



Customs and Immigration Union
Syndicat des Douanes et de l'Immigration

July 16, 2011

The Honourable Vic Toews
Minister of Public Safety
269 Laurier Avenue West, 19th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P8

Via Email: toews.v@parl.gc.ca

Re: CBSA Biometric Lookout System Project

Dear Minister,

As a result of information provided to us following the Public Security Technical Program (PSTP) Summer Symposium held recently in Ottawa, we thought you would want to be apprised of what appears to be the status of the aforementioned CBSA led project which was funded by PSTP in 2009.

As you may recall, you and I first met during the unveiling of your Party's *Security and Criminal Justice Platform* in January 2006. That visionary and informed platform included, among many other things, a commitment to arm Border Services Officers and to end work-alone situations for them. It also wisely included a commitment to "*Deploy face recognition and other biometric technology at border crossings and ports of entry*" (p.26). Achieving this improvement has been publicly identified by the Prime Minister since that time and both the recent public announcements from Government of biometric data sharing to prevent immigration fraud through the Five Party Conference and the ongoing perimeter security discussions with the U.S. clearly contemplate the kind of work which was intended by the PSTP project at hand.

The Customs and Immigration Union has supported your Government's position on the need for a Facial-Recognition Biometric 'Persons-of-Interest' Lookout System to be deployed at points-of-entry to Canada. Our related views were included in our original *Secure Border Action Plan* in November 2006 which was updated in 2009.

Accordingly, when the PSTP announced its Project goals in 2008, we were pleased to see they contemplated the creation of such a trial database with field testing to identify specific operational issues related to the different sites. The PSTP Application Form for the Project proposal identified the required work as follows:

The Project objectives are to combine the biometrics, port of entry operation, law enforcement, intelligence, legal, policy and technology review expertise of the Project partners so as to identify the optimum biometric security solutions to detect and interdict defined inadmissible persons seeking entry to Canada in a fashion that is consistent with port of entry functionality, institutional requirements and public policy priorities.

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The Statement of Work for the Project specifically required:

Collaboratively undertake a study that will investigate the capability to recognize and stop dangerous persons of interest at points of entry into Canada across a variety of border environments. All current and potential biometrics techniques must be evaluated using direct vendor analysis and evaluation, and in a "matrix" methodology that captures biometric technology capabilities against the specific public security domain.

At the time, CIU submitted a bid to the PSTP to undertake this test work in which we were honoured to partner with the Ontario Provincial Police at the express direction of then Commissioner Fantino. Although we were disappointed when we learned we were unsuccessful, we recognized that CBSA, who was awarded the Project and funding, was clearly the appropriate lead agency to undertake the important work specified.

Since that time, at our initiative, we have provided CBSA with detailed suggestions regarding both content and deployment and have met with CBSA officials to discuss specifics. At no time during these exchanges or meetings were we ever advised that the original PSTP funded project was not proceeding as called-for and described above.

We trust you can appreciate our concern, therefore, when we were advised that during the Surveillance and Intelligence-Interdiction group meetings of the PSTP Conference, it was revealed, and acknowledged by CBSA, that the initial project did *not* proceed as intended and had instead turned into nothing more than a 'paper analysis' from the technology partner.

We have been further advised that the follow-up on the related data security project, which CBSA also received PSTP funding for, was also not based on a 'persons-of-interest' biometric lookout database but instead nothing more than a controlled, known subject enrolled, site access project using a small number of Defence Research & Development Canada employees. While we acknowledge this kind of research is far easier to perform and has some generic validity, it is hardly the work originally intended or relevant to the Canada Border Services Agency or the Government's border security priorities.

In light of the foregoing, we thought you would want to be aware of this information so that you may be able to determine whether the original PSTP funded, CBSA led project in fact created a sample 'persons-of-interest' biometric database and whether it was field tested in different point-of-entry environments, or not. We have already notified M. Portelance of these concerns.

Should it be the case that the work intended has *not* been performed; we encourage the Government to take action so that this long awaited and vital work is actually accomplished. As noted above, we have already provided CBSA with detailed materials regarding both database content and operational deployment, and we would be pleased to share these materials with you or your officials or to meet to discuss how we feel it would be best to proceed on this critical initiative. In other words Minister, as always, you can rely on our assistance and cooperation.

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Sincerely Yours,

Ron Moran
National President

c.c.: Members of the CIU National Board of Directors