

**REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL DAVID W. OGDEN
AT THE CEREMONY FOR THE PHOENIX OCDETF STRIKE FORCE**

Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us to mark the official opening of the Phoenix OCDETF (Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force) Strike Force. This is an important day. The OCDETF program supports and coordinates the collaborative law enforcement approach that positions us best to effectively combat the vicious drug trafficking organizations, known as the Mexican drug cartels, that contribute to so much of the violence and crime in neighborhoods across this country.

These criminal organizations are a national security threat to Mexico and a threat to public safety and security in the United States. They are responsible for the steady stream of illicit drugs -- cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, or marijuana -- that cross our border from south to north. We believe that they are responsible for 80 to 90 percent of the illegal drugs sold in the United States. They are also responsible for the deadly flow of illegal firearms across the border, which enable the terrible violence and terror in some Mexican communities.

These sophisticated criminal organizations operate across local, state, and national borders creating a challenge for law enforcement in both countries. To combat this persistent and pernicious threat, we must also be seamless in our operations by acting as a multi-agency team.

The OCDETF Program -- now in its 27th year -- is a model of interagency coordination, innovation, and teamwork, and is the cornerstone of the Justice Department's anti-cartel strategy. That strategy recognizes that the most effective way to fight these large criminal networks is by combining the strengths, resources, and expertise of federal, state and local investigative and prosecutorial agencies. OCDETF serves as the organizational structure for the formation of prosecutor-led, multi-agency task forces. It focuses the efforts of these task forces through the use of intelligence-based targeting to drive large scale arrests, prosecutions and asset forfeitures.

These teams are extraordinarily capable. They combine:

- DEA's unique knowledge of international drug trafficking organizations, and its working relationships with foreign, state, and local law enforcement authorities;
- FBI's experience in gathering and analyzing intelligence data, investigating gangs and other complex criminal organizations, as well as its expertise in handling sensitive public corruption matters;
- ICE's expertise in investigating goods and currency involved in international contraband smuggling and in confronting and interdicting drug and gun traffickers;
- ATF's expertise in investigating illegal firearms and explosives, which have long been the drug traffickers' tools of the trade;

- IRS's knowledge of sophisticated illegal financial operations, the tax code, money laundering statutes, and asset forfeiture laws to thoroughly investigate the dealings of the targeted organizations and dismantle the economic infrastructure that fuels their operations;
- the U.S. Marshals Service's skills in fugitive investigations and apprehension of criminals in the U.S. and abroad who have the resources to try to hide anywhere in the world;
- the Coast Guard's maritime reach and expertise, and
- the critical local knowledge of State and local law enforcement officers who are intimately familiar with the individuals living in the neighborhoods that they serve. They know how the criminals conduct their activity and its impact on their communities. They also have invaluable contacts with local businesses and community leaders who all play a critical role in fighting crime.

OCDETF supports such cooperation in various ways, but co-located strike forces, such as the one we announce today, are extraordinarily effective vehicles for OCDETF's team concept. In many places, OCDETF pulls together its coalition of law enforcement entities by relying upon "virtual task forces" where members report to work each day at their respective agency's offices and come together as needed to work on particular investigations and prosecutions.

But in an effort to better foster the enhanced intelligence sharing and coordination necessary to achieve the best results from this intelligence-driven, strategic enforcement approach, OCDETF has established co-located strike forces in key cities across the country.

Working side-by-side every day, the members of the OCDETF Strike Forces are able to focus their efforts, eliminate superfluous work, and save valuable resources. As a result, they have been able to take the fight against the most notorious international drug cartels to new levels. Coordinating the efforts of their member agencies, OCDETF Strike Forces were integral participants in the major successes in this fight - Operation Xcellerator against the Sinaloa Cartel, Project Reckoning against the Gulf Cartel, and last month's coordinated arrests of members of the La Familia Cartel.

OCDETF currently has co-located strike forces in nine key cities: Atlanta, Boston, El Paso, Houston, New York, San Diego, San Juan, Tampa, and now, here in Phoenix. These strike forces also function as a central point of contact for OCDETF agents and prosecutors nationwide, gathering intelligence and disseminating investigative leads throughout the neighboring areas. Although these strike forces were established for the same basic purpose, each is unique to the region it serves and tailors its approach to the nature of the threat there.

The Phoenix Strike Force focuses its efforts on major drug trafficking organizations operating along the Southwest Border. By bringing together agents from DEA, ICE, ATF, FBI, IRS, the Marshals Service, and state and local law enforcement agencies, the Phoenix Strike

Force is able to leverage the expertise of six federal and five local law enforcement agencies to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking cartels. In its first months of operation, working out of provisional space while this Strike Force facility was under construction, the Phoenix Strike Force has already achieved great success. It conducted 89 wiretap investigations and was responsible for the indictment of a Mexican national who is on the United States' list of high level international drug traffickers, along with members of his drug trafficking organization.

The strike force's work also led to the indictment of a drug trafficker who had been identified as a target of regional significance, 68 arrests, and the seizure of \$45 million in cartel assets, 106 kilograms of cocaine, 146 pounds of methamphetamine, and 4,000 pounds of marijuana. We look forward to the Phoenix Strike Force continuing, and even expanding upon these remarkable achievements as it moves into its permanent facility.

There are many people who contributed to these successes and I would like to take a moment to recognize a few of them. Stuart Nash, an associate in my office, has provided steady leadership to this effort.

- SAC Beth Kempshall, and ASAC Doug Coleman of the DEA,
- SAC William Newell and ASACs George Gillette and Ken Melson and Jim Needles of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and Explosives

- SAC John Lewis and ASAC Steve Hooper of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and finally,

- Phoenix Police Chief Jack F. Harris,
have been instrumental partners in making OCDETF what is it today.

Please join me in congratulating the members of the Phoenix OCDETF Strike Force for the outstanding work they have done the last several months and to congratulate you on moving in to your new site. You are among the most dedicated individuals in law enforcement. On behalf of the Department, I want to thank you for all that you do. Keep up the good work.

I'd like to turn it over to the new United States Attorney for the District of Arizona,
Dennis Burke ...