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**Remarks For U.S. Coast Guard Intelligence Coordination Center's  
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***REMARKS AS PREPARED***

Good morning. I'd like to thank you, Captain Whitmer, for the introduction, and the Coast Guard for the invitation to join you today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to an increasingly serious threat to global security -- human smuggling and trafficking.

The smuggling of human beings is not only a pressing law enforcement and security challenge in the United States. It also poses an urgent moral challenge here and around the world.

In May 2003, police discovered dozens of undocumented aliens -- men, women, and children -- locked in a hot, airless tractor-trailer outside Victoria, Texas. The trailer, originally bound for Houston, had been unhitched and abandoned 175 miles from the Mexico border in a botched smuggling job.

In the hours that followed, the victims grew more and more desperate for air -- scraping at the insulation in the doors and beating their way through the taillights in a futile effort to escape. Ultimately, 19 people died in that trailer, including a seven-year-old boy. It

was the deadliest case of human smuggling in the United States in fifteen years, illustrating in grim detail how a journey that begins in hope can end in horror.

This was no isolated case. Each week brings new stories of the suffering that men, women, and children experience at the hands of smugglers and traffickers. The stories are almost numbingly repetitive – undocumented aliens found dead in railroad cars, in the heat of the Arizona desert, in cargo containers of merchant vessels. The suffering is immeasurable.

The full scope of human smuggling and trafficking is difficult to ascertain. But we do know it is a common practice that is only becoming more widespread. It is estimated that existing networks facilitate the smuggling of up to two million people globally each year.

We know the United States is a primary target for smugglers and traffickers, which means that literally tens of thousands of men, women, and children are entering this nation illegally each year – undocumented, undetected, and unprotected.

We also know that human trafficking and smuggling are remarkably lucrative enterprises. Smuggling and trade in human beings generate an estimated \$9.5 billion in profit for criminal organizations worldwide. In many cases, these profits fuel additional criminal enterprises, such as the trafficking of drugs, weapons, or other contraband. Or the funds are laundered and invested in legitimate business enterprises. These untraced profits feed

organized crime activities, undermining governmental action and the rule of law, while allowing these criminal networks to grow stronger, more resilient, and more dangerous.

These human smuggling networks are a serious vulnerability, posing a tremendous threat to our nation's security. The global criminal networks that have made human smuggling and trafficking a profitable enterprise could readily be tapped – for the right price -- to help terrorists cross our borders or gain entry to our ports. Similarly, the routes and methods they use to transport human cargo could easily be used to transport weapons of mass destruction across borders or into ports.

But our concern with human smuggling and trafficking should go far beyond matters of security and law enforcement. There is another critical dimension to this issue -- as I suggested earlier -- in the real cost in human suffering and exploitation that too often accompanies this criminal practice.

In case after case, we see the shockingly callous disregard smugglers and traffickers have for the lives in their charge. In too many cases, the victims flee poverty or abuse, only to be forced to travel in squalid conditions without adequate food, water, or air. Arriving at their destination, they are frequently subject to brutal violence, forced labor, and sexual exploitation.

Smuggling and trafficking all too often lead the way to cruelty, slavery, and servitude -- assaults on basic freedoms and human dignity. Such practices are an affront to our nation's most closely held and deeply cherished values.

These are age-old problems for which we need new solutions. What we seek are national and global strategies through which we can prevent the smuggling and trafficking of human beings . . . through which we can protect men, women, and children against this horrific form of exploitation . . . and through which we can prosecute and punish those who seek to profit from these criminal practices.

The agency I lead within the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement – or ICE, as we are known – is moving on a variety of fronts to tackle smuggling and trafficking. With our investigative tools, legal authorities, and global reach, ICE is well suited to confront human trafficking.

One of ICE's most effective weapons in this fight is our Office of Investigations, where we have a branch dedicated to identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organizations that engage in human smuggling.

Our specialized investigative teams are prepared to respond to critical smuggling incidents as swiftly as possible. Smuggling and trafficking cases are complex, so our teams of agents have specialized skills – investigators, language specialists, financial investigators, forensic investigators, and others. This helps us deploy our resources more

readily when an incident occurs, whether it's at the border, at a maritime port, or in the nation's interior.

Combining former customs authorities with immigration authorities gives us a powerful new tool in the fight against smuggling – the ability to go after the money. As I mentioned earlier, human smuggling is now big business, and ICE can hit these organizations where it hurts – at the bottom line – by seizing their profits and putting them out of business. With these new tools, we have the same flexibility criminal and terrorist networks enjoy, and we can adjust our tactics as they change theirs.

We've already seen the effectiveness of this new approach. In the Victoria, Texas, case, ICE worked closely with other DHS components, local law enforcement, and intelligence and enforcement agencies in Mexico and Guatemala. ICE's unique combination of investigative tools allowed us to follow the money, pinpoint the conspirators, and bring them to justice.

Our investigation wasn't only effective – it was swift. In just one month, ICE's coordinated approach led to the arrest and prosecution of 14 defendants in the United States and abroad.

In so doing, we created a new model for fighting smuggling crimes. We have now taken that model to Arizona, where we saw a growing trend of violent confrontations between human smuggling gangs, with shoot-outs, kidnappings, and car-jackings becoming

alarming common. ICE pulled together a task force known as “Operation ICE Storm” to combat violent crime in the Phoenix area.

We brought our expertise in immigration, customs, and money laundering investigations into a partnership with other stakeholders at the Arizona border. Since we launched “Operation ICE Storm,” we’ve prosecuted more than 120 defendants for human smuggling, kidnapping, money laundering, and weapons and drug violations. We’ve seized scores of weapons and nearly two million dollars in cash.

Every time we confiscate an assault weapon or cash from these networks, and every time we trace back and shut down one of their funding streams, we make it harder for these criminals to do business. The result? Phoenix police tell us that, thanks to “ICE Storm,” their city saw a 30 PERCENT decline in homicides in the final quarter of 2003. We’re building on “ICE Storm’s” success with the Arizona Border Control initiative that the Department of Homeland Security launched just last month.

ICE Storm is a model for other areas where we’re vulnerable to smugglers – for instance, at our nation’s ports. While port and maritime security require different resources from what is required for ICE Storm, we can draw on the same conceptual framework to develop a comprehensive strategy to fighting smugglers and traffickers at these vulnerable points. ICE and the Coast Guard have already begun working together on new intelligence sharing initiatives such as “Operation Watchtower,” in which our agents cooperate to gather, analyze, and share counter-terrorism intelligence on vessel

movements, crews and cargoes into and out of our busiest ports. “Operation Watchtower” is only one of the ways we’re working together to secure our ports and deter maritime crime.

I would also like to say a few words about human trafficking, that form of smuggling which extracts the greatest human cost -- forcing victims into servitude, tearing apart families, stripping the innocent of their freedom, rights, and dignity. A disturbingly large number of trafficking cases center on women and children forced into prostitution and sexual slavery. In virtually all of these cases, the victims have been promised jobs, marriages, or other new opportunities, only to find themselves trapped in a web of exploitation and abuse.

At ICE, we’ve stepped up our investigations of these exploitative practices, and we’re getting results. In January, a man in McAllen, Texas, who headed a sex slavery ring at the border, was sentenced to 23 years in prison. In New Jersey last summer, we uncovered a prostitution ring that trafficked in Mexican girls, who were lured to the United States only to be forced into sexual slavery. In New York City, our investigators uncovered a trafficking network that recruited South Korean women, promising them jobs as hostesses but forcing them to work as prostitutes. These traffickers, and a great many others, are off the streets and out of business.

Smuggling and trafficking are by definition international crimes, which is why ICE is prepared to take that fight abroad. We’ve developed a full spectrum of investigation and

enforcement to confront the problem at every point – in source and transit countries, on the seas, at our nation’s borders and ports, and in the U.S. interior. In U.S. embassies throughout the world, we have a network of ICE attaches, who are working with their counterparts in foreign law enforcement agencies to better coordinate investigations and communication, and to follow the money and seize the millions of dollars in profits flowing to these organizations. We’re integrating our government’s intelligence and enforcement efforts, and we’re mobilizing other governments and international organizations, in the fight against human smuggling and trafficking.

ICE’s efforts are one part of the broader Homeland Security strategy for combating smuggling and securing our ports and borders. In this fight, we rely on the efforts of our partners to make this strategy successful.

The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection plays a crucial role in securing our ports and borders to ensure that smugglers, traffickers, and terrorists are unable to move into this country undetected.

The Coast Guard has provided tremendous leadership in developing and implementing port security plans, while remaining committed to its core duties of marine safety, search and rescue, and interdiction.

And let’s remember also our partners in private industry. Shippers and their customers have provided critical cooperation and feedback as we’ve put new security and inspection

measures into place at our nation's ports. Our success in countering the smugglers, traffickers, and terrorists who would exploit our vulnerabilities and do us harm will be a shared success.

In September 2003, President Bush stood before the U.N. General Assembly and called for vigorous action against human trafficking. His words bear repeating: "We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time."

As the President suggested then, smuggling and trafficking in human beings are not at all new practices – they are criminal methods with a long history.

What is new is the sophistication of criminal organizations that benefit from the speed and efficiency of today's telecommunications, transportation, and financial networks.

What is new is the security threat we face today, in which terrorists will employ any method and exploit any vulnerability to strike at our country and people.

What is new is the war we are fighting against these criminals and terrorists, and the tactics, tools, and strategies we must bring to bear in defeating them.

Our mission at ICE and at the Department of Homeland Security is to ensure that those who would exploit others for profit are challenged at every step, and that they are ultimately put out of business. We're fortunate to have a President who is wholly committed to winning this battle, who recognizes human trafficking for what it is – a moral challenge that we must confront.

We're fortunate to have a Secretary of Homeland Security who is dedicated to this mission, and we're fortunate to have the commitment of so many professional men and women who share the desire to make our nation and the world a safer, more secure place. We look forward to working with you in continued partnership in this vital mission to make human smuggling and trafficking a thing of the past. Thank you very much.