

EVANS: "STRATEGY TARGETING ORGANIZED PIRACY CRACKS DOWN ON PIRATES WHO STEAL FROM AMERICAN WORKERS"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Commerce Secretary Donald L. Evans today joined Ambassador Robert Zoellick, Attorney General John Ashcroft, Homeland Security Under Secretary Asa Hutchinson to focus on the Administration's "Strategy Targeting Organized Piracy(STOP)" initiative. The initiative protects American businesses and their products from counterfeiters and pirates who are stealing from America's workers and robbing billions from the U.S. economy.

"For the past three years, the Bush Administration has aggressively worked to enforce intellectual property rights. Today's STOP initiative allows us to leverage those efforts and new innovative solutions to better protect America's intellectual property." said Evans. "One of President Bush's top economic priorities has been to put counterfeiters and pirates who tilt the playing field against American companies out of business. The STOP initiative gives American businesses clear steps to protect themselves from international counterfeiters and encourages businesses to adopt programs to insure that their supply chains are free from fakes."

Under the STOP Initiative, Commerce will do the following:

- Establish a hotline that provides a one-stop-shop for businesses to protect their intellectual property at home and abroad. 1-866-999-HALT provides businesses with the information they need to leverage the resources of the U.S.G. to protect their intellectual property rights
- Build a bridge between companies and US Customs to block bogus goods at the border.
- Develop a comprehensive web-based guide for American innovators and businesses on how to safeguard their ideas and innovations;
- Challenge industry leaders to develop voluntary guidelines/corporate compliance programs to ensure that their supply chains are free of trade in fakes

The Commerce Department continues to focus on the President's goal to level the playing field by opening new markets for American products and tough enforcement of international trade laws in order to grow our economy and create new jobs.

"The Bush administration will continue knocking down the barriers to effective trade enforcement," said Evans. "Our goal is to ensure that the talents, the innovations, and the creativity of America's brightest minds are protected from theft and piracy."