



THOMAS J. VILSACK  
GOVERNOR

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SALLY J. PEDERSON  
LT. GOVERNOR

December 19, 2006

The Honorable Michael Chertoff  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Naval Security Station  
Nebraska and Massachusetts Avenues, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

The U. S. Department of Homeland Security-Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) recent actions relating to Operation Wagon Train potentially jeopardized the safety of state and local law enforcement personnel in Iowa and, at the same time, unnecessarily interfered with Iowa's ability to respond to the humanitarian consequences of the recent raids across the Midwest. These raids could have compromised ongoing local, state and federal law enforcement undercover operations and led to unnecessary risks to law enforcement officers. This lack of coordination among law-enforcement and military authorities is completely unacceptable in this post 9-11 and Katrina world.

ICE's failure to advise the Iowa National Guard of the size and scope of the raid could have led to unacceptable risks to Guard personnel and property. Although the Guard was simply a space provider, your department's operations and lack of coordination put the Iowa National Guard into the national spotlight without the courtesy of providing them sufficient information or authority to plan and respond. The information blackout imposed by ICE following the raids further exacerbated the situation. Rather than working to partner with local, state, and other federal law enforcement agencies, ICE chose to pursue a solitary path that limited the operation's effectiveness, created undo hardship for many not at fault, and led to resentment and further mistrust of government.

Finally, the complete lack of an adequate media plan in the age of 24-7 news coverage is completely unacceptable. ICE failed to provide any information to Iowa National Guard public affairs staff prior to and during the operation. It was wholly inadequate that ICE public affairs personnel in Washington, D.C. issued only one short news release more than 24 hours after the operation began. ICE failed to hold a news conference at Camp Dodge – after promising to do so. These systemic failures to communicate with the public and news organizations created an information vacuum that

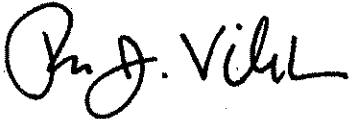


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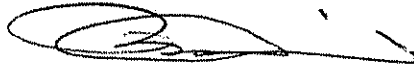
was filled with unreliable and unverifiable rumors that further undermined the public's trust and confidence in both the state and federal government.

In order to prevent similar or greater problems in the future, please note that the Iowa National Guard, at both Camp Dodge and throughout our state, will now require proper notification to the Governor and appropriate law enforcement personnel, as well as a thorough and synchronized media plan, before we again agree to provide any space for future actions or operations by ICE.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this issue.



Thomas J. Vilsack  
Governor of the State of Iowa



RON DARDIS  
Major General, Iowa National Guard  
The Adjutant General