a 40% decrease in illegal migration through the Mona Passage. In April 2008, the program was expanded to South Florida.

Ports of Entry

Of course, it makes little sense to secure our maritime domain and the long stretches of border between our official ports of entry if we continue to have possible gaps in border security at the ports of entry themselves.

Since the Department's creation, we have continued to make major advances to prevent dangerous people from entering our country through official ports of entry. We have fully implemented US-VISIT two-fingerprint capabilities at all U.S. ports of entry. The State Department has deployed ten-fingerprint capabilities to all U.S. consulates overseas. We also have begun deploying ten-fingerprint capability to select U.S. airports, with the goal of full deployment to airports by the end of this calendar year.

US-VISIT checks a visitor's fingerprints against records of immigration violators and FBI records of criminals and known or suspected terrorists. Checking biometrics against immigration and criminal databases and watch lists helps officers make visa determinations and admissibility decisions. Collecting ten fingerprints also improves fingerprint-matching accuracy and our ability to compare a visitor's fingerprints against latent fingerprints collected by the Department of Defense and the FBI from known terrorists all over the world.

In January of this year, we also ended the routine practice of accepting oral declarations alone to prove citizenship and identity at our land and sea ports of entry. People entering our country, including U.S. citizens, are now asked to present documentary evidence of their citizenship and identity from a specified list of acceptable documents. Not only will this help reduce the number of false claims of U.S. citizenship, but it has reduced the opportunity for document fraud by

narrowing the list of more than 8,000 different documents that a traveler might present to our CBP officers. These changes are improving security and efficiency at the ports of entry.

I might add that we implemented these most recent changes in travel document requirements without causing discernible increases in wait times at the border. After only a few months since the new requirements were instituted, compliance rates of queried travelers exceed 90%. U.S. and Canadian citizens are presenting the requested documents when crossing the border. This is a great “non-news” story, demonstrating that we can improve security at the ports of entry without sacrificing convenience for legitimate travelers.

Furthermore, as we move toward implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, we will be utilizing radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, a proven technology that has successfully facilitated travel and trade across our land borders since 1995 through our trusted traveler programs. The vicinity RFID tags on travel documents contain no personal information, only a number that is meaningful to our secure DHS systems. The number acts as a pointer for DHS to access information while ensuring no outside parties have access. WHTI will incorporate state-of-the-art RFID technology, which should allow us to read up to eight vicinity RFID-enabled documents in a vehicle at a range of ten to 15 feet and keep traffic flow moving.

CBP has technology currently in place at all ports of entry to read any travel document with a machine-readable zone, including passports, Enhanced Drivers Licenses, and the new Passport Card being issued by the Department of State. All CBP officers at the ports of entry are currently trained in the use of this technology.

In preparation for WHTI implementation, CBP awarded a contract on January 10, 2008 to begin the process of deploying vicinity RFID facilitative technology and infrastructure to 354 vehicle primary lanes at 39 high-volume land ports of entry over the next two fiscal years. We have started the actual construction at our land border ports.

In February 2008, we deployed the new vehicle primary client software application to more than ten high-volume ports in anticipation of implementing the vicinity RFID primary lane solution.

This critical software deployment, which will be completed at all 39 ports by fall, quickly and effectively provides officers with vital information on border crossers.

And finally, on June 6, 2008, the Department launched the Global Entry program at George Bush Intercontinental, JFK, and Dulles International Airports as well as an expanded Model Ports Initiative to improve security and convenience at our ports.

Global Entry is designed to expedite the screening and processing of pre-approved, low-risk American citizens or permanent legal residents entering the United States, while freeing more CBP officers to focus more on actual security and criminal risks. Applicants will provide their biographical and biometric information, undergo a background check, and complete an interview with a CBP officer.

Established in 2006 as part of the Rice-Chertoff Initiative, Model Ports is being expanded to 18 additional airports. It has enhanced border security through the use of new technology while streamlining security processes and facilitating travel for legitimate visitors.

In addition to these initiatives, the Department is also committed to establishing an exit system to help confirm through biometrics that an individual has left the United States. Currently, commercial carriers and vessel owners and operators already play a role in the collection of passenger information. Today, carriers collect and transmit biographical information electronically and submit paper I-94 forms to our Department for passengers departing the United States. Introducing biometrics into this process will require these carriers, owners, and operators to collect additional information.

In April 2008, the Department announced a proposed rule that would mandate the collection of biometric information from most non-US citizens departing the United States by air or sea. A 60-day comment period ended on June 23 and the Department is currently reviewing the comments it received. In addition to enhancing security, the proposed exit rule will assist in our efforts to meet the requirements of the provisions of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act (9/11 Act) that authorize the expansion of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

Visa Waiver Program: Expansion Plus Security

Each year, our ports of entry welcome hundreds of millions of visitors to this country. For two decades, many of them have arrived under our VWP, which enables nationals of certain countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa.

Yet in our post-9/11 world, we are acutely aware of the inherent risk that visa-free travel poses to our national security. Simply stated, it is naïve to assume that a traveler from a VWP country automatically constitutes a lesser threat than a traveler from a non-VWP country. Let us not forget that Richard Reid, the notorious “shoe bomber,” was a British national from a VWP-member country,, and that Zacharias Moussaoui, who is serving a life sentence for his role in the 9/11 attacks, was a citizen of France, who traveled to the U.S. under the VWP.

Consequently, in accordance with the 9/11 Act, the United States is now moving to strengthen the VWP’s security elements. Specifically, DHS is working with the Department of State to transform the program into one that is capable of analyzing threats on a traveler-by-traveler basis, rather than on a country-by-country basis, while at the same time expanding the program to include further eligible countries.

A cornerstone of this effort is the creation of an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). Beginning in January of 2009, DHS intends to require all VWP travelers to apply for ESTA approval to travel to the United States under the VWP program by submitting biographical and eligibility information on-line prior to departure. The information will be similar to that required today on the I-94W paper form.

An electronic travel authorization system similar to ESTA was inaugurated by Australia and has been used there for a number of years. Our ESTA requires no information beyond what is already being collected on paper forms. But by asking VWP travelers to submit this information before boarding a carrier to come here, it will enable authorities to pinpoint potential security threats ahead of time, identify individuals ineligible for visa-free travel before they board (thus

saving them a wasted trip to a U.S. airport and back), and process authorized travelers more efficiently.

The deployment of ESTA is not the only way we are strengthening VWP security. Over the past six months, the United States has signed memoranda of understanding with eight nations aspiring to join VWP – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Republic of Korea, and Slovakia – putting each on a path to fulfilling the new security requirements that current VWP nations will also have to meet by October 2009. These new requirements will include providing information about serious crimes and known and suspected terrorists, timely reporting of lost and stolen passport data, and cooperation on airport and aviation security. The ultimate result will be an expanded number of increasingly secure nations sending legitimate visitors to our country. In fact, we are reaping the rewards of enhanced security cooperation even before VWP expansion is a reality.

II. ENHANCING INTERIOR ENFORCEMENT

From construction of fencing to reform of the Visa Waiver Program, the security measures I've outlined are designed to protect our borders, our ports of entry, and ultimately our entire country. Strong and effective interior enforcement can provide a further boost to security, while deterring illegal border crossings.

Interior enforcement includes targeted worksite enforcement operations across the United States; increasing fines and penalties; seizing assets and when appropriate, seeking incarceration for those who break the law; providing better tools to help employers maintain a stable, legal workforce; and identifying, arresting, and removing fugitives, criminals, and illegal alien gang members who pose a threat to the American people.

In Fiscal Year 2007, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) removed or returned more than 285,000 illegal aliens as part of a comprehensive interior enforcement strategy focused on more efficient processing of apprehended illegal aliens and reducing the criminal and fugitive alien populations.

This strategy has resulted in sustained advances across multiple areas of ICE's mission, including the continuation of our "catch and return" practice (instead of the former "catch-and-release" approach), a re-engineered and more effective detention and removal system, and new agreements with foreign countries to ensure prompt and efficient repatriation of their citizens.

Worksite Enforcement

ICE's worksite enforcement efforts advanced significantly in Fiscal Year 2007. ICE made 4,077 administrative arrests and 863 criminal arrests in targeted worksite enforcement operations across the country. Ninety-two of those arrested for criminal violations were in the employer's supervisory chain and 771 were other employees.

The majority of the employee criminal arrests were for identity theft. The employer criminal arrests included illegal hiring, harboring, conspiracy, and identity theft. Some cases also included money-laundering charges.

In May 2008, ICE conducted the largest worksite enforcement operation in its history. As a result, 297 immigrants pleaded guilty to using fraudulent documents to obtain their jobs at an Iowa meat processing plant, and 270 of them have been convicted on criminal charges and will serve prison sentences. On July 3, 2008, two supervisors at the plant were arrested and charged with aiding and abetting the possession and use of fraudulent identity documents and encouraging aliens to reside illegally in the United States. One of them was also charged with aiding and abetting aggravated identity theft.

Increasing Fines Against Employers

As a further disincentive to hire illegal aliens, we have partnered with the Department of Justice to increase civil fines on employers by approximately 25 percent, which is the maximum we can do under existing law. This action was one of the 26 administrative reforms we announced in

August and is intended to change behavior and hold unscrupulous employers accountable for their actions.

Expanding Workforce Tools

As we are holding employers accountable for breaking the law, we are also providing honest employers with an expanded set of tools to maintain a stable, legal workforce.

We are moving ahead with supplemental rule-making to our No-Match Rule published last year. As you may know, this rule provided a safe harbor for employers that followed a clear set of procedures in response to receiving a Social Security Administration Employer No-Match Letter that indicated a potential problem with an employee's records, or receiving a Department of Homeland Security letter regarding employment verifications. Although the Department was sued to stop the rule from taking effect, we have made progress in addressing the judge's concerns by releasing a supplemental proposed rule that provides a more detailed analysis of our no-match policy. It was published in the Federal Register on March 26, 2008 (73 FR 15944).

We are also continuing to promote the use of E-Verify, an on-line system that allows employers to check, in most cases within seconds, whether an employee is authorized to work in the United States. Over 94% of all E-Verify queries are automatically verified. Some states have begun to require employers to enroll in E-Verify, notably Arizona, where the system has been adding more than 500 new employers per week. Nationally, we are adding 1,000 new E-verify employers per week. More than 75,000 employers are currently enrolled, compared to 24,463 at the end of Fiscal Year 2007, and more than 4 million new hires have been queried this fiscal year. We are expanding outreach across the country in an effort to increase participation. To support this work, we have requested \$100 million in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

We are establishing a robust monitoring and compliance unit to check employers' use of E-Verify and respond to situations where employers could use the system in a discriminatory or otherwise unlawful manner. We are also increasing our outreach to employers and the American public to ensure that employers and employees understand their respective rights and obligations.

Additionally, we have added a new photo-screening capability to E-Verify that will significantly reduce document fraud. With this new enhancement, employers are able to match the photo on DHS-issued permanent residence cards (green cards) and employment authorization documents (EAD) with the photo held in the DHS database.

The federal government is leading by example. Last month, the President issued an Executive Order directing me to designate an electronic employment eligibility verification system for Federal contractors to use. Subsequently, I designated E-Verify as that system. The FAR Council has published proposed changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulation to implement the requirement that contractors agree to use E-Verify when entering into federal contracts.

As there are more than 200,000 companies doing business with the federal government, this will significantly expand the use of E-Verify and make it more difficult for people who are in this country illegally to obtain jobs through fraud.

E-Verify is clearly a vital program for our country. It is important that Congress take the appropriate action to reauthorize E-Verify this year to ensure that employers may continue to benefit from this valuable system.

Boosting State, Local, and International Cooperation

We also work with state and local law enforcement who want to participate in our enforcement efforts by receiving training and contributing to joint federal, state, local, and international law enforcement initiatives.

Much of this work is organized through the ICE Agreements of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security (ICE ACCESS) program, which includes training under the 287(g) program, participation in Border Enforcement Security Task Forces (BEST) and Document and Benefit Fraud Task Forces (DBFTF).

Through the 287(g) program, ICE delegates enforcement powers to state and local agencies that serve as force multipliers in their communities and are trained and supervised by ICE officers. As of July 1, 2008, ICE has signed 55 memoranda of agreement (MOAs) with state and local law enforcement agencies to participate in the program. Last year, ICE trained 422 state and local officers. In the program's last two years, state and local law enforcement partners have identified more than 28,000 illegal aliens for potential deportation.

ICE also has continued to expand its BEST teams to work cooperatively with domestic and foreign law enforcement counterparts to dismantle criminal organizations operating near the border. There are ten BEST teams located along the U.S. borders. The BEST concept was first implemented in Laredo, Texas in January 2006. BEST teams were subsequently established in Tucson, Arizona (March 2006); El Paso, Texas (October 2006); San Diego, California (November 2006); and Rio Grande Valley (Harlingen, Brownsville, McAllen), Texas (March 2007).

In February 2008, the first northern border BEST operation was initiated in Blaine, Washington. The second northern border BEST team was subsequently launched in Buffalo, New York in March 2008. In Fiscal Year 2008, BEST established teams in three other locations along the southwest border: Phoenix, Arizona and Yuma, Arizona (March 2008) and Imperial Valley, California (June 2008).

In Fiscal Year 2007, BEST was responsible for 519 criminal arrests and 1,145 administrative arrests of illegal aliens, the seizure of 52,518 pounds of marijuana and 2,066 pounds of cocaine, 178 vehicles, 12 improvised explosive devices, and more than \$2.9 million in U.S. currency.

In FY 2008, BEST will expand its operations in three other major U.S. cities with large maritime ports of entry. BEST will insert teams in the ports of New York/New Jersey, Los Angeles/Long Beach, and Miami.

ICE DBFTFs are a strong law enforcement presence that combats fraud utilizing existing manpower and authorities. Through comprehensive criminal investigations, successful

prosecutions, aggressive asset forfeiture and positive media, the DBFTFs detect, deter and dismantle organizations that facilitate fraud. The task forces promote the sharing of information, ensure the integrity of our laws, and uphold public safety. In April 2007, ICE formed six new task forces, bringing the total number of DBFTFs to 17. These task forces have been responsible for 954 criminal arrests and 635 criminal convictions.

Targeting Fugitives, Criminals, and Gang Members

Finally, our interior enforcement efforts have focused on identifying, arresting, and removing fugitives, criminals, and illegal alien gang members in our country.

In Fiscal Year 2007, ICE Fugitive Operations Teams arrested 30,407 individuals, nearly double the number of arrests in Fiscal Year 2006. The teams, which quintupled in number from 17 to 75 between 2005 and 2007, identify, locate, arrest and remove aliens who have failed to depart the United States pursuant to a final order of removal, deportation, or exclusion; or who have failed to report to a Detention and Removal Officer after receiving notice to do so. In Fiscal Year 2008, Congress authorized an additional 29 teams. Fugitive Operations Teams have arrested 24,457 individuals this year.

ICE also expanded its Criminal Alien Program (CAP) in Fiscal Year 2007, initiating formal removal proceedings for 164,000 illegal aliens serving prison terms for crimes they committed in the United States. ICE has already initiated 55,547 formal removal proceedings against additional criminal aliens in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2008 under this program. ICE is developing a comprehensive “Secure Communities” plan to identify and remove criminal aliens which will revolutionize immigration enforcement. By using technology to share information between law enforcement agencies and apply risk-based methodologies to focus resources, ICE will be able to assist all local communities in removing high-risk removable criminal aliens.

In addition, in Fiscal Year 2007 ICE arrested 3,302 gang members and their associates as part of Operation Community Shield. This total includes 1,442 criminal arrests. For Fiscal Year 2008 (through June 30), ICE has arrested 2,267 gang members and their associates. In total, ICE has

arrested more than 9,600 gang members and associates as part of Operation Community Shield since 2005.

As an added layer of protection against the entry of known gang members, we have worked with the Department of State to expand the list of known organized street gangs whose members are barred from entry into the United States. This action will ensure that active members of specified criminal organizations or street gangs from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, or Mexico, as well as certain other foreign locations, will be denied a visa.

In all of these operations, we work cooperatively with state and local law enforcement to make sure we achieve our purpose with minimal disruption to surrounding communities. We also work with community organizations to ensure that children of illegal immigrants directly impacted by these operations are treated humanely and given appropriate care according to established protocols.

III. CONCLUSION

From protecting our physical borders to enhancing our interior enforcement, my Department continues to pursue a host of measures that are designed to increase the security of our homeland. There can be no homeland security without border security, and so for the duration of my tenure as Secretary of Homeland Security, I will continue to enforce our laws accordingly.

While an enforcement-only approach will not address the full breadth of the nation's immigration challenges, the American people demanded last year that enforcement efforts be serious and sustained. It is my hope that as we continue to enforce existing law with increased effectiveness, this Congress will consider once more the kind of reform that will deal fully with these challenges.

I look forward to continued partnership with this Committee on border security, and indeed, on every aspect of homeland security, for the benefit of this nation and its people.