

**STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA O'CONNELL**  
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**OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION SHARING, AND**  
**TERRORISM RISK ASSESSMENT**  
**HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE**  
**JUNE 28, 2006**

Chairman Simmons, Ranking Member Lofgren, Members of the Subcommittee, I am Cynthia O'Connell, Acting Director of the Office of Intelligence for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). I sincerely appreciate this opportunity to share with you how the men and women of ICE Intelligence employ our capabilities to help secure our nation's borders.

The ICE Office of Intelligence supports ICE and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) intelligence requirements and priorities. We have made significant progress in continuing and expanding our responsibilities to support the needs of ICE, DHS, and the Intelligence Community (IC). With unique Immigration and Customs authorities and intelligence tools, ICE Intelligence has also enhanced its detection, collection and analysis capabilities.

In addition to ICE Intelligence Headquarters in Washington DC, we have six Field Intelligence Units located in New York, Long Beach, Chicago, Houston, Tucson, and Miami; two technical collection facilities – the Tactical Intelligence Center (TIC) and a Special Operations Center; and intelligence assets at the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC).

ICE Intelligence Headquarters supports ICE management and DHS Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) efforts, and coordinates ICE intelligence programs and operations nationwide. The Field Intelligence Units provide intelligence expertise to investigative offices and detention facilities in the field and to the DHS Intelligence as a whole. Our technical collection facilities act in concert with the Intelligence Community, the military, and other Federal agencies to safeguard the southern border and to extend coverage of our borders outward even to the shores of South America.

In intelligence terms, these are very powerful capabilities, and we have moved aggressively to organize them into a coherent and effective support system, both to advance the ICE investigative and operational missions, and to support and integrate ICE in the DHS intelligence functions. We have accomplished this through the ICE Intelligence Strategic Plan, which was constructed with the specific intent to integrate our intelligence capabilities with other components in the Department, to support a unified DHS Intelligence Enterprise.

The ICE Intelligence plan takes advantage of currently operating, demonstrably effective projects, programs, and activities; combines them with proposed new programs and capabilities; and unites the whole under a common strategic purpose – the protection of our country against threats that could arise from our borders. It is more than just a plan. It reflects real, effective action on the front lines.

### Special Operations Center

The Special Operations Center detects and locates smugglers moving contraband and aliens across our borders by collecting intelligence through real-time technical means, primarily signals and imagery intelligence. It supports ICE investigations with methodologies that not only interdict the incursion, but also helps identify smuggling organizations for investigation and dismantling. This kind of intelligence has real long-term benefits. The unit's emphasis to date has been on the U.S. and Mexico border.

We coordinate with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations and Office of Border Patrol assets to stop illegal activity. The information we collect is disseminated to ICE and Border Patrol agents in affected areas along the border from California to Texas.

ICE is currently integrating its intelligence program with the Special Operations Center geospatial intelligence capabilities, sponsored by DHS, and the analytical functions of our Southwest Field Intelligence Unit. We are working with DHS Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) to leverage available Department of Defense and DHS Science and Technology resources for upgrades to this dedicated border protection unit.

What I have just described to you is true, border-focused intelligence support; however, our protective effort is not devoted to just the land borders. We are also heavily involved in maritime and air transportation environments. We view border security as a continuum – it starts in various foreign countries, proceeds internationally to our borders, seaports, and airports, and extends into the interior of the United States, where support structures exist for criminal organizations as well as illegal immigrants. ICE provides intelligence at all points along this continuum.

#### ICE Intelligence Projects and Programs

*The Port Intelligence Center (PIC)* was created in response to Secretary Michael Chertoff's directive to develop a task force that addresses New York and New Jersey seaport vulnerabilities. The ICE Northeast Field Intelligence Unit (NEFIU), in coordination with the ICE Special Agent in Charge/New York

(SAC/NY) and SAC/Newark, CBP, USCG, the New York City Police Department (NYCPD), and other state and local law enforcement groups, have established the NY/NJ Metropolitan Area Port Intelligence Center. The PIC will develop a seaport intelligence collection strategy aimed primarily at cultivating human intelligence in the maritime environment. It utilizes the intelligence resources of its members to prioritize vulnerabilities and pursue entities and individuals for potential source cultivation.

The *National Security Integration Center (NSIC)* is an Office of Investigations and Office of Intelligence joint center that assesses information, targets suspects, and supports national security investigations conducted by ICE.

*Operation Ardent Guardian* targets the illicit use of legitimate immigration channels, seeking the indicators of asylum fraud, marriage fraud, false documents, and other fraudulent means of entry.

*Extraterritorial Criminal Travel Strike Force (ECT)* is a new cooperative initiative by the ICE Office of Investigations and the Criminal Division of the Justice Department. Supported by ICE Intelligence, the targeting capabilities of ECT are designed to leverage extraterritorial investigative and prosecutorial expertise to attack foreign-based criminal networks.

*Operation Last Call* exploits the intelligence value of hundreds of thousands of individuals who enter our detention and removal system annually. This highly effective operation collects, evaluates, analyzes, and disseminates information derived from detainees in ICE custody. Customers for Operation Last Call intelligence are ICE operational units, DHS I&A, the Intelligence Community, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other Federal agencies. This program focuses on relevant collection in the areas of force protection, anti-terrorism, ongoing criminal enterprises, human trafficking and smuggling, contraband smuggling (weapons of mass destruction, drugs, etc.), threats to critical infrastructure, and the movement of money that support illicit activities.

*Project Aegis (Domestic Visa Security)* supports the ICE Visa Security program, which places ICE personnel in sensitive foreign countries to work with State Department consular officials in vetting visa applicants. The ICE Intelligence domestic program performs detailed research on the resident U.S. sponsors and contacts listed in visa applications and reports on the background and potentially suspect activities of those individuals. This program provided substantial intelligence on the Lodi, California, Pakistani community that has recently figured prominently in terrorist investigations and action.

*Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST)*, the DHS-inspired initiative that responds to the increase in border violence, is actively supported by the analytic resources of the Houston and Tucson Field Intelligence Units. In addition to the

BEST program, ICE Intelligence is working with DHS I&A on its Intelligence Campaign Plan (ICP), a border-wide security effort aimed at more efficient consolidation of relevant field-generated information.

*Operation Crystal Ball*, a joint operation involving ICE, the Office of Naval Intelligence, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and CBP, tracks suspect vessels and crewmembers and maintains historical databases to respond to queries from investigators and officers working in the maritime environment. ICE Crystal Ball analysts use electronic collection techniques and perform both classified and unclassified research to derive movement and position information. They also populate Naval Intelligence databases with large volumes of current vessel tracking data. Crystal Ball support has repeatedly resulted in drug seizures from merchant vessels and crewmembers, and continually contributes to the strategic goal of awareness in the maritime and seaport environment.

*Operation Capistrano*, a cooperative initiative with the State Department's Office of Consular Affairs, trains passport examiners to recognize indicators that may point to potential narcotics and currency smugglers. This initiative has led to 1,366 seizures and 1,300 arrests.

*Operation Roswell*, an outgrowth of Operation Capistrano, uses similar techniques to identify alien smugglers, immigration fraud violators and child sex tourism suspects. In the past two years, Operation Roswell has led to the

removal of 26 aliens, provided evidence of over 60 incidences of marriage fraud schemes, and in one significant case, yielded analysis that led to 8 arrests, 10 removals, and the dismantling of an organization that had successfully smuggled 37 foreign nationals into the United States.

*Operation Watchtower*, working in coordination with USCG and CBP, analyzes the international movements of vessels and cargoes to provide timely intelligence and risk assessment for investigative and threat detection support.

These examples are all actual ongoing activities, presently producing valuable intelligence that protects our borders. Many of these activities also directly support the Department's Secure Border Initiative. We also maintain a full-time senior liaison officer posted permanently to DHS I&A, which serves as an open conduit between ICE Intelligence and I&A.

In spite of such successful initiatives, we are not content to rest on present production and current capabilities. Business plans and performance metrics based on objective customer evaluations must support all our work. From these markers, the ICE Intelligence strategic plan proposes the development and acquisition of advanced technologies, new techniques, new processes, and additional integration into multi-agency and multi-national operations. This is our future path to a safer and more secure border and Homeland.



Thank you for the opportunity to describe some of our initiatives that support border security. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.