

Statement of
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State, Local, and Private Sector Preparedness and Integration

on

“Counternarcotics Enforcement: Coordination at the Federal, State, and Local Level”

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Chairman Pryor, Senator Ensign, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to come before this Subcommittee and update you on the activities of the Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement. It is an honor to testify and to address your questions on the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to combat violence and cross-border drug smuggling.

The Department of Homeland Security is actively engaged in securing this nation's borders from the violence waged by drug cartels. As stated by the Secretary of Homeland Security, the violence in Mexico is not only an international threat, but it is a homeland security issue in which all Americans have a stake.

Secretary Napolitano recently announced Southwest Border initiatives designed to crack down on Mexican drug cartels through enhanced border security. The plans call for the redeployment of personnel, increased intelligence capability, and better coordination with, Federal, state, local, and Mexican law enforcement authorities. The Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement will play an important role in furthering the Department's plan.

DHS' Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement (CNE) is statutorily charged with two primary functions. CNE's first primary function is to support the Department's drug interdiction efforts. To accomplish this, CNE "coordinate[s] policy and operations within the Department of Homeland Security, between the Department and other Federal departments and agencies, and between the Department, State, and local agencies with respect to stopping the entry of illegal drugs into the United States." CNE also is charged with ensuring the Department has the adequate resources to meet its counternarcotics mission. CNE's second primary function is to "track and sever the connections between illegal drug trafficking and terrorism." CNE undertakes this mission in coordination with the US law enforcement community. Our partnership with the Departments of Justice and Treasury, as well as interagency coordination between DHS, DOJ and Treasury, has provided a strong basis for cohesive strategic and tactical efforts to combat SW border crime.

CNE's responsibilities are unique within the Department. Its establishment as an independent office, reporting directly to the Secretary of Homeland Security, recognizes CNE's important roles and responsibilities within the Department as well as the U.S. Government's overall drug control efforts.

To ensure the success of the Department's counternarcotics mission, CNE regularly works with DHS components and offices with drug-related responsibilities, including the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I &A), the Office of International Affairs (OIA), and the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T). CNE also works closely with the Office of Policy to ensure close coordination of counternarcotics efforts within the Department's broader

mission. As part of our consultative outreach, CNE is working with the DHS Office of State and Local Law Enforcement and the Office of Intergovernmental Programs to ensure coordination, integration, and support for our State, local, and tribal partners.

SECURING THE SOUTHWEST BORDER

The Southwest Border provides the clearest and most poignant example of the threat narcotics trafficking poses to homeland security and national security. Mexico is currently the transit point for approximately 90 percent of all cocaine consumed in the United States and is the primary source of foreign marijuana and methamphetamine, and a major source of heroin to the United States. The continuing violence in Mexico associated with drug trafficking, and the GOM's crack-down on major Mexican drug trafficking organizations, is bringing ever-increasing attention to the threats of narcotics smuggling and drug-related violence in the Southwest Border region. The National Drug Intelligence Center's (NDIC) 2009 *National Drug Threat Assessment* states that Mexican drug cartels are "the biggest organized crime threat in the United States." A few weeks ago, Secretary Napolitano testified to the Senate Homeland Security Committee that drug cartel violence is "a Homeland Security issue in which all Americans have a stake." Clearly, these threats justify national-level attention and improved unity of effort.

The U.S. – Mexico border spans nearly 2,000 miles. The vast geography and range of environments – from major urban centers to sparsely populated wilderness – pose serious challenges to law enforcement and make the Southwest Border a prime environment that can be exploited by Mexican drug trafficking organizations. These criminal organizations present significant challenges to border security. They operate well-orchestrated smuggling operations that utilize sophisticated techniques to conceal and transport narcotics, including mixing narcotics into pre-manufactured items and using low-flying aircraft and tunnels to cross the border. Drug traffickers exploit the border in two directions, smuggling drugs from Mexico into the United States and moving weapons and billions of dollars in illicit drug profits from the United States into Mexico.

Across the border, President Calderón is directing a courageous and concerted national effort to combat the organized criminal activities of Mexican drug cartels. These transnational criminal organizations are engaging in brutal tactics and conducting inhumane acts. It is incumbent upon us to focus our law enforcement efforts to ensure public safety along the Southwest Border and to work with the Government of Mexico to defeat criminal organizations in this region.

POLICY COORDINATION

One of CNE's most important responsibilities is to coordinate DHS counternarcotics policy within DHS and the interagency in an effort to stop the entry of illegal drugs into the United States. Due to the significance of drug trafficking routes through Mexico and into U.S. markets, CNE staff is working closely with the Department's components and the interagency to support counternarcotics efforts along the Southwest Border.

CNE, along with the Department of Justice's Office of the Deputy Attorney General (ODAG), are leading interagency efforts to develop the 2009 *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*. This strategy is being developed pursuant to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Reauthorization Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-469). ONDCP designated CNE and ODAG as the executive agents to lead the interagency process to develop the strategy. The strategy, which focuses on substantially reducing the flow of illicit drugs, drug proceeds, and associated instruments of violence across the U.S.-Mexico border, updates the first National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy announced by ONDCP in October 2007. As a result of the changing situation on the border, the 2009 *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy* has substantially broadened its focus. The soon to be released Strategy will prioritize the role that the outbound flow of illegal cash and weapons plays in sustaining the cartels and addresses this threat in two dedicated chapters. The Strategy also is the result of an expanded consultation process, including more thorough coordination with Congress, State and local authorities.

The *National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy* is part of the Administration's comprehensive response to the situation on the Southwest border, which also includes our partnership with Mexico through the Merida Initiative, immediate increases in law enforcement and border security personnel and equipment, operations plans for border-related contingencies, and our national effort to reduce the demand for illegal drugs at home.

The Strategy is also part of the Department of Homeland Security's strategic counternarcotics framework. In 2008, CNE submitted to Congress the Department's *Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy* and *Maritime Border and Transit Zone Counternarcotics Strategy*. These strategies help integrate and synchronize the Department's overall ability to respond to changes in drug trafficking routes. CNE builds upon the Department's priorities and those set forth in the *National Drug Control Strategy*, *National Interdiction Command and Control Plan*, and the *National Interdiction Planning Guidance*, in an effort to better integrate the Department's counternarcotics efforts along all U.S. borders.

OPERATIONS COORDINATION

CNE also plays a prominent role in coordinating DHS counterdrug operations among DHS components, within the interagency, and with international partners. CNE has been an active participant in the U.S.-Mexico Senior Law Enforcement Plenary, U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Interdiction Working Group, and, most recently, the U.S.-Mexico arms trafficking conference in Cuernavaca, Mexico. CNE is also an active participant within interagency counternarcotics efforts, for example, related to Colombia, Afghanistan and Africa. CNE has been a key component in DHS' involvement in the Mérida Initiative. CNE is a strong advocate for Mérida Initiative programs to successfully combat the threats of drug trafficking and related transnational crime and terrorism in the Western Hemisphere.

In addition to representing DHS at these important forums, CNE supports DHS operational components by engaging in efforts to coordinate DHS counternarcotics operations. Among the many examples of CNE's involvement in support of operations coordination efforts, I would like to highlight two: interdiction planning efforts in support of the United States Interdiction Coordinator and The Interdiction Committee (TIC) and Forward Operating Location (FOL) negotiations.

CNE, in collaboration with the other DHS operational components including CBP USCG, and ICE, is supporting TIC and the United States Interdiction Coordinator's review of the operational adequacy, integration, and use of interdiction assets. The CNE Director is a member of The Interdiction Committee (TIC), an advisory body to the United States Interdiction Coordinator (USIC) and Director, ONDCP. In this role, CNE assists the TIC Chairman in (1) reviewing the operations of Joint Interagency Task Force South, Joint Interagency Task Force West, and CBP's Air and Marine Operations Center; (2) developing recommendations for better integrating detection, monitoring, and law enforcement with interdiction efforts to more effectively disrupt international drug trafficker transportation and distribution systems; and (3) providing advice with respect to the operational adequacy, integration, and utilization of interdiction assets, as well as any other matters that may bear on the accomplishment of operational interdiction objectives. As an example of the type of work conducted, CNE is supporting the Interagency Planning and Asset Management Group Western Hemisphere Transit Zone Performance Gap Analysis. This is an interagency assessment of mission performance requirements, capabilities, and resources required to achieve national cocaine interdiction goals between FY 2010 and FY 2014.

CNE also plays an important role in the Federal Governments' international counternarcotics efforts. For example, last year the Government of Ecuador notified the U.S. Government that it would not renew the bilateral Manta, Ecuador FOL agreement, which is set to expire on November 12, 2009. Working alongside our intra- and interagency partners, CNE serves as the Department's lead interlocutor with the interagency coordinator, to ensure that DHS counternarcotics operations (USCG and CBP Air & Marine) are relocated to other airfields in the region in order to minimize the loss of the Department's aerial surveillance footprint in the Eastern Pacific maritime drug transit zone.

Recent events along the Southwest Border of the United States reaffirm the need for information-sharing, cooperation and coordination among all federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. DHS frequently teams with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), as well as other Federal agencies, to ensure the sharing of critical investigative information, in part by supporting the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) and Special Operations Division. These centers provide effective and efficient mechanisms to exchange information and intelligence, maximize resources, streamline operations, and improve the ability to fight crime and terrorism by analyzing data from a variety of sources. Full participation by all federal law enforcement agencies to include DHS components, in these centers is essential to the success of our efforts to combat drug trafficking.

COUNTERNARCOTICS RESOURCES

CNE is committed to ensuring the adequacy of counternarcotics resources to complement DHS efforts to protect and secure our nation's borders through the deployment of personnel, technology, air assets, infrastructure, the use of intelligence, and interagency partnerships. Counternarcotics mission effectiveness requires establishing and deploying the right mix of personnel, technology, infrastructure, and response platforms to achieve maximum tactical and strategic advantage.

The CNE Annual Report provides a review of the Department's counterdrug activities for the past fiscal year and the DHS counternarcotics budget request for the upcoming fiscal year. This report provides the Department's only "one stop," comprehensive guide to DHS drug control agencies seizure metrics for the previous fiscal year. This report also discusses how CNE has successfully defined and applied performance measures to the Department's counterdrug components' programmatic activities. I anticipate the 2009 CNE Annual Report will be released soon after the President's submits his FY 2010 budget request.

SEVERING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DRUG TRAFFICKING AND TERRORISM

The second overarching CNE responsibility is to track and sever the connections between drug trafficking and terrorism. Worldwide illicit drug trafficking generates significant revenue that buttresses the infrastructure of organized crime and terrorism. To fulfill this mission, CNE has established a Drug Terror Nexus (DTX) Division. Our DTX Division works closely with interagency partners – primarily through the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) construct – to collect and analyze information about the links between terrorist groups and drug trafficking and to target these links. One of the DTX Division's most important endeavors is to promote an exchange of drug-terror information between the law enforcement and intelligence communities, and by extension, to provide law enforcement agencies at all levels of government the actionable information they need to apprehend terrorists.

As part of this effort, our DTX Division is constantly working to improve relationships with High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs), JTTFs, Fusion Centers, and state, local, and tribal entities. For example, less than two months ago a DTX Division staff member met with key personnel from the South Florida HIDTA to enhance cooperative relationships on drug-terror issues with that key organization in order to establish and ensure accurate and timely information flow on drug-terror issues. In addition, at the request of the Director of the Gulf Coast HIDTA, CNE senior staff participated in the HIDTA Investigative Support Center Managers meeting last week to establish robust interface with HIDTAs nationwide. Our DTX Division will continue to foster relationships between various Federal, state, and local partners by sharing intelligence related to drug trafficking and terrorism with them, and by soliciting their advice on how to track and sever connections tied to this evolving threat.

The DTX Division has worked to expand the Intelligence Community's ability to collaborate on drug-terror issues. Using the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), CNE solicits participation in improving collection plans relative to drug-terror links. CNE also continues to expand the use of web-based, collaborative law enforcement and intelligence sharing tools such as Intellipedia — an online system managed by the Director of National Intelligence—and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Law Enforcement On-line (LEO).

CNE will continue to highlight the critical importance of drug-terror issues and facilitate increased collaborative efforts between Federal, State, local, and tribal entities on the tracking and severing of identified drug-terror connections.

CONCLUSION

The current violence along our Southwest Border is only symptomatic of a highly sophisticated, multi-billion dollar, well-armed transnational criminal system built around the production, transportation, sale, and consumption of dangerous illicit narcotics. Narcotics smuggling and related criminal activities are not localized problems along the border. The damage they cause to our Nation is tremendous. Illicit drugs are responsible for the death of more than 20,000 Americans each year. The social costs of the drug trade are well in excess of \$100 billion annually. Now, more than ever, CNE is playing a critical role to improve homeland security and support the national drug control program.

I thank the Subcommittee for this opportunity to testify. As you can see, CNE is committed to addressing the threat of drug-related violence and smuggling at the United States' borders. We are fortunate to have the backing of our interagency partners, the support of Congress, and the cooperation of our international partners, including the Government of Mexico, to fight this battle aggressively. Thank you for your time and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.