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SECURE BORDER INITIATIVE

DHS Has Faced Challenges Deploying Technology and Fencing Along the Southwest Border

Statement for the Record of Richard M. Stana, Director
Homeland Security and Justice Issues

GAO

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Why GAO Did This Study

Securing the nation's borders from illegal entry of aliens and contraband, including terrorists and weapons of mass destruction, continues to be a major challenge. In November 2005, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the launch of the Secure Border Initiative (SBI)—a multiyear, multibillion dollar program aimed at securing U.S. borders and reducing illegal immigration. Within DHS, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) provides agents and officers to support SBI. As requested, this statement summarizes (1) the findings and recommendations of GAO's reports on SBI's technology, known as SBI*net* (including such things as cameras and radars), and DHS's recent actions on SBI*net*; and (2) the findings and recommendations of GAO's reports on tactical infrastructure, such as fencing, and the extent to which CBP has deployed tactical infrastructure and assessed its operational impact. This statement is based on products issued from 2007 through 2010, with selected updates as of April 2010. To conduct these updates, GAO reviewed program schedules, status reports and funding and interviewed DHS officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO has made numerous recommendations on SBI design and implementation, which DHS generally concurred with and has begun taking action to implement.

What GAO Found

Since the inception of SBI*net*, GAO has reported on a range of issues regarding design and implementation, including program challenges, management weaknesses, and cost, schedule, and performance risks; DHS has largely concurred with GAO's recommendations and has started to take some action to address them. For example, in October 2007, GAO testified that the project involving the first segment of SBI*net* technology across the southwest border had fallen behind its planned schedule. In a September 2008 testimony, GAO reported that CBP plans to initially deploy SBI*net* technology along the southwest border had slipped from the end of 2008 to 2011 and that SBI*net* would have fewer capabilities than originally planned. As of April 2010, SBI*net*'s promised capabilities were still not operational. Limitations in the system's ability to function have contributed to delays. GAO has also reviewed CBP expenditure plans and found a lack of specificity on such things as planned activities and milestones. GAO made recommendations, including the need for future expenditure plans to include explicit and measurable commitments relative to the capabilities, schedule, costs, and benefits associated with individual SBI program activities. While DHS has concurred with GAO's recommendations, and its expenditure plans have improved from year to year in detail and quality, the plans, including the one for fiscal year 2009, did not fully satisfy the conditions set out by law. Further, in September 2008, GAO made recommendations to address SBI*net* technological capabilities that were ambiguous or in a state of flux. DHS generally concurred with them. In January 2010, GAO reported that the number of new system defects identified over an 17 month period while testing was underway was generally increasing faster than the number of defects being fixed, not indicative of a maturing system. Given the program's shortcomings, in January 2010, the Secretary of Homeland Security ordered an assessment of the program, and in March 2010, the Secretary froze a portion of the program's fiscal year 2010 funding. GAO plans to report in May 2010 on the SBI*net* solution and the status of its September 2008 recommendations.

CBP has completed deploying most of its planned tactical infrastructure and has begun efforts to measure its impact on border security, in response to a GAO recommendation. As of April 2010, CBP had completed 646 of the 652 miles of fencing it committed to deploy along the southwest border. CBP plans to have the remaining 6 miles of this baseline completed by December 2010. CBP reported that tactical infrastructure, coupled with additional trained agents, had increased the miles of the southwest border under control, but despite a $2.6 billion investment, it cannot account separately for the impact of tactical infrastructure. In a September 2009 report, GAO recommended that to improve the quality of information available to allocate resources and determine tactical infrastructure's contribution to effective control of the border, the Commissioner of CBP conduct a cost-effective evaluation of the impact of tactical infrastructure. DHS concurred with our recommendation and, in April 2010, told GAO that the Homeland Security Institute had undertaken this analysis.

_____ **United States Government Accountability Office**

Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to submit this statement on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Secure Border Initiative (SBI) program—a multiyear, multibillion dollar program aimed at securing U.S. borders and reducing illegal immigration. Securing the nation's borders from illegal entry of aliens and contraband, including terrorists and weapons of mass destruction, continues to be a major challenge. In November 2005, DHS announced the launch of SBI to help address this challenge. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) supports this initiative by providing agents and officers to patrol the borders, secure the ports of entry, and enforce immigration laws.[1] In addition, CBP's SBI program is responsible for developing a comprehensive border protection system using technology, known as SBI*net*, and tactical infrastructure—fencing, roads, and lighting—along the southwest border to deter smugglers and aliens attempting illegal entry.[2] Since fiscal year 2005, SBI has received funding amounting to about $4.5 billion. Approximately $1.6 billion has been allocated to SBI*net* and $2.6 billion to tactical infrastructure.[3]

SBI*net* is to consist of surveillance technologies, such as sensors, cameras, and radars, as well as command, control, communications, and intelligence (C3I) technologies, including software and hardware to produce a Common Operating Picture (COP)—which, among other things, presents a display of activities within specific areas along the border at CBP command centers. SBI*net* technology is to be initially deployed in two geographic areas—referred to as Tus-1 and Ajo-1—that jointly span 53 miles of the Tucson sector.[4] In September 2006, CBP awarded a 3-year

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[1]At a port of entry location, CBP officers secure the flow of people and cargo into and out of the country, while facilitating legitimate travel and trade.

[2]The SBI Program Executive Office, referred to in this statement as the SBI program office, has overall responsibility for overseeing all SBI activities for acquisition and implementation, including establishing and meeting program goals, objectives, and schedules for overseeing contractor performance; and for coordinating among DHS agencies. However, as of March 2009, the tactical infrastructure program office was realigned and is now managed on a day to day basis by CBP's Office of Administration Facilities Management and Engineering division.

[3]Remaining funds were allocated to program management and environmental requirements.

[4]The U.S. Border Patrol has 20 sectors in which it is responsible for detecting, interdicting, and apprehending those who engage in illegal activity across U.S. borders between official ports of entry.

contract to the Boeing Company, with three additional 1-year options for the development and deployment of SBI projects. In September 2009, CBP extended its contract with Boeing for the first option year. As of December 2009, CBP had awarded 13 task orders to Boeing for a total amount of approximately $1.2 billion. Table 1 is a summary of the task orders awarded to Boeing.

Table 1: Task Orders Awarded to Boeing for SBI projects as of December 2009[a] (Dollars in millions)

Task Order Description	Date Awarded	Ceiling of Funds[b]	Approximate Task order obligation
Program Management: The mission engineering, facilities and infrastructure, systems engineering, test and evaluation, and program management services to develop and deploy the SBI*net* system.	09/21/2006	$146.9	$146.9
Project 28: Boeing's pilot project and initial implementation of SBI*net* technology for 28 miles of the border in the Tucson sector[c]	10/20/2006	20.7	20.7
Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR): The construction of 32 miles of vehicle and pedestrian barriers on the southern border of the BMGR in the Yuma Sector.	01/12/2007	122.2	122.2
Fence Lab: The testing of potential pedestrian and vehicle fence and barrier solutions.	03/14/2007	0.7	0.7
Design: SBI*net* deployment design solution, including design, environmental-clearance support, and locations for the SBI*net* technology solution in the Yuma, Tucson, and El Paso sectors.	08/01/2007	115.0	115.0
Project 28 Contractor Maintenance and Logistics Support: Provides Project 28 with the required maintenance and logistics support to operate the system.	12/07/2007	10.6	10.6
Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (C3I) and Common Operating Picture (COP): The development of the next version of the SBI*net* operating software to design, develop, and demonstrate a functional SBI*net* C3I/COP system.	12/07/2007	73.0	71.0
Supply and Supply Chain Management: The development and implementation of a supply and supply chain management system solution to execute tactical infrastructure projects.	01/07/2008	318.6	318.6
System: A follow on to the program management task order, this task order specifies the program management and system-engineering activities required to achieve an integrated program across all task orders issues under the SBI contract.	04/15/2008	205.8	200.8
Arizona Deployment: Boeing's deployment of two projects of the SBI*net* system along approximately 53 miles of the southwest border in the Tucson sector.	06/25/2008	115.0	90.5
Integrated Logistics Support: Provides SBI*net* with the required maintenance and logistics support to operate the system.	08/16/2008	61.6	61.6
Design for Buffalo Sector: Provides for the design of a remote video surveillance system (RVSS) capability—a system of towers with cameras that transmit information to video monitors at a sector's headquarters—in the Buffalo sector.	02/05/2009	0.6	0.6
Northern Border Project: Provides for the design, installation, and deployment of surveillance technology capabilities in the Detroit and Buffalo Border Patrol sectors.	03/31/2009	22.4	20.9
Total		**$1,213.1**	**$1,180.1**

Source: CBP.

In addition to deploying technology across the southwest border, DHS originally planned to deploy 370 miles of single-layer pedestrian fencing and 300 miles of vehicle fencing by December 31, 2008. Pedestrian fencing is designed to prevent people on foot from crossing the border and vehicle fencing consists of physical barriers meant to stop the entry of vehicles. In September 2008, DHS revised its goal, committing instead to having 661 miles either built, under construction, or under contract by December 31, 2008. As of January 2010, DHS officials told us that due to engineering and hydrology constraints, the agency revised its goal to 652 miles. Although some tactical infrastructure exists in all the southwest border sectors, most of what has been built through the SBI program is located in the San Diego, Yuma, Tucson, El Paso, and Rio Grande Valley sectors.

My statement is based on our extensive body of work on SBI over the last 3 years, including our most recent reports in September 2009[5] and January 2010[6] and selected updates we conducted in April 2010. All told, we have issued 16 reports and testimonies that collectively address the SBI program.[7] As requested, our statement (1) summarizes the findings and recommendations from our SBI*net* reports, and DHS's recent actions on the program; and (2) summarizes the findings and recommendations from our reports on tactical infrastructure and describes the extent to which CBP has deployed the SBI tactical infrastructure program and assessed its operational impact. Detailed information on the scope and methodology for each of the reports used to prepare this statement appears in the respective reports. To update our September 2009 report, we reviewed recently available DHS documents, including current program schedules,

[5]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Technology Deployment Delays Persist and the Impact of Border Fencing Has Not Been Assessed*, GAO-09-896 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2009).

[6]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: DHS Needs to Address Testing and Performance Limitations That Place Key Technology Program at Risk*, GAO-10-158 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 29, 2010).

[7]See list of these related GAO products at the end of this document.

status reports, and funding information. We determined that funding and fencing mileage data provided by CBP were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this statement. We based our decision on an assessment of each respective area by questioning cognizant DHS officials about the source of the data and policies and procedures used to maintain the integrity of these data. All of the work supporting this statement was performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings based on our audit objectives.

SBI*net* Program Challenges, Management Weaknesses, and Cost, Schedule, and Performance Risks Exist

Since the inception of SBI*net*, we have reported on a range of issues regarding program design and implementation. For example, in October 2007, we testified that DHS had made some progress in implementing Project 28—the first segment of SBI*net* technology across the southwest border—but had fallen behind its planned schedule.[8] In our February 2008 testimony, we noted that although DHS accepted Project 28 and was gathering lessons learned from the project, CBP officials responsible for the program said it did not fully meet their expectations and would not be replicated.[9] We also reported issues with the system that remained unresolved. For example, the Border Patrol, a CBP component, reported that as of February 2008, problems remained with the resolution of cameras at distances over 5 kilometers, while expectations had been that the cameras would work at twice that distance. In our September 2008 testimony, we reported that CBP had initially planned to deploy SBI*net* technology along the southwest border by the end of 2008, but as of February 2008, this date had slipped to 2011 and that SBI*net* would have fewer capabilities than originally planned.[10]

In September 2009, we reported that SBI*net* technology capabilities had not yet been deployed and delays required the Border Patrol to rely on

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[8]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Observations on Selected Aspects of SBInet Program Implementation*, GAO-07-131T (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 24, 2007).

[9]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Observations on the Importance of Applying Lessons Learned to Future Projects*, GAO-08-508T (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2008).

[10]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Secure Border Initiative: Observations on Deployment Challenges*, GAO-08-1141T (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2008).

existing technology for securing the border, rather than using the newer SBI*net* technology planned to overcome the existing technology's limitations.[11] As of April 2010, SBI*net*'s promised technology capabilities are still not operational and delays continue to require Border Patrol to rely on existing technology for securing the border, rather than using the newer SBI*net* technology planned to overcome the existing technology's limitations. When CBP initiated SBI*net* in 2006, it planned to complete SBI*net* deployment along the entire southwest border in fiscal year 2009, but by February 2009, the completion date had slipped to 2016. The first deployments of SBI*net* technology projects are to take place along 53 miles in the Tucson border sector, designated as Tus-1 and Ajo-1. As of April 7, 2010, the schedule for Tus-1 and Ajo-1 had slipped from the end of calendar year 2008 as planned in February 2008, and government acceptance of Tus-1 was expected in September 2010 and Ajo-1 in the fourth quarter of calendar year 2010.[12]

Limitations in the system's ability to function as intended as well as concerns about the impact of placing towers and access roads in environmentally sensitive locations have contributed to these delays. Examples of these system limitations include continued instability of the cameras and mechanical problems with the radar at the tower, and issues with the sensitivity of the radar. As of January 2010, program officials stated that the program was working to address system limitations, such as modifications to the radar. As a result of the delays, Border Patrol agents continue to use existing technology that has limitations, such as performance shortfalls and maintenance issues.[13] For example, on the southwest border, Border Patrol relies on existing equipment such as cameras mounted on towers that have intermittent problems, including

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[11]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Technology Deployment Delays Persist and the Impact of Border Fencing Has Not Been Assessed*, GAO-09-896 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2009), and *Secure Border Initiative: Technology Deployment Delays Persist and the Impact of Border Fencing Has Not Been Assessed*, GAO-09-1013T (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 17, 2009).

[12]The SBI program office defines government acceptance as the SBI program office taking ownership of the SBI*net* technology system from the contractor and comes before handing the technology over to Border Patrol.

[13]According the SBI Executive Director, starting in February 2010, Office of Border Patrol agents began to use the Tus-1 technology system during night operations as part of their early operational assessment of the system while Boeing works to complete deployment activities during the day.

signal loss. Border Patrol has procured and delivered some new technology to fill gaps or augment existing equipment.

We have also been mandated to review CBP's SBI expenditure plans, beginning with fiscal year 2007. In doing so, in February 2007, we reported that CBP's initial expenditure plan lacked specificity on such things as planned activities and milestones, anticipated costs, staffing levels, and expected mission outcomes.[14] We noted that this, coupled with the large cost and ambitious time frames, added risk to the program. At that time, we made several recommendations to address these deficiencies.[15] These recommendations included one regarding the need for future expenditure plans to include explicit and measurable commitments relative to the capabilities, schedule, costs, and benefits associated with individual SBI program activities. Although DHS agreed with this recommendation, to date, it has not been fully implemented. In our June 2008 report on the fiscal year 2008 expenditure plan, we recommended that CBP ensure that future expenditure plans include an explicit description of how activities will further the objectives of SBI, as defined in the DHS Secure Border Strategic Plan, and how the plan allocates funding to the highest priority border security needs.[16] DHS concurred with this recommendation and implemented it as part of the fiscal year 2009 expenditure plan. In reviewing the fiscal year 2008 and 2009 expenditure plans, we have reported that, although the plans improved from year to year, providing more detail and higher quality information than the year before; the plans did not fully satisfy all the conditions set out by law.[17]

In addition to monitoring program implementation and reviewing expenditure plans, we have also examined acquisition weaknesses that increased the risk that the system would not perform as intended, take longer to deliver than necessary, and cost more than it should. In

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[14]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: SBInet Expenditure Plan Needs to Better Support Oversight and Accountability*, GAO-07-309 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 15, 2007).

[15] See GAO-07-309 for additional recommendations.

[16]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Fiscal Year 2008 Expenditure Plan Shows Improvement, but Deficiencies Limit Congressional Oversight and DHS Accountability*, GAO-08-739R (Washington, D.C.: June 26, 2008).

[17]GAO-08-739R, and GAO, *U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Fiscal Year 2009 Expenditure Plan*, GAO-09-274R (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 30, 2009)

particular, we reported in September 2008[18] that important aspects of SBI*net* were ambiguous and in a continued state of flux, making it unclear and uncertain what technological capabilities were to be delivered and when. Further, we reported at that time that SBI*net* requirements had not been effectively developed and managed and that testing was not being effectively managed. Accordingly, we concluded that the program was a risky endeavor, and we made a number of recommendations for strengthening the program's chances of success. DHS largely agreed with these recommendations and we have ongoing work that will report on the status of DHS's efforts to implement them. We reported in January 2010[19] that key aspects of ongoing qualification testing had not been properly planned and executed. For example, while DHS's testing approach appropriately consisted of a series of test events, many of the test plans and procedures were not defined in accordance with relevant guidance, and over 70 percent of the approved test procedures had to be rewritten during execution because the procedures were not adequate. Among these changes were ones that appeared to have been made to pass the test rather than to qualify the system. We also reported at this time that the number of new system defects identified over a 17 month period while testing was underway was generally increasing faster than the number of defects being fixed—a trend that is not indicative of a maturing system that is ready for acceptance and deployment.[20] Compounding this trend was the fact that the full magnitude of this issue was unclear because these defects were not all being assigned priorities based on severity. Accordingly, we made additional recommendations and DHS largely agreed with them and has efforts underway to address them.

Most recently, we concluded a review of SBI*net* that addresses the extent to which DHS has defined the scope of its proposed SBI*net* solution, demonstrated the cost effectiveness of this solution, developed a reliable schedule for implementing the solution, employed acquisition management disciplines, and addressed the recommendations in our September 2008 report. Although we plan to report on the results of this review later this month, we briefed DHS on our findings in December

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[18]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: DHS Needs to Address Significant Risks in Delivering Key Technology Investment.* GAO-08-1086 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 22, 2008).

[19]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: DHS Needs to Address Testing and Performance Limitations That Place Key Technology Program at Risk*, GAO-10-158 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 29, 2010).

[20]GAO-10-158.

2009, and provided DHS with a draft of this report, including conclusions and recommendations in March 2010. Among other things, these recommendations provide a framework for how the program should proceed.

In light of program shortcomings, continued delays, questions surrounding SBI*net*'s viability, and the program's high cost vis-à-vis other alternatives, in January 2010, the Secretary of Homeland Security ordered a department assessment of the SBI program. In addition, on March 16, 2010, the Secretary froze fiscal year 2010 funding for any work on SBI*net* beyond Tus-1 and Ajo-1 until the assessment is completed and the Secretary reallocated $50 million of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act[21] funds allocated to SBI*net* to procure alternative tested and commercially available technologies, such as mobile radios, to be used along the border. In March 2010, the SBI Executive Director stated that the department's assessment ordered in January 2010, would consist of a comprehensive and science-based assessment of alternatives intended to determine if there are alternatives to SBI*net* that may more efficiently, effectively and economically meet U.S. border security needs. According to the SBI Executive Director, if the assessment suggests that the SBI*net* capabilities are worth the cost, DHS will extend its deployment to sites beyond Tus-1 and Ajo-1. However, if the assessment suggests that alternative technology options represent the best balance of capability and cost-effectiveness, DHS intends to immediately begin redirecting resources currently allocated for border security efforts to these stronger options.

As part of our continuing support to the Congress in overseeing the SBI program, we are currently reviewing DHS's expenditure plan for the fiscal year 2010 Border Security Fencing, Infrastructure, and Technology appropriation, which provides funding for the SBI program. Additionally, we are completing a review of the internal control procedures in place to ensure that payments to SBI*net*'s prime contractor were proper and in compliance with selected key contract terms and conditions. Finally, we are reviewing controls for managing and overseeing the SBI*net* prime contractor, including efforts to monitor the prime contractor's progress in meeting cost and schedule expectations. We expect to report on the results of these reviews later this year.

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[21]American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115, 162, 302 (2009).

SBI Has Completed Deploying Most of Its Planned Tactical Infrastructure and Has Begun Efforts to Measure Its Impact on Border Security

In addition to monitoring SBI*net* implementation, we also reported on the tactical infrastructure component of the SBI program. For example, in October 2007, we reported that tactical infrastructure deployment along the southwest border was on schedule, but meeting CBP's fencing goal by December 31, 2008, might be challenging and more costly than planned.[22] In September 2008, we also reported that the deployment of fencing was ongoing, but costs were increasing, the life-cycle cost for fencing was not yet known, and finishing the planned number of miles by December 31, 2008 would be challenging.[23] We also reported on continuing cost increases and delays with respect to deploying tactical infrastructure. In September 2009, we reported, among other things, that delays continued in completing planned tactical infrastructure primarily because of challenges in acquiring the necessary property rights from landowners.[24]

As of today, planned fencing-related deployments are almost complete, but their impact on border security has not been measured. As of April 2010, CBP had completed 646 of the 652 miles of fencing it committed to deploy along the southwest border. CBP plans to have the remaining 6 miles of this baseline completed by December 2010, pending resolution of litigation for portions of property along the border. Also, CBP plans to construct an additional 14 miles of pedestrian fencing in the Rio Grande Valley Sector by September 2010.[25] See table 2 for more information. While fencing costs increased over the course of construction, because all construction contracts have been awarded, costs are less likely to change. CBP plans to use $110 million in fiscal year 2010 funds for new construction costs— which includes $10 million for land acquisition—and $75 million for operations and maintenance of existing infrastructure. The life-cycle cost study prepared by a contractor for CBP shows that total 20 year life-cycle costs for all tactical infrastructure—including pre-SBI infrastructure as well as that planned for fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011—and consisting

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[22]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Observations on Selected Aspects of SBInet Program Implementation.* GAO-08-131T. (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 24, 2007).

[23]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Observations on Deployment Challenges.* GAO-08-1141T. (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2008).

[24]GAO, *Secure Border Initiative: Technology Deployment Delays Persist and the Impact of Border Fencing Has Not Been Assessed.* GAO-09-896. (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2009).

[25]With the addition of the 14 miles of pedestrian fencing, CBP plans to construct a total of 666 miles of fencing through December 2010.

of deployment and operations and future maintenance costs for the fence, roads, and lighting, among other things, are estimated at about $6.5 billion.

Table 2: Tactical Infrastructure Deployment Progress as of April 2010

Infrastructure Type	Miles in place before SBI[a]	Miles deployed through SBI as of April 2010	Total miles in place as of April 2010	Current target	Miles remaining to meet target
Pedestrian fencing	65	282	347	367[b]	20
Vehicle fencing	72	227	299	299	0
Total fencing	**137**	**509**	**646**	**666**	**20**

Source: GAO analysis of SBI data.

[a]Seventy-eight miles of pedestrian fencing and 57 miles of vehicle fencing were in place before the SBI program began. However, since SBI began construction, some miles of fencing have been removed, replaced or retrofitted resulting in mileage totals that are different from those we have reported in earlier reports.

[b]Includes 14 miles of pedestrian fence planned for the Rio Grande Valley Sector that will be constructed as a stand alone project, not as a part of the original baseline.

CBP reported that tactical infrastructure, coupled with additional trained agents, had increased the miles of the southwest border under control, but despite a $2.6 billion investment, it cannot account separately for the impact of tactical infrastructure. CBP measures miles of tactical infrastructure constructed and has completed analyses intended to show where fencing is more appropriate than other alternatives, such as more personnel, but these analyses were based primarily on the judgment of senior Border Patrol agents. Leading practices suggest that a program evaluation would complement those efforts.[26] Until CBP determines the contribution of tactical infrastructure to border security, it is not positioned to address the impact of this investment. In our September 2009 report, we recommended that to improve the quality of information available to allocate resources and determine tactical infrastructure's contribution to effective control of the border, the Commissioner of CBP conduct a cost-effective evaluation of the impact of tactical infrastructure on effective control of the border.[27]

DHS concurred with our recommendation and described actions recently completed, underway, and planned that it said will address our

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[26]GAO, *Agency Performance Plans: Examples of Practices That Can Improve Usefulness to Decisionmakers*, GAO/GGD/AIMD-99-69, (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 26, 1999).

[27]GAO-09-896.

recommendation. In April 2010, SBI officials told us that the Homeland Security Institute was conducting an analysis of the impact of tactical infrastructure on border security. We believe that this effort would be consistent with our recommendation, further complement performance management initiatives, and be useful to inform resource decision making.

This concludes my statement for the record.

Contacts and Acknowledgments

For further information on this statement, please contact Richard M. Stana at (202) 512-8777 or stanar@gao.gov. Contact points for our offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this statement. In addition to the contact named above, Frances Cook, Katherine Davis, Jeanette Espinola, Dan Gordon, Kaelin Kuhn, Jeremy Manion, Taylor Matheson, Jamelyn Payan, Susan Quinlan, Jonathan Smith, Sushmita Srikanth, and Juan Tapia-Videla made key contributions to this statement.

Related GAO Products

Secure Border Initiative: Testing and Problem Resolution Challenges Put Delivery of Technology Program at Risk. GAO-10-511T. Washington, D.C.: Mar. 18, 2010.

Secure Border Initiative: DHS Needs to Address Testing and Performance Limitations that Place Key Technology Program at Risk. GAO-10-158. Washington, D.C.: Jan. 29, 2010.

Secure Border Initiative: Technology Deployment Delays Persist and the Impact of Border Fencing Has Not Been Assessed. GAO-09-1013T. Washington, D.C.: Sept. 17, 2009.

Secure Border Initiative: Technology Deployment Delays Persist and the Impact of Border Fencing Has Not Been Assessed. GAO-09-896. Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2009.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Secure Border Initiative Fiscal Year 2009 Expenditure Plan. GAO-09-274R. Washington, D.C.: Apr. 30, 2009.

Secure Border Initiative Fence Construction Costs. GAO-09-244R. Washington, D.C.: Jan. 29, 2009.

Secure Border Initiative: DHS Needs to Address Significant Risks in Delivering Key Technology Investment. GAO-08-1086. Washington, D.C.: Sept. 22, 2008.

Secure Border Initiative: DHS Needs to Address Significant Risks in Delivering Key Technology Investment. GAO-08-1148T. Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2008.

Secure Border Initiative: Observations on Deployment Challenges. GAO-08-1141T. Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2008.

Secure Border Initiative: Fiscal Year 2008 Expenditure Plan Shows Improvement, but Deficiencies Limit Congressional Oversight and DHS Accountability. GAO-08-739R. Washington, D.C.: June 26, 2008.

Department of Homeland Security: Better Planning and Oversight Needed to Improve Complex Service Acquisition Outcomes. GAO-08-765T. Washington, D.C.: May 8, 2008.

Department of Homeland Security: Better Planning and Assessment Needed to Improve Outcomes for Complex Service Acquisitions GAO-08-263. Washington, D.C.: Apr. 22, 2008.

Secure Border Initiative: Observations on the Importance of Applying Lessons Learned to Future Projects. GAO-08-508T. Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2008.

Secure Border Initiative: Observations on Selected Aspects of SBInet Program Implementation. GAO-08-131T. Washington, D.C.: Oct. 24, 2007.

Secure Border Initiative: SBInet Planning and Management Improvements Needed to Control Risks. GAO-07-504T. Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2007.

Secure Border Initiative: SBInet Expenditure Plan Needs to Better Support Oversight and Accountability. GAO-07-309. Washington, D.C.: Feb. 15, 2007.

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