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BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
HEARING ON "PROGRESS SINCE 9/11:
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF U.S. ANTI-TERRORIST FINANCING EFFORTS"**

MARCH 11, 2003

I. INTRODUCTION

Chairwoman Kelly and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the efforts undertaken by Operation Green Quest and its role in terrorist finance. Terrorist organizations survive on their ability to raise funds and transfer them internationally to support their activities. These funds are often moved by exploiting weaknesses in domestic and international financial systems and through the use of other types of money service businesses. Operation Green Quest employs a systematic approach to identify funding mechanisms utilized by terrorist organizations. I am pleased to share with you Operation Green Quest's mission, methodology, goals and successes as they relate to terrorist financing.

Since its establishment in October 2001, Operation Green Quest has been committed to the difficult task of the identification, disruption and dismantling of organizations and systems that serve as sources of terrorist funding. From its inception, Operation Green Quest has met this mission head on.

II. OVERVIEW

Based in Washington D.C., and led by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Operation Green Quest serves a command and

coordination center for terrorist-financing investigations in BICE field operations. Operation Green Quest collects, develops, manages, and disseminates leads to appropriate field offices for investigative action. As such, it is the repository for terrorist financial investigations and is able to prioritize, identify investigative overlaps, and redirect resources to meet operational objectives.

Operation Green Quest utilizes an interagency task force approach to augment existing counter-terrorist efforts by targeting financial networks through the application of a “systems-based” approach to “follow the money.” This systems-based approach, and the understanding that the financing of terrorism has always been a key component of Operation Green Quest.

In addition to the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Operation Green Quest is comprised of representatives from the Internal Revenue Service; Secret Service, Office of Foreign Assets Control; Financial Crimes Enforcement Network; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Naval Criminal Investigative Service; Postal Inspection Service; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and the Coast Guard.

Operation Green Quest also has a component within the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Cybersmuggling Center. This state-of-the-art center supports Operation Green Quest through a unit dedicated to the identification of web sites that promote terrorist fund raising efforts, as well as through computer forensics expertise.

Another weapon in Operation Green Quest's arsenal is a strong investigative presence in 31 foreign offices. These offices initiate investigative leads and perform critical follow-up to existing leads. The attachés also conduct outreach with foreign government and law enforcement officials.

Operation Green Quest has achieved great success in identifying and penetrating systems that fund terrorist activity, including charities and non-governmental organizations, money service businesses, and bulk cash smuggling. A great number of Operation Green Quest's successes can be attributed to aggressive outreach to the financial and trade communities. Operation Green Quest views the financial and trade communities as the frontline in identifying suspicious activity and potential financiers of terrorist activities. In order to promote a partnership between law enforcement and the private sector, Operation Green Quest has provided approximately 80 terrorist financing-related presentations to a total audience of about 5,000 individuals.

Recent examples of Operation Green Quest successes include: in December 2002, 21 search, seizure and arrest warrants were executed on money service businesses in Detroit; in Seattle 36 search and six arrest warrants were executed on illegal wire emitters; and in Los Angeles, as a result of an outbound seizure of \$280,000 in bulk currency, three search warrants were executed resulting in one arrest and the seizure of approximately \$2.2 million.

Simply stated, Operation Green Quest attempts to identify suspicious financial activities that may be indicative of terrorist-financing, as well as financial and trade systems that are susceptible to exploitation by terrorist financiers.

Green Quest sees is the mechanism through which those who endeavor to harm our country are denied access to the systems used to generate and move funds in support of their terrorist activities. As a result, Operation Green Quest takes full advantage of the combined statutory authorities available to its task force members. Operation Green Quest will utilize both traditional financial violations of law as well as other Federal statutes such as counterfeiting, fraud, and failure to register as a money service business to achieve this goal.

In addition to its investigative efforts, Operation Green Quest has coordinated with the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection to target efforts to illegally export bulk currency out of the United States. These initiatives have focused on identifying and disrupting the various methods used to smuggle bulk currency and negotiable instruments that may be used in support of terrorist finance. As a result, approximately \$22 million have been seized, \$14 million of which was destined to countries of concern.

Operation Green Quest has utilized existing resources as a means to accomplish its mission. As a result of Operation Green Quest successes, 15 dedicated Green Quest investigative groups in 13 key geographic areas have been established through the reallocation of existing resources. In addition, the Green Quest command and coordination center will expand to create specialized units to address specific systems vulnerable to terrorist financing.

III. CLOSING

In conclusion, I would like to thank the distinguished members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today, and will be glad to answer any questions you may have.