

**Statement of Ranking Member Henry Cuellar (D-TX) as prepared  
Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security  
Committee on Homeland Security  
Hearing on Strengthening the Border – Finding the Right Mix of Personnel, Infrastructure  
and Technology  
March 15, 2011**

I think we can both agree that we are at an important stage in our nation's efforts to secure our borders.

As border security threats are continuing to evolve and our country is facing new challenges that demand new solutions, we must be at the forefront of all measures to secure and protect our homeland, including our many points of entry and exit on the Northern and Southern borders.

At our Northern and Southern borders, we've taken critical steps to interdict the flow of illegal weapons, people, drugs and cash, but more work needs to be done.

Chairwoman Miller and I both represent districts along our Nation's borders, and I know we have several issues of mutual interest.

Communities along our Nation's borders and coastal waters face a unique exposure to threats that concern us all.

In the 28th District of Texas, which I represent, we have firsthand knowledge of the challenges along the southern border and the importance of providing the tools necessary to enhance border security.

I believe strongly that technology and personnel play vital roles in securing America's borders.

DHS has increased its efforts in recent years to enhance border security, and we, both Democrats and Republicans, have provided the resources necessary to help do just that.

Since 2007, Congress has continued to increase border security funding.

As a result, CBP now has over 20,000 Border Patrol Agents; more than 20,000 CBP Officers at ports of entry and preclearance stations; and over 1,000 Air and Marine pilots and vessel operators.

Through the work of this committee, Congress has also provided funding to enable DHS to deploy technology in their security efforts.

I'm particularly interested in receiving an update of CBP's use of unmanned aerial systems (UASs) and how this technology will be utilized in the future in securing our borders.

We must continue to mitigate border threats by deploying a combination of manpower, technology, and resources to enhance our strategy for securing our borders.

I am interested in hearing from our witnesses about how they believe we can achieve this important goal.

However, I do want to remind everyone here that in our discussion about border security, we cannot continue to overlook the importance of our land ports of entry, which play a vital role in combating the flow of illegal weapons, drugs, cash and human smuggling, while facilitating legitimate trade and travel.

CBP reports that on a typical day officers at the ports of entry process 956,167 passengers and pedestrians and 64,414 truck, rail, and sea containers.

We cannot achieve effective control of our borders if we do not provide the needed resources to the ports of entry 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.