

**The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security**

**Opening Statement:  
*Southwest Border Enforcement***

**Witnesses:**

**Chief Michael Fisher, Border Patrol  
Assistant Commissioner Tom Winkowski, CBP Field Operations  
Associate Director Jim Dinkins, ICE Homeland Security Investigations  
Rear Admiral Paul Zukunft, USCG Commander Eleventh District**

**10:00 AM | Wednesday | March 16, 2011 | 2359 RHOB**

This morning we welcome witnesses from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to talk about our progress in securing the Southwest border. They are:

- Chief Michael Fisher, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (or CBP), Office of Border Patrol;
- Assistant Commissioner Thomas Winkowski [Win-cow-ski], CBP, Office of Field Operations;
- Associate Director Jim Dinkins, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (or ICE) Homeland Security Investigations; and
- Rear Admiral Paul Zukunft [Zoo-kanft], Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard's Eleventh District.

Gentlemen, we thank you for appearing today. We also thank you for your service. Each of you represents officers and agents who risk their lives every day in the interests of our nation's safety and security. And, all of your agencies have experienced losses in the line of duty in the past year. Let me express our condolences for those you have lost and our sincere gratitude for all of you who carry on.

With 5,500 miles of border with Canada, 1,993 miles of border with Mexico, and 2,627 miles of shoreline, securing the borders of the United States is a daunting task. Since its inception, this Subcommittee has closely examined security efforts and conditions along our borders, particularly along the Southwest border. Our focus today is not a recitation of where we have been – we know well the significant resources and dramatic strides that have been made since 2003. Rather, we want to talk about the goals for border security.

Today, Gentlemen, we want to hear three things directly from you – the officers and agents who work on the front line:

1. What is the current assessment of border security?
2. When will the border be secure? What does that mean? What resources are needed?  
and

### 3. How do we measure progress towards a secure and economically vibrant border?

Let me elaborate on each of these points. First, what is the current assessment of border security? After investing billions of dollars in Southwest border security efforts in the past eight years, where are we in relation to where we need to go?

On the U.S. side of the border, we have invested in federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel and capabilities; built 649 miles of physical fencing and tactical infrastructure to enhance detection and deterrence; and deployed and tested a variety of technologies. We have also invested in bringing the fight to the cartels – stepping up interdiction efforts away from our borders, using air and maritime assets and supporting investigations in Latin America and Mexico.

At the same time, despite our efforts, conditions in Mexico remain dire – drug production is up and meeting demand; and drug-related violence has resulted in nearly 35,000 deaths since 2005. With the end of President Calderon’s term coming in just a year, how much progress do we expect to make?

Second, and most important, how much further do we have to go? What are the end goals, and how much will it cost to reach them?

Commissioner Bersin gave us some insight into what he thinks the end goals are in his appearance last week – the standard being that, “If you try to come in illegally, you will be detected and you will be arrested...It means reducing the flow of illegal traffic into the United States from Mexico to a point that both assures public safety and is perceived by the people who live on the border and the people who live in Arizona as being safe and secure.”

I want to dig into the Commissioner’s comments. How will we achieve that level of detection and interdiction? What resources will it take? And how long will it take?

Last, how do we measure progress along the way? The Administration has touted the decrease in apprehensions along the Southwest Border as an indication of fewer illegal crossings and, therefore, successful deterrence. How do we really know that is the case? For our entire history, the so-called denominator has been evasive. We know how many we detect and interdict. The core question has been how many illegal aliens actually successfully cross into the U.S. and with what volume of contraband and drugs? How are we seeking to measure that?

Director Morton and Admiral Papp indicated that their roles, in part, were to interdict individuals and drugs away from the land border to reduce the pressure on our border. How is that contribution being measured?

Gentlemen, this is truly a daunting task, and you face significant challenges every day in meeting our Nation’s border security needs. I appreciate you appearing before us today and thank you in advance for your candor and insights into Southwest border security operations.

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