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## DHS Agencies Unveil Results of Unprecedented, Multi-Agency Effort to Secure Border in Arizona

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**Tucson, Ariz.** — U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Alan Bersin, Tucson Sector Border Patrol Chief Randy Hill, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agent in Charge for Arizona Matthew Allen today announced results to date from the Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats (ACTT)—a collaborative enforcement effort put in place in September 2009 that leverages the capabilities and resources of over 60 federal, state, local and tribal agencies in Arizona and the government of Mexico to combat individuals and criminal organizations that pose a threat to communities on both sides of the border.

*click for hi-res*



Bundles of marijuana interdicted by Border Patrol agents near Tucson, Ariz.

“ACTT is one of the many examples of the ways in which DHS is working side-by-side with the law enforcement agencies that have a stake in strengthening border security and improving the quality of life of affected communities,” said Commissioner Bersin. “This alliance is significantly strengthening border security enforcement across federal, state, tribal and local jurisdictions, and will continue to do so for years to come.”

Since its inception, ACTT has resulted in:

- The seizure of more than 1.6 million lbs. of marijuana, 3,800 lbs. of cocaine, and 1,000 lbs. of methamphetamine;
- The seizure of more than \$13 million in undeclared U.S. currency and 268 weapons;
- Nearly 14,000 aliens denied entry to the U.S. at Arizona ports of entry due to criminal background or other disqualifying factors; and
- Approximately 270,000 apprehensions between ports of entry;

“The scope and complexity of criminal smuggling organizations operating along the Arizona/Mexico border requires a united front from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies,” said ICE Special Agent in Charge Allen. “ICE is proud to participate in this unprecedented effort to secure the Arizona-Sonora corridor and bring a smart and effective approach to border security.”

Since launching the Southwest Border Initiative in March 2009, the Obama administration has

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engaged in an unprecedented effort to bring focus and intensity to Southwest border security, coupled with a reinvigorated, smart and effective approach to enforcing immigration laws in the interior of our country.

The Border Patrol is better staffed than at any time in its history, having doubled the number of agents from approximately 10,000 in 2004 to more than 20,700 in 2010. Further, DHS has doubled the number of ICE personnel assigned to Border Enforcement Security Task Forces; increased the number of intelligence analysts working along the U.S.-Mexico border; quintupled deployments of Border Liaison Officers; deployed thousands of technology assets – including mobile surveillance units, thermal imaging systems, and large-and small-scale non-intrusive inspection equipment – at and between the ports of entry; and begun screening of southbound rail and vehicle traffic for the illegal weapons and cash that are helping to fuel the cartel violence in Mexico.

These investments have also produced significant results. Border Patrol apprehensions—a key indicator of illegal immigration—have decreased 36 percent in the last two years and are less than half of what they were at their peak; violent crime in border communities has remained flat or fallen in the past decade; and statistics have shown that some of the safest communities in America are along the border. In addition, in fiscal years 2009 and 2010, CBP and ICE seized more than \$282 million in illegal currency, more than 7 million pounds of drugs, and more than 6,800 weapons along the entire southwest border – increases of more than \$73 million, more than 1 million pounds of drugs and more than 1,500 weapons compared to 2007-2008.

In the coming months, DHS will continue to deploy additional resources to the Southwest border, including two new forward operating bases to improve coordination of border activities, improved tactical communications systems and 1,000 new Border Patrol Agents, funded through the Emergency Supplemental for Border Security passed and signed into law in August 2010.

*U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.*

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