



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 10, 2014

DHS Secretary Touts Department Accomplishments, Ignores Failures

In a speech delivered October 9 at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson (shown) played up the recent decline in unaccompanied minors illegally crossing our southern border, stating that “illegal migration by unaccompanied kids turned the corner, and it’s now in fact at its lowest number since January 2013.”



While it is true that the number of unaccompanied youths illegally entering our country has declined in recent months, that decline will likely end soon. As we noted in our article of September 23, at least one expert who has studied immigration extensively, Carl Meacham, the director of the Americas Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), predicted that the recent decline will soon reverse itself.

The decline “won’t last long,” Meacham said, noting that “the situation in Central America hasn’t changed; we have the same problems of insecurity and violence, the lack of governability continues and jobs are still a problem — there is no work for young people who are members of cartels or street gangs.”

A CBS News report on August 7 cited Department of Homeland Security figures released that day showing that about 5,500 unaccompanied children were arrested in July, about half the number apprehended in May and June and the lowest monthly figure since February. However, the decline may be at least partially attributable to the intense heat in Mexico during the summer months.

Even Secretary Johnson, speaking in response to the decline, admitted that those numbers were still much higher than in previous years. From last October to July, 63,000 unaccompanied children entered the United States illegally, double the number from the same period a year earlier.

Johnson’s presentation, entitled “Border Security in the 21st Century,” utilized 38 slides to summarize the history of U.S. border security since President Theodore Roosevelt created the United States Immigration Service in 1904. The secretary noted that “over the last 15 years — across the Clinton, Bush and Obama Administrations — our government has invested more in border security than at any point in the history of this Nation.”

The *Washington Times* noted that one of the slides Johnson showed during his speech depicted the estimated number of illegal immigrants in the United States, but he had to rely on numbers from the Pew Hispanic Center because DHS stopped putting out estimates of the illegal immigrant population more than two years ago. Johnson promised to hire more statisticians so his department can provide more up-to-date and comprehensive statistics related to the border crisis.

Johnson’s observation that the United States has spent more on border security during the past 15 years than at any other time in our history summarizes what seems like a sensible response to a serious



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ongoing crisis. However, Johnson's next statement seems to stretch logic a bit:

In fact, over the last 15 years, the number of apprehensions on our southwest border — a major indicator of total attempts to cross the border illegally — has declined significantly; it is now less than a third of what it was in the year 2000, and it's at its lowest level since the 1970s.

The unproven premise here is that the number of apprehensions is necessarily a reliable indicator of attempts to cross the border illegally. It is also possible that the reason that the number of apprehension has declined is that more illegal aliens are slipping through without being apprehended. Furthermore, even when illegal border crossers are apprehended, they are frequently released rather than deported.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials released 67,879 illegal immigrants with criminal convictions in 2013 and made no move to deport them. ICE is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

This information was made available on March 31 by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), a Washington, D.C.-based think tank that collected the information from ICE's "Weekly Departures and Detention Report" for the end of fiscal year 2013. The CIS obtained a copy of the report through a lawsuit.

Much of Johnson's presentation tracked progress made by the Border Patrol from fiscal year 2000 through 2014, and measured the increase in both the number of agents — from 8,619 to 18,127 — and the tools in the Border Patrol's arsenal such as fencing, roads, lighting, underground sensors, aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicle (drones), boats, mobile surveillance equipment, and remote video surveillance systems. He summed these up by stating: "Today the Border Patrol has the largest deployment of people, vehicles, aircraft, boats and equipment along the southwest border in its 90-year history."

The best equipped Border Patrol in the world will not stem illegal migration, however, if the illegal migrants are not apprehended, charged with breaking our laws, and then deported.

Johnson noted that his estimate for FY 2014 shows a modest increase in apprehensions of illegal border crossers, stating:

This increase is almost entirely due to what happened this summer in the Rio Grande Valley....

This summer we saw an unprecedented spike in illegal migration into South Texas. Almost all of this migration came from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. And, as everyone knows, it consisted of large numbers of unaccompanied children and adults with children, which presented a humanitarian dimension to the problem.

As we noted in a July article, a DHS report leaked to the public last summer acknowledged that the failure to deport those who have entered the United States illegally is among the "pull factors" prompting more people to follow suit.

The report, identified as "De-Classified" and "Law Enforcement Sensitive," was leaked to Breitbart Texas by a law-enforcement source in DHS who wanted to remain unidentified.

The Obama administration reported that since October, 52,000 Unaccompanied Children (UACs) — most from Central America — were apprehended at the U.S. border, up from 6,000 in 2011. Yet the DHS report, noted Breitbart, stated that only 0.1 percent of the Central American UACs were deported in Fiscal Year 2013, down from two percent during the prior year.



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Not only have the vast majority of UAC here illegally not been deported, most were relocated to different parts of the United States and placed with sponsor families pending the outcome of their hearings at immigration courts, which may take years. While living with such families, they are being sent to public schools, which have become overburdened and forced to spend additional tax dollars to educate them.

During his talk, Johnson said: "I am bolstering our Office of Immigration Statistics by adding new statisticians." Perhaps the money intended to hire more statisticians would produce better results if it were used to hire more immigration judges and more agents engaged in processing deportations. However, that would not accomplish the goals of the Obama administration, which seems more interested in courting votes among Hispanic voters than in enforcing our immigration laws.

Photo of DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson: AP Images

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