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CBP On the Hill: Hearings Highlight CBP's Complex and Critical Mission



CBP Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske testifies at a Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing in Phoenix, AZ, on November 23, 2015.

Recent congressional hearings highlight the complexity of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) broad and critical mission, as guided by CBP's [Vision and Strategy 2020](#), to combat the threats of terrorism and transnational crime, and safeguard our economy by enabling lawful trade and travel.

Countering Terrorism and Transnational Crime

As America's unified border agency, CBP's top priority is to keep terrorists and their weapons from entering the United States. In October 2015, CBP's Office of Field Operations (OFO) Assistant Commissioner Todd Owen testified at a House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing to discuss CBP's role in [securing cargo](#) and preventing the arrival of radiological weapons at our Nation's [ports](#). In December, OFO Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Wagner testified about how CBP secures international travel from the threat of terrorists in a Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Roundtable focused on strengthening the [Visa Waiver Program](#).



Advancing Comprehensive Border Security and Management

On a typical day, as part of its mission to protect the public from the entry of dangerous people and materials, CBP seizes nearly 6 tons of illicit drugs. The use and availability of heroin and other opioids have been increasing at an alarming rate. This past fall, [CBP Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske](#) participated in two field hearings, in New Hampshire and Arizona, to discuss CBP's efforts in interdicting dangerous drugs at the border.

CBP's border security mission transcends multiple and diverse border environments across the air, land, and sea. In July, Air and Marine Operations (AMO) Assistant Commissioner Randolph Alles testified in two hearings to discuss how AMO lends critical [aeronautical and maritime capabilities](#) and cohesion to an array of border security and maritime law enforcement efforts.



Border security threats are dynamic. To enhance integrated approaches to current and evolving threats, CBP collaborates with our partners to develop a comprehensive understanding of the threat environment and expand the use of risk-informed strategies. In September, Robert Harris, Director of the DHS [Joint Task Force-West](#), testified before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on border violence and protecting personnel.



Enhancing U.S. Economic Competitiveness by Enabling Lawful Trade and Travel

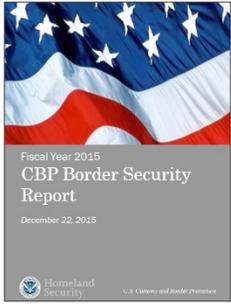
CBP is not only responsible for keeping dangerous people and goods from crossing the border, but also for ensuring the efficient movement of lawful trade and travel that is so critical to our Nation's economic growth and prosperity. In November, OFO Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Wagner testified at a House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, hearing on CBP's [Public-Private Partnerships](#), a key component of CBP's [Resource Optimization Strategy](#) to support increasing volumes of trade and travel.



Promoting Organizational Integration, Innovation, and Agility

CBP's [frontline law enforcement and mission critical personnel](#) are our greatest resource and essential to maintaining our security and facilitation mandates. Rigorous [hiring processes and suitability standards](#) and remote duty locations complicate CBP's efforts to recruit and retain frontline personnel. In October, Office of Human Resources Management Assistant Commissioner Linda Jacksta testified at a Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management, hearing focused on the impact of limited pay flexibilities on federal workforce hiring and retention.

Additional information and [written testimony](#) is available on the [CBP Website](#). For additional information, please contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



FY 2015 Border Security Report

On December 22, 2015, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) published a [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2015 Border Security Report](#). The report summarizes CBP's FY 2015 border enforcement efforts and reflects CBP's focus on transparency and building partnerships to secure a 21st Century border against a variety of threats and adversaries.

The Nation's long-term investment in border security has produced significant and positive results at and [between ports of entry](#). Illegal

migration, as defined by total Border Patrol apprehensions, continues to reflect an overall decline compared to the peak in 2000. In FY 2015, Border Patrol nationwide apprehensions totaled 337,117, compared to 486,651 in FY 2014. This represents a 30 percent decline in total apprehensions compared to FY 2014.

[At ports of entry](#) in FY 2015, CBP officers arrested 8,246 individuals wanted for serious crimes. Officers also stopped 225,342 inadmissible aliens from entering the United States through ports of entry, an increase of 14 percent from FY 2014. Grounds of inadmissibility included immigration violations, criminal and other violations, and national security reasons.

In FY 2015, CBP continued its efforts to interdict individuals in the [air and maritime environments](#) through its Air and Marine Operations (AMO). Air and Marine agents contributed to the apprehension of 51,130 individuals by Border Patrol, and 4,485 criminal arrests by agents in conjunction with other law enforcement partners.

CBP officers and agents also played a critical counter-narcotics role, resulting in the seizure or disruption of more than 3.3 million pounds of narcotics in FY 2015. In addition, the agency seized more than \$129 million in unreported currency through targeted enforcement operations.

CBP maintains border security through significant investments in advanced technology, such as CBP's eight [Tethered Aerostat Radar Systems](#) (TARS), which form a network of long-range radars deployed on the border. The TARS can identify and monitor low-altitude aircraft and vessels at a distance of 200 miles, increasing domain awareness and providing CBP personnel with critical additional time to assess and respond to possible incursions. The system recorded more than 335 suspected cross-border attempts in FY 2015, about 40 percent of all border-related radar detections.

In FY 2015, CBP continued its commitment to increased transparency and accountability by implementing a unified, formal review process for use-of-force incidents, conducting a feasibility study on the use of [body-worn cameras](#) in each of CBP's operational environments, and releasing [FY 2015 use-of-force data](#), which reflects a 26 percent decline over FY 2014.

CBP's efforts in FY 2015 reflect its continued commitment to border security, while ensuring increased transparency and accountability. The men and women of CBP serving on the frontlines are dedicated to protecting our Nation's security, while facilitating trade and travel that are vital to our economic prosperity.

The full report and additional statistics, including [unaccompanied children statistics](#), are available on the [CBP Website](#). For additional information, please contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

CBP Disrupts Maritime Drug Transfer



Air and Marine agents with U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) [Air and Marine Operations](#) (AMO), recently

seized two vessels, almost a ton of marijuana, and arrested four suspects when they interrupted an at-sea drug transfer near San Clemente Island.

In the evening of December 2, 2015, AMO agents on patrol in a [Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft](#), spotted a northbound pleasure craft in Mexican waters running with no lights. Agents monitored the vessel until it crossed the international border and then guided other agents, operating a [Midnight Express](#) pursuit boat, to its location.

Agents covertly followed the suspect vessel for several hours when they located a second pleasure craft about 18 miles east of San Clemente Island also not operating their running lights. Agents observed the crews of these vessels meet and begin passing cargo from the first vessel to the second. AMO agents stealthily closed-in on the vessels to conduct a boarding inspection, where they discovered and removed 1,788 pounds of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$1,072,000.



AMO's specialized law enforcement capabilities allow AMO to make significant contributions to CBP border security efforts. AMO uses its sophisticated fleets to detect, sort, intercept, track and apprehend criminals in diverse environments at and beyond U.S. borders.

The full story is available on the [CBP Website](#). For additional information, please contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



Training the Largest Law Enforcement Air Force

Frontline, CBP's official magazine, recently featured the CBP National Air Training Center in Oklahoma City, where new aviators learn the tactics and procedures that will shape their careers and where

seasoned flyers return to keep those skills sharp. The full story is available on the [CBP Website](#).



Global Entry On-Site Enrollment

On December 8 and 9, 2015, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) hosted a Global Entry Mobile Enrollment Event on the Hill exclusively for Members of Congress and their staff. [Global Entry](#) is a CBP [Trusted Traveler Program](#) that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States. During the event, CBP enrolled approximately 180 Members of Congress and staff in the Global Entry program.

Were you unable to attend this event? CBP operates a Global Entry [enrollment center](#) in the Ronald Reagan Building at 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC, and at locations across the country. For more information on how to [apply for Global Entry](#), please visit the [CBP Website](#) or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

The Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) serves as the single point of contact within CBP for communications between CBP and Congress.

OCA is committed to addressing any question or concern you may have related to CBP's complex mission. Please contact us:

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Please visit CBP's [Congressional Resources](#) webpage for Frequently Asked Questions, News and Events, and other CBP Resources.