



TESTIMONY OF

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BEFORE

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Committee on Homeland Security  
Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security

ON

“Stopping the Daily Border Caravan: Time to Build a Policy Wall”

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## **Introduction**

Chairwoman McSally, Ranking Member Vela, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the efforts of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to achieve our strategic and operational border security objectives and to enhance our deterrence, detection, and interdiction of illegal cross-border activity.

CBP is responsible for securing approximately 7,000 miles of land border, 95,000 miles of shoreline, 328 ports of entry (POE), and the associated air and maritime space from the illegal entry of people and contraband 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.

## **Legislative Priorities**

When President Trump took office last year, he issued a series of Executive Orders to enhance border security, promote public safety, minimize the threat of terrorist attacks by foreign nationals, and protect American workers from unfair foreign competition. In January 2017, the President signed the Executive Order entitled *Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements* (EO 13767), which directs executive departments and agencies to deploy all lawful means to secure the Nation's Southern border, prevent further illegal immigration to the United States, and repatriate aliens with final orders of removal swiftly, consistently, and humanely. EO 13767 sets a new standard of operational control of the Southern border and establishes the foundation for securing the Southern border by directing the provision of necessary tools, resources, and policy goals for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) dedicated men and women to fulfill their critical mission.

But CBP is part of a system that neither begins nor ends at our borders, and innovative technologies and enhanced interdiction capabilities alone cannot prevent illegal crossings. The Administration seeks support from Congress to amend current law to facilitate the expeditious return of Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) and family units who are ineligible for relief. The Administration supports correcting the systemic deficiencies that created the asylum backlog, and supports providing additional resources to reduce the immigration court backlog and ensure the swift return of illegal border crossers. CBP looks forward to working with Congress on the legislation needed to enhance the security of our Nation, ensure effective immigration and enforcement, and protect American workers and taxpayers. These legislative needs have a direct impact on CBP's ability to perform its mission.

CBP remains committed to working with Congress to address these issues in support of the priorities of this Administration and CBP's mission set.

## **Partnerships for Border Security**

To fulfill our complex missions, CBP is working with DHS components, our federal, state, local, tribal and territorial partners, and with our international counterparts to ensure that information is shared quickly, resources are spent where they are most needed, and that the American people and economy are kept safe.

### *Processing Claims of Asylum*

Individuals who do not have proper travel documents and attempt to enter the United States, either at a POE or between the POEs, may be subject to expedited removal. If individuals placed into expedited removal inform CBP officers that they are afraid to go back to their home countries, they wish to apply for asylum, or that they fear persecution or torture, they are detained and referred to a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) asylum officer for a credible fear interview. Usually these individuals are detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) pending this credible fear interview, and the interviews are often conducted at detention facilities. Individuals who are found to have credible fear are referred to Immigration Court, where they may apply for relief from removal, including asylum. Individuals who are found to not have a credible fear are given an opportunity to ask an Immigration Judge for a review of the negative determination before ICE removes them from the United States.

To ensure that all claims for asylum are considered, DHS, in partnership with the Department of Justice (DOJ), is taking a number of steps to ensure that all cases and claims are adjudicated promptly, including sending to the border, as necessary, additional USCIS asylum officers, ICE attorneys, and DOJ Immigration Judges.

### *Collaboration with the Department of Defense National Guard*

The number of individuals apprehended while trying to enter the country illegally in between established POEs, and of those presenting themselves for entry without proper documentation at POEs along our Southwest border, increased by 37 percent from February to March 2018. When compared to March of 2017, the increase is an extraordinary 203 percent. CBP is committed to working with our domestic and international partners to secure our border.

To enhance CBP's capability in Southwest border sectors, the Department of Defense (DOD), in conjunction with border state governors, has begun deploying the National Guard to assist in stopping the flow of deadly drugs and other contraband, gang members and other criminals, and illegal aliens into this country. Initial forces are already on the ground assisting CBP by executing missions such as logistical and administrative support, operating detection systems, providing mobile communications, and augmenting border-related intelligence analysis efforts. National Guard members will provide added surveillance, engineering, administrative, and mechanical support to our agents on the frontline to allow CBP's agents to focus on their primary responsibility of securing our border. National Guard personnel will not conduct law enforcement activities, will not be assigned responsibilities that require direct contact with migrants, and will not be assigned missions that require them to be armed.

### *Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Partnerships*

CBP hosts monthly briefings/teleconferences with federal, state, and local partners regarding the current state of the border – both Northern and Southern– to monitor emerging trends and threats and provide a cross-component, multi-agency venue for discussion. The monthly briefings focus on drugs, weapons, currency interdictions, and alien apprehensions both at and between the POEs. These briefings/teleconferences currently include participants from: the Government of Canada, the Government of Mexico, the Government of Australia, ICE, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), DOD's U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Southern Command, Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,

Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), U.S. Attorneys' Offices (USAOs), Naval Investigative Command, State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers, and other international, federal, state, and local law enforcement as appropriate.

The Office of Intelligence (OI) hosts a bi-weekly fusion forum to facilitate an open discussion with CBP's federal, state, local, and international partners on emerging trends and patterns, specific problem sets confronted by each organization, and each organization's attempts to address them. Additionally, OI personnel take part in a variety of weekly or monthly conference calls related to a variety of issues affecting CBP's mission including narcotics, terrorism, trade and migration.

CBP is enhancing our collaboration with other DHS components to leverage the unique resources, authorities, and capabilities of each agency to more effectively and efficiently execute our border security missions against drug trafficking organizations, Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), terrorists, and other threats and challenges. Under the Department's Unity of Effort initiative, the Joint Task Forces' operations also increase information sharing with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, improve border-wide criminal intelligence-led interdiction operations, and address transnational threats.

#### *International Partnerships*

Throughout Central America, CBP leverages its attaché and advisor network to engage local immigration, border management, and police authorities, as well as our federal partners such as the Department of State's U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and ICE to enhance security, improve governance and promote prosperity in the region. CBP efforts in the region include: training, mentoring, and sharing best practices with local law enforcement; providing assistance in making customs processes more efficient and transparent to enhance trade facilitation; and building the capacity of law enforcement in each country to counter drug smuggling activities, monitor, track, and deter the illicit migration of third country nationals, and facilitate cross-border coordination.

#### **Investing in Border Security**

CBP's proposed investments in border security leverage the Capability Gap Analysis Process (CGAP), an annual, full spectrum requirements analysis process. The CGAP creates a consistent and repeatable, field-driven approach to conducting mission analysis and planning aimed at identifying capabilities gaps across the complex environments United States Border Patrol (USBP) and Air and Marine Operations (AMO) agents work in every day. Capability gaps are captured directly from the field using this process. These gaps are evaluated through qualitative and quantitative analysis and other evidence to provide information to decision makers about the border security mission space across the Northern, Southern, and Coastal borders of the United States. This methodology leads to informed investments that achieve the greatest possible operational impact. As the threats along the borders change, USBP and AMO will update this analysis as needed to maximize the impact of future investments.

The CGAP is used by USBP to identify needs related to 12 master capabilities: communications; doctrine and policy; domain awareness; human capital management; impedance and denial (I&D); information management; intelligence and counter intelligence; mission readiness; planning and analysis; security and partnerships; access and mobility; and command and control. While CGAP

identifies needs across all 12 master capabilities, four capabilities – I&D, domain awareness, access and mobility, and mission readiness – are consistently prioritized by field commanders as the most important. AMO uses CGAP to provide qualitative and quantitative gaps associated with their seven mission sets: Air Security; Land Security; Maritime Security; Extended Border and Foreign Operations; Air and Maritime Investigations; Contingency and National Tasking Operations; and Other Law Enforcement Operations. These identified needs are then subject to appropriate review and validation through the DHS requirements processes.

Impedance & Denial (I&D) is among the four capabilities that USBP field commanders consistently prioritize during the CGAP process. I&D is the ability to slow and/or stop the use of terrain for illicit cross-border activity. This is achieved primarily through the use of man-made infrastructure such as a physical wall, and the complementary deployment of personnel, roads, and technology. Border barriers have enhanced – and will continue to enhance – CBP’s operational capabilities by creating an enduring capability that impedes illegal cross-border activity and facilitates the deterrence and prevention of illegal entries. I&D investments are critical to protecting border areas with short vanishing times where illicit crossers can quickly evade law enforcement by “vanishing” into border communities. Investments in I&D, and particularly in a border wall system, will help CBP obtain operational control of the border and prevent illegal border crossings.

## **Infrastructure**

Tactical infrastructure, including physical barriers and complementary capabilities, has long been a critical component of CBP’s multi-layered and risk-based approach to securing our Southern border. Tactical infrastructure also supports Executive Order 13767 *Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements* and CBP’s operational requirements, including the high-priority border wall system.

### *Between the Ports of Entry*

The land along the border between the United States and Mexico is extremely diverse, consisting of desert landscape, mountainous terrain, and urban areas. Today, we have several types of barriers, including steel bollard and levee wall, along nearly one-third, or 654 miles, of the Southern border. The recently passed Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 supports CBP’s mission through investments in border infrastructure and technology, port security, and recruitment and retention efforts, to include \$1.4 billion for the largest investment in border wall in more than a decade. We are eager to put this funding to work to improve our nation’s security, and encourage Congress to continue to support investments in the high-priority border wall system.

CBP is seeking to build on the successes of, and lessons learned from, the construction and operation of existing barriers to deploy a system that addresses dynamic cross-border threats. CBP is working with industry and partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to incorporate additional alternative barrier design features and other innovative solutions into our border barrier systems. Border barrier systems are comprehensive solutions that include a concentrated combination of various types of infrastructure such as walls, all-weather roads, lighting, sensors, enforcement cameras, and other related technology. Deployments of additional infrastructure will be made using a multi-phased approach that meets USBP’s operational requirements, and which safeguards national security and public safety. These deployments will

be the results of a thorough analysis of threats and mission effectiveness and will follow disciplined acquisition processes overseen by DHS.

Throughout the planning, design, and construction process, CBP will complete project, budget, real estate, and environmental planning to ensure appropriate resource stewardship. CBP will leverage expertise in federal acquisition to maximize transparency and accountability and to ensure the most effective and efficient solutions are deployed to meet requirements, in accordance with the established DHS acquisition lifecycle framework and acquisition review board oversight.

CBP is committed to ensuring that all stakeholder communities, including federal partners, state, local, and tribal officials, and impacted communities are kept informed and engaged throughout this process.

#### *At the Ports of Entry*

CBP supports a vast and diverse real property portfolio, consisting of more than 4,300 owned and leased buildings, over 28 million square feet of facility space, and approximately 4,600 acres of land throughout the United States. Constructing and improving CBP's physical infrastructure is essential to keeping facilities operationally viable for frontline and mission support functions. CBP, in coordination with General Services Administration (GSA), continues to construct and modernize land POEs along the Northern and Southern borders, and to complete additional enhancement and expansion projects within the Office of Field Operations (OFO) portfolio. Thanks to the funding provided in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Omnibus, CBP is working with the GSA to ensure that our priority requirements in locations including Otay Mesa, CA, and Alexandria Bay, NY receive much-needed updates. We look forward to working with GSA and Congress to ensure that our physical infrastructure meets CBP's needs now and in the future.

#### **Technology**

Technology enhances CBP's operational capabilities by increasing the ability of the men and women of CBP to detect and identify individuals illegally crossing the border; detect dangerous goods and materials concealed in cargo and vehicles; and detect and interdict illegal activity in the air and maritime domains. For CBP, the use of technology in the border environment is an invaluable force multiplier that increases situational awareness. Technology enhances the ability of CBP to detect illegal activity quickly, with less risk to the safety of our front-line personnel.

#### *At the Ports of Entry*

Smugglers use a wide variety of tactics and techniques to traffic concealed drugs and other contraband through POEs. CBP incorporates advanced detection equipment and technology, including the use of Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) equipment and radiation detection technologies, to maintain robust cargo, commercial conveyance, and vehicle inspection regimes at our POEs.

NII technology is a critical element in CBP's ability to detect contraband, and materials that could pose nuclear and radiological threats. CBP currently has 304 large-scale NII systems and over 4,500 small-scale systems deployed to, and between, POEs. These systems enable CBP officers to 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. This allows CBP to work smarter and faster in detecting contraband and other dangerous

materials. CBP officers also utilize NII, as well as spectroscopic and chemical testing equipment and narcotics detection canines, to detect and presumptively identify illicit drugs, including illicit opioids, at international mail and express consignment carrier facilities. Between October 1, 2010 and March 31, 2018, CBP conducted more than 84 million NII examinations, resulting in more than 19,000 narcotics seizures and more than \$79 million in currency seizures.

Scanning all arriving conveyances and containers with radiation detection equipment prior to release from the POE is an integral part of CBP's comprehensive strategy to combat nuclear and radiological terrorism. In partnership with Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD), CBP has deployed nuclear and radiological detection equipment, including 1,280 Radiation Portal Monitors (RPM), 3,319 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices (RIID), and 35,294 Personal Radiation Detectors (PRD) to all 328 POEs nationwide. Utilizing RPMs, CBP is able to scan 100 percent of all mail and express consignment mail and parcels; 100 percent of all truck cargo; 100 percent of personally-owned vehicles arriving from Canada and Mexico; and nearly 100 percent of all arriving sea-borne containerized cargo for the presence of radiological or nuclear materials. Since the RPM program began in 2002, CBP has scanned more than 1.41 billion conveyances for radiological contraband.

In conjunction with CBP's many other initiatives, advancements in cargo and conveyance screening technology provide CBP with a significant capacity to detect dangerous materials and other contraband, and continue to be a cornerstone of CBP's multilayered security strategy.

#### *Technology Investments between the Ports*

Thanks to the support of Congress, CBP continues to deploy proven, effective technology to strengthen border security operations between the POEs, in the land, air, and maritime environments. These investments increase CBP's ability to detect illegal activity along the border, increase our operational capabilities, and improve the safety of frontline law enforcement personnel.

#### *Surveillance Capabilities*

Integrated Fixed Tower (IFT) systems are one of the technologies deployed along the Southwest border in Arizona. IFTs provide long-range, persistent surveillance. An IFT system automatically detects items of interest with radar, identifies and classifies them with day and night cameras, and tracks them at the Command and Control Center through the integration of data, video, and geospatial location input.

Remote Video Surveillance Systems (RVSS) are another technology used by USBP in select areas along the Northern and Southern borders. These systems provide short-, medium-, and long-range, persistent surveillance from towers or other elevated structures. Existing RVSS are being upgraded with newer cameras, communication backhaul, command and control programs, and additional towers.

In some areas along both the Northern and Southern borders, USBP uses Unattended Ground Sensors (UGS) to provide focused, short-range, persistent surveillance. UGS are remotely monitored surveillance systems that detect, identify and track activity and subjects in areas not easy to access or monitor with other technology. These sensors are hand-installed, fixed but relocatable, easy to conceal, and adaptable to numerous operational environments. Detection

capabilities include seismic, magnetic, acoustic, infrared, radar, microwave, photoelectric, contact closure and various others. Imaging UGS (I-UGS) provide photo or video verification of detections and allow advanced image analytics.

Fixed systems provide persistent surveillance coverage to efficiently detect unauthorized border crossings. Once detection is confirmed, USBP can quickly deploy the appropriate personnel and resources to interdict. Without fixed-system technology such as IFT, RVSS, and UGS, USBP's ability to detect, identify, classify, and track illicit activity would be significantly limited.

#### *Mobile and Relocatable Surveillance Capabilities*

Working in conjunction with fixed surveillance assets, USBP also uses mobile and relocatable systems to address areas where rugged terrain and dense ground cover may limit the effectiveness and coverage of fixed systems. Mobile and relocatable technology assets provide USBP with the flexibility to adapt to changing border conditions and threats.

Mobile Surveillance Capability (MSC) systems provide long-range, mobile surveillance. They include radar and camera sensors mounted on USBP vehicles. Mobile Vehicle Surveillance Systems (MVSS) are short-, and medium-range, mobile surveillance equipment. They consist of camera sensors on telescoping masts mounted on USBP vehicles. USBP agents deploy with these systems, which detect, track, identify and classify items of interest using the video feed.

Another relocatable system is the Agent Portable Surveillance System (APSS). Mounted on a tripod, it provides medium-range, mobile surveillance and can be transported by two or three USBP agents. Two agents remain on-site 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.

CBP's Tactical Aerostats and Re-locatable Towers program, originally part of the DOD re-use program, uses a mix of aerostats, towers, cameras, and radar to provide CBP with increased situational awareness 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 along the borders.

The Cross Border Tunnel Threat (CBTT) program strengthens border security effectiveness between POEs by diminishing the ability of TCOs to gain access into the United States through cross-border tunnels and the illicit use of underground municipal infrastructure. This system helps CBP predict potential tunnel locations; detect the presence of suspected tunnels and tunneling activities as well as project the trajectory of a discovered tunnel; confirm a tunnel's existence and location through mapping and measurements; and facilitate secure information sharing across all stakeholders.

#### *Technology in the Air and Maritime Domains*

AMO increases CBP's situational awareness, enhances detection and interdiction capabilities, and extends our border security zones, offering greater capacity to stop threats before they reach our shores. AMO's 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 performs its offshore functions in coordination with the USCG and DHS's interagency partners.

To address maritime threats, and the capabilities needed to meet those threats, AMO has recently acquired 41-foot, high-speed Coastal Interceptor Vessels (CIV) to enhance Marine Interdiction Agents' (MIA) ability to detect, intercept, and interdict suspect vessels entering the coastal approaches of the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The CIV will provide MIAs with upgraded electronics, and improved situational awareness through modernized navigation and sensor technology. As with AMO's aircraft, the marine vessels also support the Department's Joint Task Forces, as well as the Border Patrol Sectors, AMO investigations and missions, ICE, and other federal, state, and local organizations.

Additionally, AMO's Small Vessel Standoff Detection radiation detection capability increases the probability of detecting radiological and nuclear materials that might be used in an attack. This transportable equipment is effective against small private or commercial vessels, and can detect a potential threat in advance of a boarding.

Multirole Enforcement Aircraft (MEA) are sensor-equipped aircraft for surveillance operations in regions where terrain, weather, and distance pose significant obstacles to border security operations. The MEA serves as a force multiplier for law enforcement personnel, facilitating the rapid-response deployment of equipment, canines, and people.

P-3 Long Range Trackers and Airborne Early Warning Aircraft provide critical detection and interdiction capability in both the air and marine environments. CBP P-3s are an integral part of the successful counter-narcotic missions operated in coordination with the JIATF-S. The P-3s patrol 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. Over the last ten years, CBP's P-3 operational efforts assisted in the seizure or disruption of the delivery of more than 1.6 million pounds of cocaine, with an estimated wholesale value of \$63 billion. In FY 2018 to date, CBP P-3 aircraft have flown 4,628 hours, and contributed to the seizure and disruption of over 83,000 lbs. of cocaine, averaging 23.5 pounds of cocaine for each hour a CBP P-3 flies.

Multiple AMO aircraft are equipped with electro-optical infrared sensor systems that provide improved detection and identification capabilities, greater standoff ranges for more covert operation and safety, and have laser range finders, laser target illumination, and Shortwave Infrared functionality. These systems enable AMO aircraft to detect persons, vehicles, vessels, and aircraft during day, night, and in adverse visibility conditions, thus enabling classification of threats and enhancing mission value for ground agents.

Other critical components of AMO's aircraft fleet include the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, which are able to carry eight agents with full gear. The Light Enforcement Helicopter (LEH) is a multi-mission helicopter used for aerial surveillance, tactical support, patrol of high-risk areas, and to transport agents responding to illegal border incursions, as well as serve search and arrest warrants. Another important asset is the DHC-8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), which bridges the gap between strategic assets, such as the P-3 and Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS).

AMO's aircraft have received a number of technological upgrades to increase their utility. For example, avionics upgrades to the AS-350 helicopter allow operators to focus more of their attention on the mission, making them more effective. AMO has also added electro-optical

infrared detection technology to its fixed-wing, light observation aircraft, thereby greatly increasing its tactical capabilities.

UAS platforms are an increasingly important part of CBP's layered and integrated approach to border security. CBP's UAS consist of an unmanned aircraft, sensors, communication packages, pilots, and ground control operators. UAS platforms are used for surveillance, detection and other mission requirements along the Southwest border, Northern border, and in the drug source and transit zones. The UAS program has logged over 49,200 flight hours since it began in FY 2006, contributed to the interdiction and disruption of the movement of cocaine and marijuana with an estimated wholesale value of \$1.18 billion. CBP can equip four UAS aircraft with Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radar (VADER) sensor systems, which can detect human movement along the ground. Since 2012, VADER detected over 64,500 people moving across the Southwest border.

Important advancements have come in the area of data integration and exploitation. New downlink technology allows AMO to provide a video feed and situational awareness to law enforcement personnel in real-time. In addition, the Minotaur mission management system will enable the integration and geo-synchronization of multiple aircraft sensors, mission databases, and intelligence gathering devices and allow multiple aircraft to share information from multiple sources, providing a never-before-seen level of air, land, and maritime domain awareness.

AMO's Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS) monitors the low-altitude approaches to the United States. With eight aerostat sites, 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. From FY 2014 through FY 2016, TARS was responsible for detecting 86 percent of all suspected air smuggling flights approaching the Southwest border from Mexico.

A vital component of DHS's domain awareness capabilities, AMO's Air and Marine Operations Center (AMOC) integrates surveillance capabilities and coordinates national security threat response with other CBP operational components, including USBP. It works with other federal and international partners.<sup>1</sup> AMOC helps AMO and its partners predict, detect, identify, classify, respond to and resolve suspect aviation and maritime activity in the approaches to U.S. borders, at the borders, and within the interior of the United States. AMOC utilizes extensive law enforcement and intelligence databases, communication networks and the Air and Marine Operations Surveillance System (AMOSS). The AMOSS provides a single display 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 integrated radars in AMOSS, yet accounted for 53 percent of all suspect target detections.

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 provided by the AMOC, allow CBP the flexibility to shift more agents from detection duties to interdiction of illegal activities.

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<sup>1</sup> AMOC partners include the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Department of Defense (including the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)), and the governments of Mexico, Canada, and the Bahamas.

### *Access & Mobility*

USBP has consistently identified Access and Mobility as a key capability for gaining and maintaining operational control of the Southern border. Access and Mobility is the ability to access areas of responsibility and, under all conditions, effect mobility for responding to illicit cross-border activity. CBP's portfolio currently includes over 900 miles of access roads. Roads are necessary to increase access points and expand patrol roads in high priority areas. Patrol roads decrease travel time, improve incident response time, and increase the effective patrol range of USBP agents. Roads are a force multiplier and key in establishing operational control of the border.

### **Hiring and Personnel**

Frontline and non-frontline personnel are one of the most critical resources for improving border security. Mission readiness - the ability to properly train and equip personnel- is critical to CBP's ability to secure the border and protect the American people.

EO 13767 mandated the hiring of 5,000 additional USBP agents. To implement this directive, and as operational demands continue to evolve, CBP continues to explore all avenues to meet current and future human capital needs. CBP subjects our recruitment and hiring practices to an ongoing cycle of analysis and refinement, working constantly to strengthen our hiring capabilities and secure adequate staffing for critical frontline operations and the network of personnel who support these operations. CBP's strategy includes initiatives designed to attract more applicants who are suited to the unique demands of CBP's mission, expedite the pre-employment timeline, refine the hiring process to address potential bottlenecks, and reduce the attrition rate of the existing workforce.

In pursuit of our hiring goals, CBP recruiters will continue to participate in thousands of recruiting events, seeking to reach a diverse spectrum of applicants. CBP has participated in close to 5,000 recruitment and outreach events since the beginning of FY 2017. CBP's use of advanced data analytics to direct recruitment efforts, deemed a best practice by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), has enabled CBP to identify demographics with low brand awareness of the CBP, and to refocus recruitment efforts toward these gaps. This has resulted in an overall increase in applicants and lowered the number of applicants it takes for one officer or agent to on-board. Recruitment at events for veterans and transitioning military personnel continues to be a top priority. CBP will continue to enhance our data analytics capabilities, refining CBP's ability to identify groups of people who are most likely to pursue or be interested in a law enforcement career and providing us with targeted areas and specific audiences for recruitment. In addition, CBP will focus on digital advertising, and enhance branding through relationships with community partners.

In the last two years, more than 40 individual improvements to CBP's hiring process have resulted in significant recruitment and hiring gains, despite record low unemployment around the United States and intense competition for highly-qualified, mission-inspired people. With support from Congress, CBP is making investments in our capability and capacity to hire across all frontline positions. CBP is focusing on efforts to attract qualified candidates and expedite their progress through the CBP hiring process.

CBP's streamlined frontline hiring process has led to significant reductions in the average time-to-hire. In the last 12 months, close to 70 percent of new USBP agents and 60 percent of new CBP officers on-boarded in 313 days or fewer, with 17 percent of USBP agents and 19 percent of CBP officers on-boarding within 192 days. This is a significant improvement from the 469-day overall baseline established in January 2016. This streamlined process is reducing the number of otherwise qualified candidates who drop out due to process fatigue or accepting more timely job offers elsewhere, helping CBP grow its workforce. CBP's background investigation time is approximately 90 days for a Tier 5 level investigation, which is required for all of CBP's law enforcement officer applicants and 90 percent of CBP applicants overall. This is considerably less than the government average for the same level investigation. CBP is also recognized as having a best practice quality assurance program, which other agencies regularly visit CBP to learn about.

As a result of these improvements, CBP's FY 2017 hiring totals surpassed FY 2016 totals by 21 percent for CBP officers, four percent for USBP agents, and 91 percent for AMO air interdiction agents. In FY 2017 CBP reached the highest number of USBP agent hires since FY 2013 and the highest number of air interdiction agents and MIA hires since FY 2014. The total number of frontline applicants increased by 73 percent between FY 2015 and FY 2017, including a 41 percent increase from FY 2016 to FY 2017.

A significant challenge for CBP is that much of our work must be carried out in remote locations. It can be difficult to attract applicants who are willing to work in these locations, and it is a significant factor in our attrition. A stable relocation program will help meet USBP operational requirements and alleviate the workforce's concerns about lack of mobility, which is significantly contributing to increased attrition. CBP is working to develop programs that address attrition through relocation and retention incentives that meet employee aspirations, and at the same time enable CBP to staff these locations. Recruitment incentives are also helpful in attracting new personnel to join CBP, especially for positions in geographic locations that are difficult to fill. CBP is thankful for the continued dedication of Congress to working collaboratively with us to develop solutions to this complicated challenge.

Consistent with the Explanatory Statement accompanying the FY 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act concerning the alternative polygraph exam format, CBP conducted a six-month pilot program that allowed the agency to compare data points from applicants tested with the new, alternative format against applicants tested with the previous format. CBP developed this pilot in collaboration with the National Center for Credibility Assessment, which governs all federal polygraph programs. After an assessment of the pilot, which carefully evaluated these metrics and measures to ensure the format maintained CBP's high standard of integrity for applicants, CBP has implemented this test format and has engaged with committee staff on our path forward. While its format may change, the exam retains all of the critical test topics of the previous exam and maintains CBP's commitment to high integrity standards for its personnel.

Additionally, DHS supports the Anti-Border Corruption Reauthorization Act of 2017, which was ordered as H.R. 2213 in the House of Representatives and S. 595 in the Senate. The House passed H.R. 2213 on June 7, 2017, thanks to the strong support of this Subcommittee and the co-sponsorship of Chairwoman McSally, and the bill is currently pending vote by the Senate. This pending legislation grants the Commissioner authority to waive the polygraph requirement for three groups of applicants who have a demonstrated, longstanding history of public trust and meet

specific criteria: current, full-time state and local law enforcement officers; current, full-time federal law enforcement officers; and veterans, active duty service members, and reservists. We thank the Members of Congress for your continued support as we seek to hire the men and women who will fulfill CBP's complex and crucial mission in the months and years to come.

### **Conclusion**

The border environment is dynamic and requires constant adaptation to respond to emerging threats and changing conditions. CBP continues to work in close coordination with our partners to respond to these threats and ensure the safety and prosperity of the American people. With the support of Congress, CBP will continue to secure our Nation's borders through the risk-based deployment of infrastructure, personnel, and technology.

Chairwoman McSally, Ranking Member Vela, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today. I look forward to your questions.