

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****A Call to Action: Narco-Terrorism's Threat to the Southern U.S. Border***

October 14, 2011 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Oversight, Investigations, and Management subcommittee hearing entitled “A Call to Action: Narco-Terrorism’s Threat to the Southern U.S. Border”:

“To Gen. McCaffrey and Gen. Scales, both of you held long illustrious careers in our U.S. military and I thank you both for your service to our country. The purpose of today’s hearing is to examine the threat of Mexico’s drug trade on our Southwestern border.

Over the past few years, this Committee has conducted numerous hearings on violence occurring on the Mexican side of the southwest border. We have also examined the numerous efforts undertaken by our government to assist our Mexican allies in disrupting and dismantling Mexican drug trafficking organizations – otherwise known as DTOs. These hearings have also explored an ongoing question of how much crime actually spills over from Mexico into the United States.

On one hand, criminal statistics indicate that border communities are among the safest in the United States. In fact, there is less crime in some Texas cities on the border than what occurs right here in our Nation’s capital. As we know, crime, all over this country, stems from a variety of sources.

Being able to pinpoint whether crime occurs in Texas that would have occurred regardless of its proximity to Mexico and crime that occurs because it is spillover from Mexican drug-related activity is not an easy task.

I commend both General McCaffrey and General Scales for taking on the challenge.

However, if what is contained in their report is deemed to be true, that would mean that I would have to disregard the most widely cited and concrete evidence of crime in the United States: the FBI Uniform Crime Report.

According to the FBI, the homicide rate along the U.S. side of the southwestern border has actually decreased by as much as 14% over the last three years. These numbers show a clear distinction between political rhetoric and proven facts.

According to the report, FBI criminal statistics do not accurately reflect crime in border communities because violence goes unreported or under-reported because witnesses to crimes are afraid to testify out of fear of Mexican drug DTOs.

However, the report does not provide any concrete evidence or proof to support this bold claim. I will readily admit that in recent years violence in Mexico has reached an all-time high.

However, despite dire predictions, statistics and concrete evidence show that this violence has not spilled over into the United States.

In fact, the violence occurring in Mexico is highly concentrated and in many instances limited to drug trafficking corridors, some of which are hundreds of miles away from the United States border.

There is a need to bring awareness to the unique situation faced by Texas border citizens; however, we must also assure people living outside of Texas that border towns are safe for travel, trade and commerce and that violent crime rates have remained flat or decreased in border communities in the Southwest.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that despite strides made to increase personnel on the border, Republican-sponsored budget cuts threaten to take us backwards.

This Congress, the Majority introduced H.R. 1 which cuts \$350 million from the Department of Homeland Security budget for border security, fencing and technology.

The Department of Homeland Security must have all the resources and authorities it needs to protect our borders. As Members of Congress, we must align our budget priorities with where we claim help is needed.”

#

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

United States House of Representatives - Committee on Homeland Security
H2-117, Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: (202) 226-2616 | Fax: (202) 226-4499
<http://chsdemocrats.house.gov>