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Building America's Trust Through Border Security: Progress on the Southern Border

Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, One Hundred
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Prepared Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration
Hearing on “Building America’s Trust: Progress on the Southern Border”
May 23, 2017

I want to thank Chairman Cornyn and Ranking Member Durbin for having this very important hearing today. Effectively securing our Southern Border has been a concern for years, and it is one of the most persistent challenges facing the federal government. Amid transnational drug trafficking, unauthorized immigration, and international terror threats, securing our border remains a major security challenge.

When President Obama first took office in 2009, Congress and the Bush Administration had made enormous strides in border security. Working together in a bi-partisan fashion, we increased the number of border patrol agents by 59%, from 11,000 to 17,500, and added hundreds of miles of fencing and other infrastructure on the U.S.-Mexican border. These measures paid off, and in the last year of the Bush Administration more than 1.1 million people were apprehended at the border, with almost 706,000 people caught at the Southern Border alone. Although we hadn’t achieved full operational control, we were on the right track.

Unfortunately, those gains were all-but-lost under the Obama Administration. During the first full year of the Obama Administration, only 900,000 people were apprehended at all border points of entry. By President Obama’s last year in office, that number had fallen to a paltry 530,000, a 51% decrease from the Bush Administration. While supporters of the Obama Administration claim that illegal immigration also decreased over the same time period, they ignore a vital point: the reduced apprehension rate allowed more people to enter our country illegally, in violation of our laws.

The Obama Administration’s own Department of Homeland Security found that while illegal entries decreased, so did the chance of apprehension. In 2015, only 54% of unauthorized immigrants were apprehended at points of entry at the Southern Border. This lackluster enforcement, along with President Obama’s catch and release policies and non-existent interior enforcement, encouraged a huge influx of unauthorized immigrants, some of whose entry wreaked havoc on law-abiding Americans.

Thankfully, the Trump Administration has taken concrete steps to reverse President Obama’s open-border policies and restore lawfulness to our nation’s immigration system. By tightening border controls and unshackling ICE agents, the Trump Administration has sent a clear, simple message to unauthorized immigrants: America’s laws will be enforced. This message is resonating, and illegal immigration is down more than 60% since the President took office.

While I commend the Trump Administration, and Deputy Commissioner Vittiello, for their progress, the fact remains that more needs to be done. Congress needs to work with the

Administration to find measures to both increase apprehensions and deter illegal entry. While Deputy Commissioner Vittiello will testify about the need for increased surveillance technologies and port-of-entry improvements, Congress should also consider a number of other common-sense measures. Among other things, we should provide more funding for:

- CBP and ICE to hire thousands of additional law enforcement officers, just like the President has called for;
- Completing the construction of all 754 miles of border fencing required under the Secure Fence Act; and
- The implementation of an automated entry and exit control system at all points of entry, as Congress has required in eight separate laws going all the way back to 1996.

These measures are common-sense, simple solutions that don't require any additional legislation. Instead, all Congress has to do is adequately fund these priorities. Plain and simple.

I look forward to Commissioner Vittiello's testimony, and to hearing his thoughts on what additional measures are needed to enhance security at our Southern Border. Working together, I'm confident that Congress and the President can come up with solutions that will help us reach our goals of truly securing our borders.



TESTIMONY OF

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BEFORE THE

U.S. Senate

Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration

ON

*“Building America’s Trust through Border Security:
Progress on the Southern Border”*

May 23, 2017
Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Cornyn, Ranking Member Durbin, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee: It is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today to discuss the crucial mission of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to protect the homeland and secure our Nation's borders while facilitating lawful international travel and trade. As a Nation, control of our borders is paramount. Thanks to the support of Congress, during the past decade CBP has deployed more personnel, resources, technology, and tactical infrastructure to secure our borders than at any other time in history. And thanks to the hard work of the men and women of CBP, and the leadership of the President, the Secretary, and the Acting Commissioner, we are making significant progress towards securing our borders.

Executive Actions

As you know, since taking office, the President issued Executive Orders to secure our borders, enforce immigration laws, and keep Americans safe. The purpose of the orders on border security are to direct executive departments and agencies to deploy all lawful means to secure our Southern border, to prevent further illegal immigration into the United States, and to repatriate illegal aliens swiftly, consistently, and humanely.

The men and women of CBP work hard every day to secure our borders and keep our Nation safe. By providing tools and resources to support CBP's dedicated men and women who are responsible for securing the border--to prevent illegal immigration, drug and human trafficking, and acts of terrorism--these executive orders significantly enhanced our capacity to secure our southern border.

Stemming the Flow of Illegal Aliens

As a result of the Executive Orders issued by the President, and the implementing policies issued by the Secretary, as well as earlier policy changes and the significant investments we have made in border enforcement personnel, technology, and infrastructure, we are seeing a historic shift in illegal crossings along the Southwest border. Since January 2017, the number of illegal aliens we have apprehended on the Southwest border has drastically decreased, indicating a significant decrease in the number of aliens attempting to illegally enter the country. The number of illegal aliens apprehended in March 2017 was 30 percent lower than February apprehensions and 64 percent lower than the same time last year.

Push factors creating a demand for both legal and illegal immigration to the United States remain fairly constant for Latin America populations and Eastern Hemisphere populations. However, we have seen indications that individuals' perception of their ability to remain in the United States after illegal entry has been affected by recent policy changes. Individuals who might seek to enter the country through unlawful channels do not want to invest significant resources only to be turned around at the border or removed soon after they arrive in the United States.

We have shown that we are serious about border security and enforcing our immigration laws. We have focused on apprehending, prosecuting and convicting the traffickers, or "coyotes," themselves. We have significantly increased the issuance of detainers for removal. We will

continue to expand our approach to include the prosecution of anyone—including family members—who pays human traffickers, especially when it involves children under the age of 18.

We have seen a dramatic decrease in the human smuggling of Cuban nationals since the end of the Cuban “wet foot, dry foot” policy. Inadmissible Cuban nationals requesting asylum in the United States or claiming fear of return to their country, are now detained pending adjudication of their claim with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or by the Department of Justice’s Executive Office of Immigration Review. As a result, our Office of Air and Marine Operations (AMO) has seen a dramatic decrease in the smuggling of Cuban nationals throughout the Florida Straits in particular. This has resulted in a significant decrease in overall maritime apprehensions of illegal aliens. AMO’s Southeast Region apprehensions have decreased from 721 in the second quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 to 439 in the second quarter of FY 2017; a decrease of approximately 39 percent.

Following changes in DHS enforcement policy with respect to Haitian nationals and the resumption of routine removal flights to Haiti in September 2016, there has been a significant decrease in the number of Haitians encountered at the Southwest border. The number of Haitians deemed inadmissible at the Southwest border fell from more than 3,400 in October 2016 to fewer than 50 in April 2017.¹ The resumption of repatriation flights is sending a clear message to the Haitians arriving in Tijuana and Mexicali that if you cross unlawfully into the United States and have no legitimate claim to asylum, you will be apprehended and returned to Haiti.

Recent reporting indicates human smuggling costs are rising, potentially due to a perception of increased risk by human smugglers or an attempt by smugglers to make up for lost revenue with fewer aliens attempting illegal travel. Aliens who persist despite policy changes will likely increasingly use alien smuggling organizations to either attempt to bypass border security or to procure fraudulent documents in an attempt to gain entry at the Ports of Entry (POEs). This is evident in the doubling of assaults against Border Patrol Agents compared to the same time last year. We are working with our partners throughout Latin America to provide continuous monitoring of this situation to provide early warning.

However, the end results are clear and positive: during FY 2016 over 415,816 illegal aliens from Central America and Mexico—including over 137,614 unaccompanied children and families—were apprehended on our Southwest border.² While more than 16,000 family units were apprehended at the border in December of 2016, only 1,125 were apprehended in March of 2017. That means fewer women and children are making this dangerous journey. We will continue to do anything in our power, and within the law, to end this flow of illegal immigration.

¹ Numbers pulled from CBP’s Southwest Border Inadmissibles by Field Office report <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/fo-sw-border-inadmissibles>

² Numbers pulled from CBP’s FY 2016 Border Security Report: <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2016-Dec/CBP-fy2016-border-security-report.pdf>

Securing Travel

In addition to CBP's role in apprehending illegal aliens, last year CBP also inspected over 390 million arriving international travelers, of whom over 119 million flew into air POEs. That's about 327,000 international air passengers each day.

Visitors make up about 50 percent of those arrival numbers, and they are generally split into two categories – visa and visa waiver. Visitors requiring a visa must apply at a U.S. Embassy overseas, and the Department of State (DOS) adjudicates, interviews, and fingerprints applicants. For Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travelers, CBP developed an on-line application process known as Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). These travelers must have an approved ESTA to board an aircraft destined for the United States from overseas, and CBP has built a verification system with the airlines to support this. CBP adjudicates ESTA applications against a series of law enforcement and intelligence databases. For the first half of this fiscal year, CBP has approved about 6.9 million ESTA applications and denied over 35,600. Of these denials about 1,050 were due to national security concerns.

Following the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 (Pub. L. No. 114-113), which included the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015, CBP took several steps to apply the new VWP restrictions for individuals who, since March 1, 2011, have traveled to or been present in Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, or Yemen, and for individuals who are dual nationals of Iran, Iraq, Sudan or Syria. So far this fiscal year, CBP has denied ESTAs to about 13,000 travelers due to the travel-related restriction, and nearly 3,000 for dual nationality.

Once a visa or ESTA is issued, CBP's National Targeting Center (NTC) conducts continuous vetting against a host of law enforcement and intelligence databases to ensure travelers remain eligible. If any issues arise, then CBP may revoke the ESTA authorization, or work directly with DOS to revoke a visa. For the first half of this fiscal year, over 1,800 visas have been revoked as a result of NTC vetting. Over 450 of these were due to national security concerns.

Once travel is actually booked, CBP conducts pre-departure vetting of all international passengers coming to the United States. By law, airlines are required to provide CBP with advance passenger manifest data and access to their reservation systems. CBP reviews this data along with previous crossing information, intelligence reports, and law enforcement databases to identify any potential risk factors.

When risk factors are identified, CBP has built several mechanisms to address those questions while the traveler is still overseas – Preclearance Operations, the Immigration Advisory Program (IAP)/Joint Security Program (JSP), and our Regional Carrier Liaison Groups.

CBP has 15 air preclearance locations in six countries. At these locations uniformed CBP Officers have the legal authorities to complete the same immigration, customs, and agriculture inspections of travelers as at domestic airports. This is our highest level of capability overseas. If found ineligible to travel to the United States at a preclearance location, CBP has authority to deny entry on foreign soil. In FY 2016, CBP Officers processed 18.3 million travelers for entry into the United States at international preclearance locations, totaling over 15 percent of travelers bound for the United States. Of this total, CBP prevented 6,451 inadmissible travelers from

boarding flights bound for the United States, a figure that includes those with a possible national security risks.

Secondly, CBP has the IAP and the JSP. Through these programs, CBP has plain clothes Officers at major gateway airports in Western Europe, with a presence in Mexico, Central America, Asia and the Middle East as well. Using advance information from the NTC, IAP Officers work in partnership with host governments and the airlines to address any national security risks and immigration issues. If any concerns remain, CBP can issue a no-board recommendation to the air carrier, and refer the traveler back to the U.S. Embassy for a more thorough review of their status. Last fiscal year, IAP Officers recommended over 4,500 no-boards referrals to the airlines.

For foreign locations not covered by either preclearance or IAP, CBP leverages what are known as Regional Carrier Liaison Groups - located in Honolulu, Miami and New York. This is where CBP Officers contact the commercial airlines directly to advise them of travelers who are likely inadmissible from entering the United States, and recommend no boarding them and directing them to the U.S. Embassy. Last fiscal year, CBP Officers recommended over 9,700 no boards to the airlines.

It is critical to note that upon arrival in the United States, all persons are subject to inspection by CBP. The experience and intuition of each individual Officer is invaluable and this provides the final piece to the pre-arrival vetting and background checks. CBP Officers review travel documents, review the results of the pre-arrival vetting, collect biometrics if required, and then interview all travelers to determine purpose and intent of travel. If any questions remain as to a person's admissibility, customs declaration, agriculture concerns, or any national security concerns, the person is referred for a secondary screening where CBP Officers or Agriculture Specialists have more time to complete the inspection.

CBP continuously strives to improve our vetting and intervention initiatives to identify and close security vulnerabilities. We remain closely engaged and coordinated with our federal counterparts, foreign governments, and the private sector.

The United States will always be a welcoming country, but we are also a country of laws, and the rule of law must be followed. CBP will continue to play a pivotal role in the enforcement of immigration laws and in keeping our country safe.

Narcotics Interdiction

Another key role played by CBP in securing our borders is the interdiction of narcotics. In FY 2016, CBP Officers and Agents seized and/or disrupted more than 3.3 million pounds of narcotics across the country³ including approximately 46,000 pounds of methamphetamine and 4,800 pounds of heroin. CBP heroin seizures by weight rose 43 percent from 1,913 kg in FY 2012 to 2,739 kg in FY 2015. CBP seizures of cocaine have remained steady between FY 2012 and FY 2016 averaging approximately 200,000 pounds of cocaine seized each fiscal year.

³ FY 2016 Border Security Report, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2016-Dec/CBP-fy2016-border-security-report.pdf>

The majority of heroin seizures occur at the Southwest border: 82 percent of all CBP heroin seizures between FY 2012 and FY 2016. Mexico is the primary supplier of heroin to the United States, with Mexican DTOs cultivating opium poppies, producing heroin in Mexico and then smuggling the narcotic across the Southwest border into the United States. According to Intelligence Community reporting, the amount of potential pure heroin production in Mexico for Calendar Year (CY) 2016 is estimated to be 81 metric tons, a marked increase from the CY 2014 estimate of 42 metric tons. We assess that the Southwest border will continue to be the dominant entry point (by weight) for heroin entering the United States.

CBP seizures of fentanyl remain relatively small compared to heroin, but have significantly increased over the past three years, from approximately two pounds seized in FY 2013 to approximately 440 pounds seized in FY 2016. Fentanyl is the most frequently seized illicit synthetic opioid, but CBP has also encountered various types of fentanyl analogues.⁴

Illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues are commonly mixed into white powder heroin, stretching the product of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and increasing profits. Illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues are also increasingly being sold alone, or pressed into counterfeit prescription pills and sold as commonly misused substances such as Norco (a form of hydrocodone) and Xanax (a benzodiazepine anti-anxiety drug). Many users are unaware they are purchasing heroin or pills laced with fentanyl or a fentanyl analogue, increasing the safety risk to users. When illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues are combined with white powder heroin or other substances- which is what we encounter most often on our Southwest border- it becomes more challenging for CBP to pinpoint exactly how much fentanyl is seized at the border.

Fentanyl is also smuggled into the United States from China and other countries. DTOs and individuals purchase powdered fentanyl online and can access open source and dark web marketplaces for the tools needed for manufacturing. Fentanyl, pill presses and binding agents are then shipped into the United States primarily using the U.S. Mail or express consignment couriers, such as FedEx, UPS, and DHL. We assess these transactions made over both the open and dark webs and comprised of smaller quantities of fentanyl (less than 1 kilogram) will likely continue in FY 2017. Based on increased flow and improved detection capabilities, CBP anticipates that both heroin and fentanyl seizures will rise over FY 2017.

To combat this threat to our Nation and the American people, CBP has deployed technology to identify synthetics at mail facilities and POEs along the Southern border, increasing our capability to identify fentanyl trafficking. We are actively leveraging our data holdings, unique authorities, and expertise on trade, travel and border security in order to develop collaborative relationships with foreign and domestic law enforcement agencies, U.S. Intelligence Community partners, and private sector and international partners to provide a fuller understanding of illicit, cross-border networks and their vulnerabilities.

This collaborative, counter-network approach provides intelligence-driven insights into key network-based national security threats that will inform, enhance, and support U.S. operational

⁴ These include: acetylfentanyl, butyrylfentanyl, beta-hydroxythiofentanyl, para-fluorobutyrylfentanyl, pentanoylfentanyl, alpha-methyl acetylfentanyl, para-fluoroisobutyrylfentanyl, para-fluorofentanyl, carfentanyl, furanylfentanyl, and most recently benzodioxolefentanyl, acrylfentanyl, and methoxyacetylfentanyl.

and intelligence activities against not just regional DTOs but also producers and shippers of illicit precursor chemicals in an effort to dismantle the entire network of actors who are involved in trafficking illicit narcotics to the United States.

Border Technology

In addition to the crucial roles played by our law enforcement personnel and infrastructure, technology is a key multiplier in CBP's efforts to secure our more than 5,000 miles of border with Canada, 1,900 miles of border with Mexico, and approximately 95,000 miles of shoreline.

CBP is committed to securing our borders and associated airspace and maritime approaches to prevent illegal entry of people and goods into the United States. The border environment in which CBP works is dynamic and requires continual adaptation to respond to emerging threats and changing conditions. DHS is seeking to take immediate steps to implement a full complement of solutions to meet border security requirements. CBP is committed to securing our Southern border with barriers, technology, and personnel.

Thanks to the support of Congress, CBP continues to deploy proven, effective technology to strengthen border security operations and compliment tactical infrastructure between the POEs in the land, air, and maritime environments. Tactical infrastructure, including physical barriers, has long been a critical component of CBP's multi-layered and risk-based approach to securing our Southern border. Border barriers have enhanced – and will continue to enhance – CBP's operational capabilities by creating persistent impedance, and facilitating the deterrence and prevention of successful illegal entries.

Investments which compliment physical barriers- including advanced detection capabilities such as surveillance systems, tethered and tactical aerostats, unmanned aircraft systems and ground sensors- will all which work in conjunction with improvements to tactical border infrastructure and increased manpower. By using these tools together as an integrated border security system,⁵ CBP is enhancing its ability to quickly detect, identify, and respond to illegal border crossings.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to border security technology acquisition. CBP's Office of Acquisition works collaboratively with operational offices including the U.S. Border Patrol, (USBP), the Office of Field Operations (OFO), and AMO to develop requirements, test and evaluate technology, and deploy effective technology in support of CBP's border security mission.

Fixed, Persistent Surveillance

With enhanced surveillance capabilities, CBP can improve its situational awareness remotely, direct a response team to the best interdiction location, and warn the team of any additional danger otherwise unknown along the way. As a result, these investments increase CBP's visibility on the border, operational capabilities, and the safety of frontline law enforcement personnel. For example, fixed systems provide line-of-sight surveillance coverage to efficiently detect incursions in flat terrain. The USBP integrates mobile and portable systems to address

⁵ Including 654 miles of border fencing

areas where rugged terrain and dense ground cover may allow adversaries to penetrate through blind spots or avoid the coverage areas of fixed systems.

Integrated Fixed Tower (IFT) systems are one of the technologies that are in the process of being acquired and deployed to the Southwest border in Arizona. IFTs are fixed surveillance assets that provide long-range persistent surveillance. These systems cover very large areas and incorporate a Common Operating Picture (COP), a central hub that receives data from one or multiple tower units. The tower systems automatically detect and track items of interest, and provide the COP Operator(s) with the data, video and geospatial location of selected items of interest to identify and classify them. By the end of this year, IFT will be fully deployed in three specific Areas of Responsibility in Arizona.

Remote Video Surveillance Systems (RVSS) are another fixed technology asset used in select areas along the Southwest and Northern borders. These systems provide short-, medium-, and long-range persistent surveillance mounted on stand-alone towers, or other structures. The RVSS uses cameras, radio and microwave transmitters to send video to a control room and enables a control room Operator to remotely detect, identify, classify and track targets using the video feed. The RVSS deployment planned as part of the Arizona Technology Plan is now complete.

Mobile Capabilities

The border environment between the POEs is dynamic. Working in conjunction with fixed surveillance assets, CBP's mobile technology assets provide flexibility and agility to adapt to changing border conditions and threats. Mobile technologies are deployed in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas as well as several Northern border locations. Along the Southwest border, Mobile Surveillance Capability systems provide long-range mobile surveillance and consist of a suite of radar and camera sensors mounted on USBP vehicles. An Agent deploys with the vehicle to operate the system, which automatically detects and tracks items of interest and provides the Agent/Operator with data and video of the observed subject.

Mobile Vehicle Surveillance Systems provide short- and medium-range mobile surveillance equipment mounted on telescoping masts and consist of a suite of camera sensors mounted on USBP vehicles. An Agent deploys with the system, which detects, tracks, identifies, and classifies items of interest using the video feed. The Agent/Operator observes activity on the video monitor to detect intrusions and assist Agents/Officers in responding to those intrusions.

Another system, which does not need to be mounted to a vehicle, is the Agent Portable Surveillance System. These systems provide medium-range mobile surveillance, and are transported by two or three Agents and mounted on a tripod. Two Agents remain on-site, one to operate the system, which automatically detects and tracks items of interest and provides the Agent/Operator with data and video of selected items of interest.

In some areas along the Southwest border, CBP also uses Unattended Ground Sensors (UGS), which provide short-range persistent surveillance. These sensors support our capability to detect, and to a limited extent, track and identify subjects. Sensor capabilities include seismic, passive infrared, acoustic, contact closure, and magnetic, although these capabilities are not necessarily available in all deployed UGS. When a ground sensor is activated, an alarm is communicated to

a data decoder that translates the sensor's activation data to a centralized computer system in an operations center. Some UGS are used in conjunction with Imaging Sensors (IS). The UGS/IS include an imaging capability to transmit images or video back to the operations center. As with UGS, UGS/IS are monitored in a centralized system and geospatially tracked.

CBP's Tactical Aerostats and Re-locatable Towers program, originally part of the Department of Defense (DoD) Re-use program, uses a mix of aerostats, towers, cameras, and radars to provide USBP with increased situational awareness through an advanced surveillance capability over a wide area. This capability has proven to be a vital asset in increasing CBP's ability to detect, identify, classify, and track activity.

The absence of mobile surveillance technology would limit the USBP's ability to detect, identify, classify, track, and rapidly respond to illicit activity. These technologies not only provide significant security benefits and multiply the capabilities of law enforcement personnel to detect, identify, and respond to suspicious activity, but also assist with public safety along the border. Mobile surveillance technology systems enable Agents to position the technology where it is needed at a specific moment, extend our observational capabilities, and increase the accuracy and speed of our response.

Technology is critical to border security operations. A tailored blend of fixed, mobile, and portable surveillance systems that complement one another increases the USBP's effectiveness in targeting a response to high-risk areas, enabling rapid response strategies to maximize manpower, and adjusting to seasonal/periodic traffic patterns.

Air and Marine Capabilities

AMO increases CBP's situational awareness, enhances its detection and interdiction capabilities, and extends our border security zones, offering greater capacity to stop threats prior to reaching the Nation's borders. Through the use of coordinated and integrated surveillance capabilities – including aviation, marine, tethered aerostats and integrated ground-based radars – AMO detects, interdicts, and prevents acts of terrorism and the unlawful movement of people, narcotics, and other contraband toward or across the borders of the United States. These assets provide multi-domain awareness for our partners across DHS, as well as critical aerial and maritime surveillance, interdiction, and operational assistance to our ground personnel.

AMO's maritime assets are tailored to the conditions of the threat environment in which we operate, and equipped with the capabilities required to interdict attempted illicit smuggling of narcotics and illegal aliens. Often there is little time to interdict inbound suspect vessels and AMO has honed its maritime border security response capability around rapid and effective interception, pursuit, and interdiction of these craft. AMO employs high speed Coastal Interceptor Vessels that are specifically designed and engineered with the speed, maneuverability, integrity and endurance to intercept and engage a variety of suspect non-compliant vessels in offshore waters, as well as the Great Lakes on the Northern border.

The DHS air surveillance network provides air domain awareness on the Southern border. The system includes the Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS), and data from ground-based radar systems owned by the Federal Aviation Administration, DOD, and Mexico. These sensor systems provide continuous surveillance coverage over fixed geographical areas, or persistent

surveillance. Extensive law enforcement and intelligence databases, flight plans, and other information is combined with the sensor data to provide meaning to the area surveilled.

CBP's aerial surveillance capabilities are enhanced through recent investments and deployments of Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft (MEA). The MEA has a multi-mode radar for use over water and land, an electro-optical/infrared camera system, and a satellite communications system. The MEA replaces several older, single-mission assets and is customized to provide maritime support in the near-shore customs waters. With its sophisticated technology systems, the MEA is a highly capable, twin-engine aircraft and a critical investment in CBP's maritime, land, and aerial surveillance capabilities.

P-3 Long Range Trackers and Airborne Early Warning Aircraft provide critical detection and interdiction capability in both the air and marine environment. Sophisticated sensors and high endurance capability greatly increase CBP's range to counter illicit trafficking. AMO P-3s are an integral part of the successful counter-narcotic missions operating in coordination with the Joint Interagency Task Force - South. The P-3s patrol in a 42 million square mile area that includes more than 41 nations, the Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and seaboard approaches to the United States. This effectively pushes our border out to sea, where large quantities of illicit traffic can be interdicted or disrupted long before reaching our shores.

Another important asset is the DHC-8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA). It bridges the gap between the strategic P-3 and Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) assets and the smaller assets providing support in the littoral waters. This tool allows AMO an unprecedented level of situational awareness in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

AMO's tactical resources have also received a number of technological upgrades to add to their utility. The AS-350 helicopter has received avionics upgrades to allow the Operators to focus more of their attention on the mission, making them more effective. AMO has also added detection technology to its fixed wing light observation aircraft, greatly increasing its tactical capabilities.

Additionally, UAS are increasingly instrumental in CBP's layered and integrated approach to border security. The UAS consists of an unmanned aircraft, sensors, communication packages, pilots, and sensor Operators. UAS are used to meet surveillance and other mission requirements along the Southern border, Northern border, Southeast coastal area, and in the drug source and transit zones. Four of CBP's UAS are equipped with Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radar (VADER) sensor systems, which are capable of detecting human movement along the ground and increase CBP aerial surveillance, enforcement, and security to prevent potential threats from illegally entering the United States. Since 2012, VADER has detected over 40,000 people moving across the Southern border. Since 2006, this versatile platform has been credited with interdicting/disrupting 13,144 pounds of cocaine and 321,330 pounds of marijuana worth an estimated \$1.8 billion. The UAS program has achieved over 35,900 flight hours since program inception in FY 2006.

UAS and P-3 aircraft are equipped with technology that provides full-motion video capture and provides real time and forensic analysis. This advanced detection and communication system enables CBP to disseminate images and other sensor data to operational users in real-time, increasing response effectiveness and speed.

Perhaps the most important advancements come in the area of data integration and exploitation. Downlink technology, paired with the BigPipe system, allows AMO to provide a video feed and situational awareness to our law enforcement partners in real-time. In addition, the Minotaur mission integration system will allow multiple aircraft to share information from multiple sources, providing a never before seen level of air, land, and sea domain awareness. As the Minotaur system evolves, it will provide even greater awareness for a greater number of users.

AMO also combats airborne and maritime smuggling with an integrated long-range radar architecture comprised of ground-based radars and elevated radars deployed on tethered aerostats. AMO, in partnership with DOD, operates and maintains a large network of terrestrial radars to establish and maintain wide-area, persistent surveillance of commercial and non-commercial aircraft flying toward, arriving at, or passing through our borders. With the awareness generated by this sensor network, CBP can detect and respond to air and maritime movement anomalies that could pose a threat to our homeland, including trafficking organizations attempting to deliver contraband across the border by flying beneath the radar field of view of our ground-based radars.

AMO's TARS monitors the low-altitude approaches to the United States and denies this airspace for illicit smuggling. With eight aerostat sites – six along the Southwest border, one in the Florida Keys, and one in Puerto Rico – the TARS elevated sensor mitigates the effect of the curvature of the earth and terrain-masking limitations associated with ground-based radars, enabling maximum long-range radar detection capabilities. FY 2015 and FY 2016 TARS recorded over 500 suspect aircraft approaching the U.S. border from Mexico. These aircraft, referred to as short landers, are used to transport narcotics through Mexico, landing just south of the border where contraband is transferred to other conveyances for follow-on movement into the United States. These detections represent approximately 82 percent of all short landers detected. In FY 2016, interdiction of short landers resulted in the reported seizure of 323.8 pounds of heroin, 421.8 pounds of cocaine, 4,806 pounds of methamphetamine, and 9,316.8 pounds of marijuana.

A vital component of DHS's domain awareness capabilities, CBP's Air and Marine Operations Center (AMOC) integrates surveillance capabilities and coordinates with other CBP operational components, including USBP and other federal, state, local, and international partners to detect, identify, track and support interdiction of suspect aviation and maritime activity in the approaches to U.S. borders, at the borders, and within the interior of the United States. Coordinating with extensive law enforcement and intelligence databases and communication networks, AMOC's command and control operational system, the Air and Marine Operations Surveillance System (AMOSS), provides a single display that is capable of processing up to 700 individual sensor feeds and tracking over 50,000 individual targets simultaneously. The eight TARS sites represent approximately two percent of the total available radars in AMOSS, yet were able to account for detecting 46 percent of all suspect target detections in FY 2015 and FY 2016.

As we continue to deploy border surveillance technology, particularly along the Southwest border, these investments in fixed and mobile technology, as well as enhancements of domain awareness capabilities allow CBP the flexibility to shift more Officers and Agents from detection duties to interdiction of illegal activities on our borders.

Security at the Ports

As the lead DHS agency for border security, CBP also works closely with our domestic and international partners to protect the Nation from the dynamic threats posed by containerized cargo arriving at our air, land, and sea ports.

Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, CBP has established security partnerships, enhanced our targeting and risk-assessment programs, and invested in advanced technology, all essential elements of our multi-layered approach to protecting the Nation from the arrival of dangerous materials, including radiological and nuclear materials, at our POEs.

CBP has several key programs that enhance our ability to assess cargo for risk, examine high-risk shipments at the earliest possible point, and increase the security of the supply chain.

First, CBP receives advance information on every cargo shipment, every vessel, and every air passenger before they arrive at our POEs. Second, our advanced targeting techniques use the data collected to enhance our ability to assess the risk associated with these cargo shipments and with the entities involved. The NTC, using the Automated Targeting System, has developed state-of-the-art capabilities to assess cargo shipments before they are laden onboard vessels destined for the United States.

Third, our partnerships — those with our DHS and Federal partners, private industry, and foreign counterparts — increase information sharing, and enhance our domain awareness, targeting capabilities, and ability to intercept threats at, or approaching our borders. Pushing our security efforts outward, the Container Security Initiative (CSI) — which was established to prevent the use of maritime containerized cargo to transport a weapon of mass effect or destruction — enables CBP to work with foreign authorities to identify and examine potentially high-risk maritime containers at the foreign port before they are laden on vessels bound for the United States. CBP's 60 CSI ports now prescreen over 80 percent of all maritime containerized cargo imported into the United States.

Working with our private industry partners, the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) provides facilitation benefits to rigorously-vetted members of the trade community who volunteer to adopt tighter security measures throughout their entire international supply chain. C-TPAT has grown from seven initial members to over 11,000 members today.

And finally, in partnership with DNDO, CBP has deployed nuclear and radiological detection equipment, including Radiation Portal Monitors (RPMs), Radiation Isotope Identification Devices, and Personal Radiation Detectors to our Nation's land, sea, and air POEs. This Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology enables CBP to detect materials that pose significant nuclear and radiological threat. Using NII imaging equipment, CBP Officers can also examine cargo conveyances such as sea containers, commercial trucks, and rail cars, as well as privately owned vehicles, for the presence of contraband without physically opening or unloading them. NII technologies — both radiological detection and imaging — are force multipliers that enable CBP to screen or examine a larger portion of the stream of commercial traffic while facilitating the flow of legitimate trade, cargo and passengers.

Utilizing RPMs deployed nationwide at our POEs, CBP is able to scan 100 percent of all mail and express consignment mail and parcels; 100 percent of all truck cargo and personally owned

vehicles arriving from Canada and Mexico; and nearly 100 percent of all arriving maritime containerized cargo for the presence of radiological or nuclear materials.

In the acquisition and deployment of border security technology, CBP ensures that investments are effective and that procurement processes are efficient, transparent, and compliant with federal law and DHS policy. With all our programs, operations, and activities, we welcome oversight and embrace our responsibility as stewards of American taxpayer resources.

CONCLUSION

The security challenges facing CBP and our Nation are considerable, particularly along the Southern border. However, we have the laws in place to secure our borders, and we are enforcing them. We have already begun to achieve successes in stemming the flow of illegal immigration. We remain committed to interdicting narcotics before they enter the country. Through the use of technology as the primary driver of all land, maritime, and air domain awareness, we will continue to adapt and respond swiftly and effectively to secure our borders and protect our Homeland.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your continued support of CBP. I would be pleased to answer any questions.