

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

## **BORDER AND MARITIME SUBCOMMITTEE**

### ***HEARING: “BORDER SECURITY THREATS TO THE HOMELAND: DHS’ RESPONSE TO INNOVATIVE TACTICS AND TECHNIQUES”***

***JUNE 19TH, 2012***

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The purpose of this hearing is to examine how the Department of Homeland Security is working to combat the ever-changing security threats along our borders.

As a life-long resident of Laredo, Texas, and a member of this Committee, I have had the opportunity to see firsthand the good work that DHS is doing along our borders.

In recent years, DHS has made an enormous investment in border security personnel, technology, and infrastructure, and there is evidence their work is paying off.

However, these efforts are being met by the efforts of drug trafficking organizations, which seemingly possess unlimited resources and funds.

As law enforcement has better secured drug smugglers’ usual routes across our borders, the drug trafficking organizations have begun to use alternative means to move contraband.

These alternative methods include the construction of cross-border tunnels and subterranean passageways, and increased use of ultralight aircrafts to get their contraband into this country undetected.

Similarly, the maritime environment has seen an increase in the use of panga boats, self-propelled semi-and-fully submersible vessels for drug trafficking.

I would like to hear from our witnesses today about their experiences with these illegal tactics, and what we could do to further enhance their work combating drug trafficking.

U.S. efforts along the southern border have and continue to receive a great deal of attention, but we cannot forget that there are threats to all of our borders – northern, southern, and maritime.

As Members of the Committee on Homeland Security, we know securing America’s borders and communities from drug trafficking, and its effects, is an enormous task.

I look forward to hearing more about how we can promote that cooperation and coordination in the interest of the safety and security of our Nation.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today’s hearing and look forward to what I hope will be a very worthwhile dialogue.