



## **(U) What Happened to the United States Customs Service? (part 1)**

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Run Date: 11/18/2004

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*How responsibility for border security was consolidated in the Department of Homeland Security (U)*

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(U) Protecting our nation's borders is of prime concern to all Americans today. The magnitude of this challenge can better be appreciated when we consider that last year 55 million people entered the U.S. by air, 15 million by sea, and 327 million over land. The number of vessels that crossed our borders last year is also staggering: 203,000 ships with 9 million containers of cargo; 576,000 commercial planes and 132,000 private aircraft; 11 million trucks; 2.4 million rail cars; and 119 million cars.

(U) The enormous responsibility of keeping our borders safe from illegal activity and criminal elements today lies primarily with the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCBP) and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (BICE), both within the Department of Homeland Security. This article seeks to clarify and provide background information regarding the transition of the former United States Customs Service and its associate partners into BCBP and BICE.

### **A Herculean Task: Protecting our Borders**

(U) Our country shares a 5,252-mile border with Canada and a 1,989-mile border with Mexico, with just over 300 international land-based ports of entry. Intertwined with our borders is a maritime system that includes 95,000 miles of coastline and navigable waterways, as well as a global transportation network of over 300 seaports, 429 commercial airports, and several hundred thousand miles of highways and railroads that offer access to almost every community within America. One quickly realizes that the challenges to the defense of this network and the nation's security are immense.

(U) Prior to the formation of the Department of Homeland Security three separate agencies were responsible for border security:

- The United States Customs Service (Department of Treasury),
- the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (Department of Agriculture), and the
- Immigration and Naturalization Service (Department of Justice).

Included within the Immigration and Naturalization Service was the United States Border Patrol.

(U) With the formation of the Department of Homeland Security, components of these agencies were reassembled as BCBP and BICE and brought together under the Border and Transportation Security Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security. In a nutshell, BCBP includes the various inspectors at our borders plus the Border Patrol; BICE brings together the investigation and enforcement elements.

*(U) Watch for part two of this article soon on SIDtoday.*

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DERIVED FROM: NSA/CSSM 1-52, DATED 08 JAN 2007 DECLASSIFY ON: 20320108