



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 22, 2016

DHS Inspector General's Report Notes "Security Issues" Along S.W. Border

A report issued on February 6 by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General identified "security issues" (such as inoperable security cameras) at six Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Forward Operating Bases (FOB) along our nation's Southwest border.

In a memorandum accompanying the report ("Conditions at CBP's Forward Operating Bases along the Southwest Border") addressed to CBP Commissioner Gil Kerlikowske, DHS Inspector General John Roth wrote that "the report contains six recommendations aimed at enhancing CBP's effectiveness" and that "CBP [had] concurred with all six recommendations."



Roth noted that his office still considered two of its six recommendations to be unresolved. These included:

Recommendation 1 (Revised): Establish a timetable for renovating FOB [redacted] or consider closing the facility. Ensure that any decision concerning major repairs or renovation of the facility takes into consideration the need for [redacted] to repair and maintain the [redacted] access road.

Recommendation 5: Establish a process to conduct periodic safety and health inspections of all FOBs. [Specific names of FOBs and information that would identify them was redacted from the report.]

In its response concurring with recommendation 1, CBP noted that the FOB in question is in "a critical enforcement area for USBP operations" in the west Arizona desert. Because that area "is very active in illegal cross border activity involving aliens and narcotics," noted the response, closing that FOB "cannot be considered an option because closing the FOB would be detrimental to the gains the Border Patrol has made at addressing and managing risk along this active part of the border."

Since closing the FOB is not an option, CBP said it has prioritized a renovation project for the base, but that "it is difficult to project a timeline for the renovation." The response noted an inter-agency budgeting conflict as causing potential delay of the renovations, since the road accessing the FOB is on tribal lands and maintained by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The solution to upgrading the road showcased a typical federal bureaucratic nightmare:

The USBP's Tucson Sector, CBP's Facilities Maintenance and Engineering Division, and CBP's Office of Chief Counsel have been working diligently with BIA to seek a legally viable avenue through which CBP's appropriated funds can be transferred to BIA and used for the repair of [redacted]. However, because Congress provides BIA with an appropriation for the maintenance



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and repair of Federal roads on tribal land, such as [redacted], CBP is not permitted to use its appropriated funds for the maintenance of [redacted]. Mindful of this limitation, CBP will continue to coordinate with BIA and keep them abreast of any progress related to the repair and maintenance of [redacted]. Estimated Completion Date (ECD): To Be Determined.

When our nation's border security is at stake, this bureaucratic nitpicking concerning which federal agency is responsible for maintaining a stretch of road to an important CBP base highlights why our federal government is so often more of a problem than a solution to solving problems.

The bureaucratic nightmare also was revealed in the CBP's concurrence and response to recommendation 5 — to establish a process to conduct periodic safety and health inspections of all FOBs. In its explanation for why the required inspections had not taken place, CBP notes:

Per the CBP Occupational Safety and Health Handbook (HB 5200-08B), the Human Resources Management (HRM), Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Division has a system in place for inspecting all facilities used or occupied by CBP employees. It should be noted, however, that the OSH Division safety specialists inspect facilities in coordination with the facility's management official(s). In the case of the FOBs, regular inspections were not always performed because the OSH Division was not aware of either the existence or occupation of FOBs in their respective areas. The HRM, OSH Division and the USBP have been collaborating to improve communications in regard to FOBs being established so that these operations can be frequently and effectively inspected.

To make a long bureaucratic explanation short, this was apparently a classic case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand was doing.

While the security lapses noted in the Inspector General's Report can be largely attributed to typical bureaucratic inefficiency and are likely to be corrected by CBP as soon as it can, there is another category of border security failure plaguing our nation that is more insidious. It is the virtual collapse of our borders not because of bureaucracy but due to our government's deliberate policies.

Among those who have vocally criticized these policies have been the border patrol agents themselves, speaking through union representatives such as Chris Cabrera, the vice president of the National Border Patrol Council Local 3307 in the Rio Grande Valley. Cabrera told Fox News in 2014 that the federal government is allowing murderers from Central America to be released into the United States. Speaking at the peak of the crisis caused by waves of unaccompanied minors crossing our southern border in 2014, Cabrera stated that there were teenage gang members among the illegal "children" being released to family members in America. He told Fox News:

If they have family in the United States, [Customs and Border Protection Officers will] release them to the family, even if they're admitted gang members....

Our agents aren't allowed to do the job they were hired to do. We're walking more and more people out the door ... they're catch-and-release that have family units. The criminal aliens that are coming in, some of these young gang member kids that are coming in, and there's no criminal history in the United States, we're releasing them out the door and more and more it gets frustrating.

On June 11, 2014, the National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers (NAFBPO) released a statement that placed much of the blame for the immigration crisis on U.S. government policy:

This is not a humanitarian crisis. It is a predictable, orchestrated and contrived assault on the



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compassionate side of Americans by her political leaders that knowingly puts minor Illegal Alien children at risk for purely political purposes. Certainly, we are not gullible enough to believe that thousands of unaccompanied minor Central American children came to America without the encouragement, aid and assistance of the United States Government. Anyone that has taken two six to seven year old children to an amusement park can only imagine the problems associated with bringing thousands of unaccompanied children that age up through Mexico and into the United States. I doubt even the Cartels would undertake that chore at any price. No, it has to be heartless corrupt politicians and their minions lusting for more money and power.

Among the political figures who blamed the Obama administration's immigration policies for our border crisis in 2014 was Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), who charged that the crisis was a "direct consequence" of President Obama's policies." The parents think, 'If I send my child [to the U.S.], my child will have amnesty.' That's what the president of the U.S. has said. It is the exact opposite of a humane approach to immigration or to securing our borders," Cruz told Breitbart News.

In an article published by *USA Today* on July 8, 2014, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) an outspoken defender of strong enforcement of our nation's immigration laws, wrote:

The crisis on our border is the direct and predictable result of President Obama's sustained effort to undermine America's immigration laws. As the president's previous director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), John Sandweg recently acknowledged: "if you are a run-of-the-mill immigrant here illegally, your odds of getting deported are close to zero." Enforcement has collapsed.

While it is good that the DHS Inspector General has pointed out several security weaknesses in the CBP Forward Operating Bases, and that CBP concurs with the recommendations in the report and intends to fix the trouble spots, they represent but a small part of our nation's failure to secure our borders. Fixing a few security cameras, and improving the facilities at the bases will do little to stem the flow of tens of thousands of illegal aliens across our borders. Only wholesale change in our government's policies, including a commitment to apprehend — and deport — all illegal border crossers will solve the crisis. However, the Obama administration has shown little resolve to accomplish that end.

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