



# Department of Justice

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**STATEMENT OF**

**KEVIN L. PERKINS  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

**BEFORE THE**

**AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, LOCAL, AND PRIVATE SECTOR  
PREPAREDNESS AND INTEGRATION  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ENTITLED**

**“NEW BORDER WAR: CORRUPTION OF U.S. OFFICIALS BY DRUG  
CARTELS”**

**PRESENTED**

**MARCH 11, 2010**

**Statement of Kevin L. Perkins**  
**Assistant Director, Criminal Investigative Division**  
**Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
**Before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Ad Hoc Subcommittee on**  
**State, Local, and Private Sector Preparedness and Integration**  
**March 11, 2010**

Good morning Chairman Pryor, Ranking Member Ensign, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the FBI's efforts to combat public corruption.

The FBI recognizes that fighting public corruption is vital to preserving our democracy, protecting our borders, and securing our communities. In fact, it is one of our top investigative priorities, along with counter-terrorism, counter-intelligence, and cyber crimes. Whether in the back of a squad car, at a border crossing, in a courtroom, or within the halls of Congress, our public officials must carry out their duties in a just and legal manner.

We are directing resources to root out public corruption across the country, but we cannot and, fortunately, do not, do it alone. We rely heavily on our partners at all levels of law enforcement. To address this particular threat, the FBI continues to focus on areas where our involvement will have a substantial and lasting impact and where the FBI has a specific skill or expertise that will contribute to the success of the operation or investigation. Often times we bring our expertise to bear on joint investigations with our partners in federal, state and local law enforcement. We stand shoulder to shoulder to combat corrupt officials, both operationally, and through the sharing of vital intelligence.

Through our vigilance, we have achieved some notable successes. In the past two years alone, our efforts have helped convict 1,600 federal, state, and local officials. We have another 3,200 public corruption cases pending, approximately 2,500 of which involve corruption of public officials. But more remains to be done. Because the interests at stake are so important and the magnitude of the problem so great, we have deployed approximately 700 agents to fight corruption around the country.

The Southwest border is a particular focus of our corruption-fighting efforts. Of the 700 agents leading our charge against public corruption, approximately 120 are working along the Southwest border. We coordinate our investigative efforts along the borders with the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG), Customs and Border Protection Internal Affairs (CBP-IA), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Professional Responsibility. The result is over 400 public corruption cases originating from that region. In fiscal year (FY) 2009, there were over 100 arrests and over 130 state and federal cases prosecuted.

Our twelve border corruption task forces along the Southwest border share information with the Southwest Intelligence Group (SWIG), the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), and

Mexican Legal Attaches to both identify and disrupt Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) from utilizing and soliciting United States public officials to commit criminal activities.

Stronger cooperation with the governments of Mexico and countries in Central America is an interagency goal of the United States government and one that we are working hard to realize. Most recently, the FBI's McAllen office hosted 30 Mexican police officers from all levels of law enforcement — local, state and federal — for a week of training and information sharing. The Mexican American Liaison and Law Enforcement Training, or MALLET, is a week-long program, featuring modules in ethics, firearms and various investigative techniques to build law enforcement contacts with the Mexican government and foster international cooperation generally.

One particular case highlights the potential national security implications of public corruption along our nation's borders. In that case, an individual gained employment as a border inspector for the specific purpose of trafficking in drugs. Through our collaborative efforts and a year-long investigation, this former public official pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to import more than 1000 kilograms of marijuana into the United States and received more than \$5 Million in bribe payments. This individual has since been sentenced to 22 years in prison.

In another extensive undercover investigation, the FBI and its partners netted corrupt officials from 12 different federal, state, and local government agencies who allegedly used their positions to traffic in drugs. To date, 84 of those subjects have pled guilty to related charges.

While the threat posed in the region is real, the Southwest border is not and should not remain the only focus of our efforts. As with other criminal priorities, the FBI utilizes a threat-based intelligence-driven proactive approach to combating all criminal enterprise. Through information sharing, collaboration, and coordination, we are able to identify and address threats early on.

The FBI recognizes the very real threat public corruption at our nation's borders and all other ports of entry pose. We are working lock-step with our law enforcement partners to address that threat. At FBI Headquarters, for example, we have established the National Border Corruption Task Force. Consisting of representatives from the FBI, DHS OIG, U.S. Customs and Border Protection- Internal Affairs, and TSA, this task force ensures general guidance and oversight of border corruption programs across the country.

Each day, the federal government is charged with protecting over 7,000 miles of land bordering Canada and Mexico, 95,000 miles of U.S. shoreline and over 300 ports of entry across the United States. Each of these entry points has the potential for criminal and/or terrorist organizations to exploit corrupt officials willing to misuse their official positions for financial and/or personal gain.

In July 2008, for example, the FBI and DEA supported Canadian law enforcement in the arrest of eight people, including a customs agent, suspected of smuggling cocaine and marijuana, contraband cigarettes and illegal immigrants over the Quebec-New York border. This underground network reportedly ferried hundreds of kilograms of cocaine from Colombia into

Canada via the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle border crossing. This is one of many investigations along our northern border.

In fact, in FY 2009 alone, FBI field offices along the nation's Canadian border conducted nearly 300 public corruption investigations. A corrupt border official might think that a bribe is sufficient payment for allowing a carload of drugs through the nation's borders. The ultimate cost, however, might be significantly higher if that carload includes members of a terrorist cell or ingredients for a weapon of mass destruction.

Through trend analysis, intelligence and information sharing, and the utilization of lessons learned and best practices, we are uniquely positioned to address the very real threat of border corruption and the risk it poses to our national security head-on.

To that end, our National Border Corruption Task Force is coordinating with other impacted divisions at FBI Headquarters. These include the FBI's Directorate of Intelligence (DI), Counterintelligence Division (CD), Counterterrorism Division (CTD), and Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate (WMDD). By working together, sharing information, and becoming more nimble in our approach, we are making great strides.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today and share the FBI's work in combating public corruption. I am now happy to answer any questions.