

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
RANKING MEMBER HENRY CUELLAR (D-TX)**

**Hearing: “Balancing Maritime Security and Trade Facilitation:
Protecting our Ports, Increasing Commerce and Securing the Supply Chain – Part I”**

**Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security
Committee on Homeland Security**

This Subcommittee has previously examined cargo security and facilitation issues at our land borders.

Some of our Nation's busiest land ports of entry are located in my congressional district, making supply chain security and facilitation of legitimate commerce a key issue for me and my constituents.

I know these issues are of great importance to the gentlelady from Michigan as well, given her district along the northern border.

Today, we are examining maritime cargo security in particular, but there are certain parallels.

Indeed, the fundamental issue is the same: How can we expedite legitimate cargo to its destination while keeping possible terrorist instruments or contraband from entering the U.S.? Given the volume of cargo crossing entering this country every day, this is no easy task for DHS and its Federal partners.

We will hear testimony today regarding DHS' programs and initiatives to secure maritime cargo, through programs such as the Container Security Initiative, Secure Freight Initiative, and C-TPAT.

I have had the opportunity to visit a CSI port, and I have also been to the National Targeting Center where much of Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) cargo security work is done.

While I appreciate the hard work of the men and women of CBP and their DHS colleagues on this challenging issue, more remains to be done.

Many of cargo security programs have grown stagnant in recent years, in part due to lack of adequate funding.

And many of these programs are carried out by CBP officers, who are in short supply.

We have greatly expanded the ranks of the Border Patrol (the “men and women in green”) since September 11, 2001, but we have not kept pace with CBP officers (“the men and women in blue”).

Without adequate personnel at our sea, land, and airports, security and facilitation both suffer.

Finally, I would like to express my dismay at the recently released, long-overdue National Strategy on Supply Chain Security. I was hoping to see more substance from the Administration on the path forward for supply chain security and facilitation.

It is my hope that the witnesses today will be able to speak to DHS' vision for its role in this very important mission.