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BEFORE
THE SENATE COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
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REGARDING
"THE STATE OF THE U.S. TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY"

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Good morning Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Dorgan, distinguished Member of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to be here today to discuss how the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is moving forward on programs that will provide traveler facilitation while still providing the level of security required to protect the United States. This is an enormous challenge. We have over 7,000 miles of shared borders with Canada and Mexico, 325 official ports of entry, and each day DHS Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers must inspect more than 1.1 million passengers and pedestrians. However, last year alone, CBP welcomed over 431 million travelers through official ports of entry. During fiscal year 2005, CBP processed a record 86 million air passengers arriving from abroad, the first year that the number of air passengers has exceeded pre-9/11 levels.

CBP is charged with the management, control, and protection of our Nation's borders, both at and between the official ports of entry. As America's frontline border agency, CBP employs highly trained and professional personnel,

resources, expertise and law enforcement authorities to discharge our priority mission of preventing terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States. Carrying out our extraordinarily important mission entails not only improving security at and between our ports of entry along the entire length of our land and maritime borders, but also extending our zone of security beyond our physical borders.

CBP has implemented a “smart border” strategy to provide security and enforce U.S. laws both at and between ports of entry, as well as extending our security zone beyond our own borders. This strategy uses advance, electronic information and an automated risk management system that identifies and targets high-risk cargo and people well before arrival in the United States. CBP has also initiated partnerships with other governments and the private sector trade community, and created trusted, vetted traveler programs, to identify low-risk cargo and people and allow them to quickly pass through the border, thereby freeing up CBP resources to focus on unknown, higher-risk traffic. At the ports of entry, CBP uses sophisticated detection technology to rapidly screen high-risk cargo for weapons, radiation, and other contraband. All CBP officers receive antiterrorism training to better enable them to recognize, identify, and interdict individuals who pose a terrorist risk.

The standardization of travel documents is a critical step in securing our Nation's borders. Currently, there are thousands of different documents that a traveler can present to CBP officers when attempting to enter the United States, creating a tremendous potential for fraud. Standardized documents will also

eliminate the time-consuming, manual process of reviewing and validating a host of distinct, and sometimes illegible and unverifiable, birth certificates and other identity documents. Having standardized documents will enable automated reading and vetting of the information, which will also be essential to increased traveler facilitation

In fiscal year 2005, over 84,000 individuals were apprehended at the ports of entry trying to cross the border with fraudulent claims of citizenship or documents. Moreover, on an average day, CBP intercepts more than 200 fraudulent documents, arrests over sixty people at ports of entry, and refuses entry to hundreds of non-citizens, a few dozen of which are criminal aliens that are attempting to enter the United States.

On March 23, 2005 in Waco, TX, President Bush, along with Canadian Prime Minister Martin and Mexican President Fox, unveiled the Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America (SPP), a blueprint for a safer and more prosperous continent. The Leaders agreed on an ambitious security and prosperity agenda, which will keep our borders closed to terrorists and open to trade. The three leaders established ministerial-level Security and Prosperity working groups. Secretary Chertoff chairs the security agenda while Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez, chairs the prosperity agenda.

The Leaders met again this year on March 31 in Cancun to review progress and renew commitment to enhance the security, prosperity, and quality of life of the citizens within North America. The leaders announced the creation of a North American Competitiveness Council (NACC). The Council will be made

up of members of the private sector from each country who will meet annually with security and prosperity Ministers and will engage with senior government officials on an ongoing basis. CBP looks forward to its role in working with the NACC.

As part of a layered approach to border security, CBP employs a host of programs. CBP's existing "trusted traveler" programs are also being evaluated for expanded use at our land borders. These include the Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI), Free and Secure Trade (FAST), and NEXUS programs. These programs facilitate the crossing of low-risk, frequent travelers and commercial truck drivers at the land borders through exclusive, dedicated lanes. To enroll in these programs, travelers must provide proof of citizenship, a Border Crossing Card (BCC) or other visa, if required, as well as other identity documentation, such as a driver's license or ID card. An intensive background check against law enforcement databases and terrorist indices is required, and includes fingerprint checks and a personal interview with a CBP officer. To date, approximately 225,000 SENTRI, NEXUS, and FAST cards have been issued. Over the next few months, we expect to increase the number of locations at which they can be used. These programs are implemented in partnership with the governments of Canada and Mexico, and many citizens of these countries participate in the programs.

At the center of our targeting efforts is CBP's National Targeting Center (NTC), where CBP personnel use the Automated Targeting System (ATS) to analyze advance information about passengers before they arrive in the United

States. The NTC employs sophisticated risk assessment rules and algorithms based upon strategic intelligence about terrorist threat, and incorporates data from numerous national intelligence and law enforcement databases, to screen all passengers traveling to the United States for potential terrorist connections or terrorist risk factors.

CBP collects biometrics on certain non-U.S. citizens at primary in air and sea ports and at secondary in land ports and, through the US-VISIT system, checks the individual against a fingerprint-based watchlist of known or suspected terrorist, wants and warrants, immigration violations, and other criminal history information as well as to determine whether the person is the same one previously encountered by DHS or State. The US-VISIT Program has substantially added to CBP's screening capabilities without impacting CBP's ability to process travelers in a timely fashion. At the ports of entry, CBP's Counter-Terrorism Response Unit can conduct intensive questioning and inspection, search, and interview of individuals. CBP has developed clear and comprehensive policies for responding when we encounter a terrorist-watch listed individual or suspected terrorist.

In partnership with the private sector and State and local governments, DHS and the Department of State have introduced a pilot "model airport" program to ensure a more welcoming environment for foreign visitors. The pilot projects at the Houston and Dulles airports entail such features as customized video messages for the public with practical information about the entry process, improved screening and efficient movement of people through the border entry

process, and assistance for foreign travelers once they have been admitted to the United States.

The Immigration Advisory Program (IAP) extends our zone of security outward by screening overseas passengers before they board aircraft destined for the United States. IAP teams identify high risk and terrorist watch listed passengers using the Automated Targeting System in CBP's National Targeting Center, and advise the airline whether the passenger will be admissible to the United States upon arrival.

The Carrier Liaison Program (CLP) was developed to enhance border security by increasing commercial carrier effectiveness in identifying improperly documented passengers destined to the United States. The primary method for accomplishing this mission is by providing technical assistance and training to carrier staff. Technical assistance includes publication and distribution of information guides, document fraud summaries and alerts. In addition, CBP is developing the 24/7 Carrier Response Center phone line that provides real-time entry requirements and document validity advice to carrier staff worldwide. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Forensic Document Laboratory (FDL) supports CLP in multiple ways, to include providing FDL Document Alerts to the CLP for distribution to airline personnel.

The CLP provides training on U.S. entry requirements, passenger assessment, fraudulent document detection and imposter identification using state of the art document examination material, equipment and training tools. Training is customized to meet the needs of specific carriers or locations based

on performance analysis or emergent circumstances. Training is delivered at U.S. ports of entry and at airports abroad by experienced CLP officers. CLP officers also assist carriers to develop and implement strategies to reduce travel document abuse.

In January 2005, CBP created the Fraudulent Document Analysis Unit (FDAU) to collect documents, provide the ports with analysis of document trends and intelligence information, and to target persons being smuggled into the United States using fraudulent documents. By the end of December 2005, the FDAU received 40,875 fraudulent documents confiscated at ports of entry and mail facilities. Working with the FDAU, CBP will increase this number in the future.

As you are aware, Avian Influenza, or 'bird flu,' is a highly contagious viral infection that has the potential to threaten our economy and the public health. The goals of the federal government's response to a potential pandemic are to stop, slow, or otherwise limit the spread of a pandemic to the United States and to sustain our infrastructure and mitigate the impact to our economy. CBP must be prepared to maintain essential services, mitigate against the spread and consequences of a pandemic, and protect our workforce and the public. CBP is working with our DHS partner agencies, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to develop an effective strategy for entry/exit procedures and travel restrictions during a pandemic.

CBP officers are committed to the highest standards of professional conduct. We want to assist the millions of legitimate travelers who pose little or

no threat, in gaining proper entry into the U.S., both safely and efficiently. As part of this effort, CBP recently implemented a campaign to educate travelers. Here are some of the best pieces of advice CBP can provide to travelers to help them have a safe, efficient and enjoyable trip abroad:

Declare everything you are bringing in from abroad, even if you bought it in a duty-free shop. All passengers arriving on a plane must complete a CBP declaration form. This declaration prevents the unintentional introduction of prohibited items, such as fruits and food products that could introduce devastating diseases and pests into the United States, and severely damage U.S. agriculture. If items purchased abroad are intended for personal use or as gifts, they are eligible for duty exemptions. If they are intended for resale, they are not. If any duty is owed, a CBP officer will assist you in paying that duty.

Many travelers look forward to bringing home special food items from abroad. However, it is important to "know before you go" which items can and cannot be brought into the United States from abroad. Every food product, fruit and vegetable *must* be declared to a CBP officer, and must be presented for inspection. It is important to remember that the rules and regulations are in place to protect the American economy, plant and animal wildlife, and the health of the American people.

Member of the Subcommittee, I have outlined a broad array of initiatives today that, with your assistance will help CBP continue to protect America from terrorist threat while fulfilling our other important traditional missions. But our work is not complete. With the continued support of the Congress, CBP will

succeed in meeting the challenges posed by the ongoing terrorist threat and the need to facilitate ever-increasing number of legitimate shipments and travelers.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.