

**Remarks by Rob Bonner\***  
**Introduction of CBP Commissioner W. Ralph Basham**  
**Center for Strategic and International Studies**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**July 11, 2007**

Thank you, Arnaud. [*Arnaud de Borchgrave, CSIS Director, Transnational Threats*]

It's good to be here at CSIS, and to have this opportunity to introduce **Commissioner Basham**. I also appreciate the opportunity, albeit now as a former Commissioner, to weigh in on port and cargo security and some of the important issues that consumed my time and energies when I was here in Washington.

Some of you may remember that it was right here at CSIS—in this very room—that I proposed the Container Security Initiative back in January 2002.

This morning, Commissioner Basham and I will discuss — among other things — "port security." I saw a cartoon in a recent issue of the ***New Yorker*** that seems appropriate to this occasion.

*[Visual #1: New Yorker Cartoon]*

Well, some may think that, like Snoopy's psychiatrist, I am "obsessing" about port security, but let me assure you, I'm not. **Not** when you consider the threat posed by Al Qaeda. **Not** when we contemplate the events in London and Glasgow just two weeks ago, and the threats to JFK and to Ft. Dix earlier this summer.

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\* Mr. Bonner reserves the right to extemporaneously modify his remarks when he delivers them. Accordingly, this text is not a verbatim account of his actual, as given remarks.

We need to realize that the threat posed by Al Qaeda— by fundamental Islamic extremism—is not just going to go away. Britain's new Prime Minister, **Gordon Brown**, was right when he said recently:

**“The threat posed by Al Qaeda "is a long-term threat. It's not going to go away in the next few weeks or months ...”**

We need to realize this here in America. We must not become complacent or engage in denial, because no amount of wishful thinking will make Al Qaeda go away.

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In my view, there need to be three (3) elements to our core strategy against Global terrorism, Islamist Jihadi extremists:

**First**, we must continue with the attack against them—the offense.

But **second** and simultaneously, we must prevent them from using asymmetrical warfare against us – by attacking us here at home.

And **third**, we must start defusing the hatred toward America and the West by separating the vast majority of moderate and tolerant Muslims from the relatively few jihadi extremists who support and practice violence and kill innocent civilians in a hideous perversion of one of the world's great religions.

Al Qaeda and its brand of Islamic terrorist extremism are why we must protect our ports and our supply chains and our economy, and the economies of all those many nations of the world that are our trading partners.

### ***[Visual #2: Ground Zero]***

This photo was taken on September 12, 2001 – from a U.S. Customs Blackhawk helicopter. This is where the North Tower stood. And the South Tower. Little noticed was that U.S. Customs was struck on 9/11. This building at 6 WTC was the U.S. Customs House in New York. 800 Customs employees had worked there.

Some of you know that I went to Ground Zero the day after I was sworn in as Commissioner in September 2001. The memory of Ground Zero and the Customs House, or what was left of it, will stay with me forever.

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***[ Visual #3 - Port of Seattle ]***

Regarding port security, there has been much discussion and a fair amount of grant funding to improve the physical security of our seaports. And while the physical security of our ports is important – the perimeter fencing and access – the greatest vulnerability and the greatest risk to our ports comes from what moves from abroad to – and through – them.

That's the Port of Seattle. As you can see, some of the container terminals are within a stone's throw of downtown Seattle. Of course, all of our major seaports are located in the midst of some of our largest urban areas.

***[ Visual #4 - Container Ship ]***

Since **Malcolm McLean's** idea of a standardized container some **60** years ago, almost all goods now arrive at our seaports in containers...what I have called the potential Trojan Horse of global terrorists.

Right after 9/11, the question arose: how to protect against concealment of a terrorist weapon, including, for example, a nuclear or radiological weapon, like a dirty bomb—or even concealment of terrorists in one of the **11 million** cargo containers unloaded at our seaports annually.

The policy was immediately clear:

(1) Prevent concealment of terrorists' weapons, (2) but do so without choking off the flow of trade, without crippling our economy. The first component – the prevention component – is part of the mission of preventing asymmetrical attacks in our homeland. It is intended to

prevent global terrorists from wafting a missile in the form of a container right onto the docks of one of our major ports. The two components, taken together, are what I referred to as the "Twin Goals" of our policy.

To effectuate that policy required a strategy -- a maritime cargo security strategy, if you will—and initiatives or programs to implement the strategy, and to achieve the policy goal.

The strategy that Customs, now CBP, implemented is one that extends our borders...that extends our zone of security outward, beyond our ports of entry. It is a strategy that obtains electronic information in advance, well before cargo containers reach our shores ... and that uses risk management principles to evaluate all those containers for risk of terrorism even before they leave foreign ports for our shores.

Ours is a strategy that partners with the private sector (C-TPAT) to secure their supply chains all the way back to their foreign suppliers' loading docks...and one that partners with foreign countries (CSI) to inspect high-risk containers bound for the U.S. before they leave foreign ports.

The initiatives or programs to implement this multi-layered cargo security strategy are:

- (1) The 24 Hour and Trade Act rules;
- (2) The CBP's National Targeting Center and its Automated Targeting System;
- (3) Use of NII. That is, sophisticated x-ray screening and radiation detection technology;
- (4) The Container Security Initiative; and
- (5) The Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, or CTPAT.

These are interrelated and interlocking programs.

One of the ideas of C-TPAT was that our trusted, private sector partners, major US importers, would adopt C-TPAT security criteria and best practices and that they would require their foreign suppliers to follow measures that vastly improve security at point of origin, at point of stuffing.

Our C-TPAT importers require C-TPAT security criteria in their purchase orders and supplier agreements and they monitor compliance. They don't do business with foreign suppliers who did not implement C-TPAT security requirements at the point of origin – the stuffing a container. And CBP goes overseas and "validates" or verifies that C-TPAT partners have, in fact, taken the steps to secure their supply chains.

But C-TPAT also contemplated a "Smart Box" – that when "smart box" technology—a Container Security Device"—was available and effective, it would be incorporated into C-TPAT as a C-TPAT best practice. The problem with the CSD technology originally, was too many false positives. This is probably no longer the case. And I am gratified that CBP and DHS will be testing CSDs to see if CSDs have sufficient reliability to be used as part of C-TPAT to better secure supply chains.

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The point is: all of these programs, including C-TPAT, are not static. They are dynamic and can and should be continually improved to provide optimum protection. That's why I am delighted that my successor, Commissioner Ralph Basham, accepted the Center's invitation to join the discussion this morning.

It's important to have his thoughts on the state of the cargo security strategy, because United States Customs and Border Protection is the pivotal agency in the development—and the implementation—of these cargo security initiatives. Indeed, CBP's priority mission—as our Nation's unified, frontline border agency—is preventing terrorists and terrorist weapons from getting across our borders and into the United States.

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The 100% inspection or "scanning" of all containers moving to the U.S. has raised its head again, on the Hill.

I would say this:

100% of scanning via x-ray and radiation is probably not feasible, especially at the larger container ports of the world, at least not without massive disruption of trade and significant adverse impact on our economy and the economies of our trading partners.

But, even if 100% overseas scanning was technically feasible, it is unnecessary, unwise and not commensurate with the burden it would impose.

I say this because we have and can achieve an equivalent level of security with our maritime security strategy – a layered risk-managed strategy that has been implemented and is being improved upon under Commission Basham's leadership. Scanning and inspecting based upon risk targeting may actually provide a higher level of security than 100% scanning.

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I resigned as Commissioner of CBP on November 24, 2005. It was Thanksgiving Day. And—believe me—I gave thanks! But I also knew the work U.S. Customs and CBP had begun—the work of implementing the strategy and initiatives to secure trade would need to continue and be improved upon.

I could not have been more pleased when, in January 2006, President Bush formally nominated my good friend and colleague, Ralph Basham, to be Commissioner. Ralph and I were colleagues at DHS, and before the homeland security reorganization, we were colleagues at the Treasury Department.

Commissioner Basham has served our nation as a public servant for **37** years, rising through the ranks of the Secret Service to the top—to be its Director. He was appointed by the President to be Secret Service Director in 2003.

As a career Secret Service Agent, Ralph understands threats and appreciates the stark realities of the terrorist threat our nation faces. He understands protective and preventative missions as few others can. And he understands the vital link between cargo and border security and the security of our homeland.

It is absolutely essential—in the age of Global Terrorism—that America secures its borders, and what...and who seeks to move across them.

Those of you who know Ralph have experienced his great personal charm and his great sense of humor. He's also a man of strong convictions. His core beliefs and integrity are like a steel beam, solid and reassuring. The job of Commissioner of CBP demands someone of these qualities. CBP is in good hands with Ralph at the helm.

Commissioner Basham has also served as the Director of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center—the federal government's primary law enforcement training center. In addition, not long after 9/11, Ralph was pressed into service as Chief of Staff at the Transportation Security Administration. He was tasked with helping to create that brand new agency from the ground up to respond to our country's immediate need for greater security of our commercial air passenger industry.

Today, Commissioner Basham is here to bring us up-to-date on where CBP is now with regard to the requirements of the SAFE Port Act and the Smart Box concept, and what challenges he sees on the horizon as we move forward with our many partners around the world to secure trade, our ports and our economy, and our nation, in this age of global terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen: please give a warm welcome to the Commissioner of United States Customs and Border Protection ... the Honorable Ralph Basham.