

**Statement of The Honorable Asa Hutchinson**  
**Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security**  
**Department of Homeland Security**  
**Before the House Committee on Government Reform**  
**Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs and the**  
**Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations**

Thank you Chairman Ose and Ranking Member Tierney, and Chairman Shays and Ranking Member Kucinich, for the opportunity to be here and discuss the Department of Homeland Security's progress in the area of consolidating and co-locating our facilities and activities to better support our mission to secure the Homeland. A very important part of this mission is support and coordination with first responders at all levels nation wide. I would also like to thank Congress, and specifically these subcommittees, for your commitment to assisting DHS in this critical area.

Earlier this year, the Department forwarded our report on plans for strategically analyzing our real property portfolio to determine where we may have opportunities to consolidate or co-locate offices in cities and areas around the country in support of our missions. I understand there is some concern that the focus of this report may have been too narrow in describing the real estate strategy. We are also currently developing a regional concept and look forward to working with the Congress as that effort progresses; however, today I look forward to addressing the issues of Section 706 of the Homeland Security Act.

Therefore, I would like to highlight our accomplishments and plans for coordinating and consolidating programmatic functions and support for the programs and for first responders. By identifying opportunities to cross train our employees, we are broadening our capability to meet the needs of the Nation.

It is important to note that the components of the Department have a long history of working with and supporting the first responders of the Nation. These relationships are still in place and viable. However, behind the scenes, we have consolidated grant programs, coordinated training activities, and streamlined our processes. We have developed ways to more effectively work together and share information within the Department, to provide an integrated approach to support responders at the state and local levels. This internal coordination was evident in the response to Hurricane Isabel, the wildfires in Southern California, and in our in response to the unrest in Haiti.

With this foundation, when first responders call on the department through the established relationships, they can expect to receive response and support from a coordinated effort that is greater than the sum of its original parts.

Some of our specific accomplishments include:

## **One Face At the Border**

As the Department of Homeland Security, we are creating, as Secretary Ridge has called it, "One Face at the Border." Within the Border and Transportation Security Directorate, we established one border agency, U. S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), for our country. In the year following its creation, CBP has made significant strides toward unification. And America is safer and its border are more secure than they were when border responsibilities were fragmented among four different entities in three different departments of government, as they were before March 1, 2003, before the creation of the Department of Homeland Security.

To create U. S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), on March 1, 2003, we took most of U.S. Customs and actually merged it with all of the immigration inspectors and Border Patrol from the former INS, and inspectors from the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. This means that for the first time in our country's history, all agencies of the United States Government with significant border responsibilities have been unified into a single federal agency responsible for managing, controlling and securing our Nation's borders.

On March 1, 2003, CBP designated one Port Director at each port of entry and put in place a single, unified chain of command. This was the first time there has ever been one person at each of our nation's ports of entry in charge of all Customs, immigration, and animal and plant health inspection services. In our seaports, the CBP Port Director works closely alongside and in full cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port. And in terms of an immediate increase in antiterrorism security, on Day One, all frontline, primary inspectors at all ports of entry into the United States were equipped with radiation detection devices. Since March 1, 2003, all inspectors have also received antiterrorism training. Customs had mandated this for all Customs inspectors in December 2001, but now it has been applied to all inspectors, including legacy immigration and agriculture inspectors at our borders.

Last year, we began rolling out unified CBP primary inspections at international airports around the country, starting with U.S. citizens and Landed Permanent Residents. Unified primary means that the CBP inspector in the booth will conduct the primary inspection for all purposes – immigration, customs, and agriculture. Originally piloted at Dulles, Houston, JFK, Newark, LAX, Atlanta, Miami, San Francisco. Unified primary is now operational at all major international airports. This a major step forward in eliminating the process of travelers potentially having to "run the gauntlet" through three separate inspection agencies. Although legacy customs and immigration inspectors have assumed interchangeable roles at the land border ports of entry for years, this is the first time unified primary has been done on a national scale at our country's airports.

Along with unified primary, we have also developed and are implementing combined anti-terrorism secondary which leverages the expertise and authorities of both legacy customs and immigration to conduct a joint secondary inspection of passengers deemed high-risk for terrorism. CBP has also begun to coordinate and consolidate our passenger analytical units – the units that identify potential high-risk travelers for inspection. Again, this brings together the

customs and immigration experience and authority to more effectively and efficiently identify and interdict individuals who pose a possible terrorist risk.

Since July 2003, we have begun rolling out a new CBP uniform and patch for all CBP inspectors at our Nation's ports of entry. It will replace the three different customs, agriculture, and immigration inspectional uniforms and patches. The new uniform and patch represent our most visible unifying symbols to the American public. The new uniform is being implemented in four phases. In the first phase, completed as of October 1, 2003, all CBP managers and supervisors converted to the new uniform. Other CBP uniformed personnel will be phased in at various points with implementation scheduled to be complete by July of this year.

All of these actions are helping us unify and become more effective as an agency. Perhaps our most significant step toward achieving "One Face at the Border," though, was announced by Secretary Ridge on September 2, 2003: the rollout of the new "CBP Officer" position. As of October, 2003, we stopped hiring and training legacy "immigration" or "customs" inspectors and began hiring and training a new group of "CBP Officers," who will be equipped to handle all CBP primary and many of the secondary inspection functions, in both the passenger and cargo environments. We are also deploying CBP Agriculture Specialists to perform more specialized agricultural inspection functions in both these environments.

It is important to note that we have also consolidated our law enforcement and investigation programs, including the recent move of the Federal Air Marshals to ICE.

### **Consolidated First Responder Grants**

As you are all aware, the Office of Domestic Preparedness is the Federal government's principal agency responsible for preparing the Nation against terrorism by assisting states, local jurisdictions, regional authorities and tribal governments prepare for, prevent, and respond to acts of terrorism. Through its programs and activities, ODP equips, trains, exercises and supports state and local homeland security personnel – the nation's first responders - who may be called upon to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive devices.

Mr. Chairman, ODP, by combining subject matter expertise, grant-making know-how, and establishing strong and long-standing ties to the nation's public safety community, has established an outstanding track record of capacity building at the state and local level. Since its creation in 1998 ODP has provided assistance to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories. Through its programs and initiatives ODP has trained 325,000 emergency responders from more than 5,000 jurisdictions and conducted more than 300 exercises. And, as of the end of Fiscal Year 2004, ODP will have provided states and localities with over \$7.1 billion in assistance and direct support.

The Fiscal Year 2005 requests includes over \$1.4 billion to continue direct assistance to the states through the Homeland Security Grant Program. As in Fiscal Year 2004, the State Homeland Security Grant program combines three ODP funding initiatives into one funding source to the states. These are the State Homeland Security Program, the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, and the Citizens Corps Program.

Combining these three programs into one, single, funding source, continues DHS' efforts to reduce the burden placed on the states by streamlining and simplifying the grant process, reduce the overall administrative costs of these programs, and to better achieve the "one-stop-shop" for federal assistance asked for by the nation's first responders. We have also moved the port security grant program to ODP.

Also included in the request is \$170 million for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program. Fiscal Year 2005 will mark the first year for which ODP has responsibility for these grants. Placement of these grants within ODP will again bring us closer to the establishment of a "one-stop-shop", and will enable states to better coordinate and identify available preparedness resources and target these resources towards homeland security needs.

Also recently consolidated within ODP is the Assistance to Firefighters, or Fire Act, Grant Program. The FY 2005 request includes \$500 million for certain provisions of the Fire Act, which will target funding towards terrorism preparedness. We continue to be committed to working with the fire service to ensure the continued success of this initiative and to ensure continued support for the nation's firefighters. I am pleased to report that the solicitation for the Fiscal year 2004 Fire Act Program opened March 1, 2004 and will close on April 2, 2004. By the end of this current fiscal year, ODP expects that over \$2 billion will have been distributed to over 15,000 fire departments since the program's inception.

Beyond the support for the nation's states and localities found in our Fiscal Year 2005 budget request, the Department is also taking steps to ensure that its staff and program offices can better support states and localities. Recently Secretary Ridge announced his intention to consolidate the Office for Domestic Preparedness with the Office for State and Local Government Coordination to form a new office – the Office for State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness.

This consolidation is in direct response to requests from the nation's first responders to provide the emergency response community with a "one-stop-shop" and one central focal point for grants, assistance, and other interactions with DHS. This consolidation will place 25 various state and local support programs and initiatives within one office to ensure simplified and coordinated administration of these programs. This consolidation will also ensure the elimination of duplication across program lines and the ability to ensure that the complementary and synergistic aspects of these programs work together to maximize their ultimate impact on states and localities. At the same time, grouping these programs under one consolidated office will ensure that the staffs, the programmatic expertise which guides these programs, are placed in a position to work together, share their expertise, and are better able to achieve the Department's single goal of better preparing the nation. Secretary Ridge's decision will enable DHS to better administer these programs by breaking down inter-department walls and exercising greater oversight. This decision will benefit states and localities by providing them a unified and better coordinated means of assistance and support.

### **National Incident Management System**

The Department has established the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Nation's first standardized management plan that creates a unified chain of command for Federal, state and local lines of government for incident response. NIMS gives all first responders the same framework for incident management and fully puts into practice the concept of, "One plan, one team, one fight!"

The efforts of dedicated professionals from state and local governments, law enforcement, the fire and emergency management communities, emergency medical services, tribal associations, public health, the private sector, public works, and non-governmental organizations across America teamed together in a collaborative effort to create NIMS. This unique system provides our Nation's first responders and authorities with the same foundation for incident management in terrorist attacks, natural disasters and other emergencies. From our Nation to our neighborhoods, America is safer.

NIMS strengthens America's response capabilities by identifying and integrating core element and best practices for all responders and incident managers. By establishing a balance between flexibility and standardization, and with the use of common doctrine, terminology, concepts, principles and processes, execution during real incidents will be consistent and seamless. Responders will be able to focus on the response, instead of organizing the response. Teamwork and assignments will be clearly enhanced.

Key elements of NIMS include:

- Incident Command System (ICS)
- Preparedness planning, training, exercises, qualifications, and certifications
- Communications and information management process and systems
- Joint Information System for public communications

In addition, we are establishing the NIMS Integration Center to serve a focal point for first responders to ensure that NIMS remains an accurate and effective management tool. This Integration Center will assess proposed changes to NIMS capture and evaluate lessons learned, and employ best practices from first responders. It will provide the strategic direction and oversight of the NIMS, including developing and facilitating national standards for NIMS education and training, first responder communications and equipment, and qualifications and credentialing of incident management and first responder personnel. The integration center will continue to use the collaborative process of Federal, state, tribal, local and private authorities to assess prospective changes and assure continuity and accuracy.

### **Strategic Facilities Planning**

The Department continues to develop a strategic real estate and facilities management plan focused on creating a more flexible, effective, efficient and mission-enabling portfolio. A first step will be a high-level analysis to establish a baseline of infrastructure and assets for further study. As we reported, this analysis will incorporate, where applicable, the findings and recommendations of previous and ongoing studies and analyses. The resulting recommendations

will focus the strategic planning process and drive a “closer look” at selected components to better understand the potential opportunities, as well as the implementation efforts required to realize the anticipated benefits.

We have already started to co-locate functions related to some of the activities mentioned, especially related to the “one face at the border” actions, where we have been able to make more efficient use of current building inventories.

We expect to be able to make more efficient use of space in many locations across the country, but will still need to maintain many mission related facilities, especially along the borders.

We will be looking very closely at our warehouse locations, where support for first responders and disaster victims are staged to determine how we can strategically place them as a combined asset of the Department where they can provide the most timely and effective support.

### **Closing**

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee again for the opportunity to appear before you here today and assure you that the Department and I are committed to achieving the goals we have established. We have already made great progress under challenging circumstances. Now, with a strong, growing and motivated staff and the continued support of DHS leadership, OMB and Congress, I am confident we will realize even greater progress in this, our second year of the Department.

I would now be happy to answer any questions you may have.