



Secretary Napolitano Announces Major Southwest Border Security Initiative

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano announced today several Southwest border initiatives designed to crack down on Mexican drug cartels through enhanced border security. The plan calls for additional personnel, increased intelligence capability and better coordination with state, local and Mexican law enforcement authorities.

"This issue requires immediate action," said Secretary Napolitano. "We are guided by two very clear objectives. First, we are going to do everything we can to prevent the violence in Mexico from spilling over across the border. And second, we will do all in our power to help President Calderón crack down on these drug cartels in Mexico."

The announcements reflect an emphasis on information sharing and integration with state and local law enforcement agencies, as well as an effort to further engage Mexican authorities. With violence escalating across the border, Secretary Napolitano will increase personnel and improve screening and technology to help Mexico target illegal guns, drugs and cash.

In addition, DHS will initiate strategic redeployments totaling more than 360 additional officers and agents at the border and in Mexico. Costs across the board, totaling up to \$184 million, will be revenue neutral, funded by realigning from less urgent activities, fund balances, and, in some cases, reprogramming.

DHS will double assignments to ICE's Border Enforcement Security Task Forces (BEST), from 95 to 190, at a cost of \$5.7 million; triple the number of intelligence analysts working at the border, at a cost of \$3.3 million; and increase ICE Attaché personnel, agents working in troubled areas in Mexico such as Ciudad Juarez and Hermosillo, by 50 percent, from 24 to 36 agents, at a cost of \$650,000. The ICE Attaché in Mexico City seized more than \$25 million in U.S. currency since fiscal year 2008 through a partnership with CBP called Operation Firewall.

In addition, Secretary Napolitano announced that ICE will double agents assigned to Criminal Alien Program Violent Criminal Alien Sections, located in the five Southwest border field offices, adding 50 agents and officers, at a cost of \$2.3 million; and quadruple the number of agents designated as Border Liaison Officers, who work to create cooperative relationships between U.S. and Mexican law enforcement authorities, from 10 to 40, at no cost.

DHS will also send new technology to the border, bolstering Secure Communities biometric identification deployment at locations at the highest risk for violence committed by criminal aliens, at a cost of \$95 million, and implementing 100 percent southbound rail screening using non-intrusive inspection equipment to detect anomalies in rail cars.

Furthermore, CBP will enhance resources at ports of entry, moving more Z-Backscatter mobile X-ray units, used to help identify anomalies in passenger vehicles, to the Southwest border. CBP is deploying 100 Border Patrol agents to augment outbound inspections at ports of entry, where they will implement more high-tech screening devices, 12 new deployments of teams of "cross-trained" canines that can detect both weapons and currency, and eight additional Law Enforcement Tactical Centers—hubs of information sharing between CBP and local enforcers.

Upgraded License Plate Readers, which help identify suspected smugglers' vehicles, will be installed on 52 out of 110 outbound lanes, at a cost of \$13 million total. In addition, three Mobile Response Teams of 25 CBP Officers each will be deployed to the Southwest border. And up to \$59 million in remaining fiscal years 2006-08 Operation Stonegarden funding will be made available to enhance state, local and tribal law enforcement operations and assets along the border.

In recent weeks, Secretary Napolitano has made outreach to state and local law enforcement authorities on the Southwest border a major priority. Assistant Secretary for State and Local Law Enforcement Ted Sexton is currently visiting border communities to meet with chiefs of police and sheriffs. DHS is also holding bi-monthly classified conference calls with local authorities to share intelligence.

In addition, CBP and ICE officials have seen significant success in confiscating illegal weapons and cash headed Southbound at the Southwest border. On Friday, CBP officers at Lincoln-Juarez International Bridge in Laredo, Texas, seized nearly \$3 million in U.S. currency hidden in a bus. Operation Armas Cuzadas seized 997 firearms at or near the border during March 7-13. In total, that operation has captured more than \$4.5 million over nine weeks.

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