

**Statement of Ranking Member Henry Cuellar  
Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security  
Hearing on Securing Our Borders –  
Operational Control and the Path Forward  
February 15, 2011**

- Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.
- I want to begin by congratulating you on your chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security.
- I enjoyed serving with you on this Subcommittee in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, and I look forward to continuing to do so this Congress.
- I know we have several areas of common interest given that we each represent border districts, albeit one on America's northern border and the other on the southern border.
- I look forward to working with you to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security has the tools needed to secure our borders, while it also ensures the free flow of legitimate trade and travel that is the lifeblood of so many border communities like ours.

- I would also like to welcome all of the new Members to our Subcommittee, both Democratic and Republican.
- On the Democratic side, we are fortunate to have two northern border members in Rep. Higgins and Rep. Clarke and a member representing a coastal area in Rep. Christensen.
- Given their knowledge of many of the issues before the Subcommittee, I know they will contribute a great deal to our work in the weeks and months ahead.
- Today, we are here to receive testimony of DHS's use of personnel, technology, and infrastructure to gain operational control of the Nation's borders.
- The United States has long attempted to obtain control of its borders, with varying degrees of success.
- One of the challenges surrounding the issue of operational control of the borders is defining the term itself.

- I am hopeful that today's discussion will lead to a definite understanding of the term and our path forward regarding effective border policies and practices.
- DHS has increased its efforts in recent years to enhance border security, and we, both Democrats and Republicans in Congress, have provided the resources necessary to help do just that.
- In my hometown of Laredo, we have firsthand knowledge of the challenges along the southern border and of the responsibility to provide the tools necessary to enhance border security.
- I am interested in hearing from our witnesses about how they believe we can do just that.
- I am particularly grateful that Mayor Salinas of Laredo accepted the invitation to share his views with the Subcommittee, both as a former law enforcement officer and now as mayor of a border city.
- In our discussion of border security, however, we cannot overlook the importance of our land ports of entry.

- Achieving operational control of the areas between the ports of entry would be meaningless unless we also provide adequate resources to the ports to enhance security and facilitate commerce.
- Madam Chairwoman, I look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues and I thank the witnesses for joining us today.
- And with that, I yield back.