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**Ranking Minority Member**  
**Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources**  
**Committee on Government Reform**  
**108<sup>th</sup> Congress**

**Joint Hearing on “Drugs and Security in a Post 9/11 World: Coordinating the  
Counternarcotics Mission at the Department of Homeland Security”**

**July 22, 2004**

Chairman Souder and Chairman Camp:

I am pleased to join you and our colleagues from both the Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources and the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Protection in welcoming a distinguished panel of witnesses from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection Robert Bonner, Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement Michael Garcia, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thomas Collins, DHS Counternarcotics Officer and United States Interdiction Coordinator Roger Mackin, and the employees they oversee work diligently everyday to protect Americans from a multitude of safety and security threats. We appreciate their service to our nation and I know we all welcome this opportunity to hear their perspectives on how DHS agencies are succeeding in fighting a coordinated, effective war on drugs and what can be done to build on the successes that have been achieved in this area.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, had a profound impact on all Americans. The harm inflicted on America that dreadful day cannot be quantified by the death toll from the Trade Center and the Pentagon or by any other narrow, numerical measure. America was changed that day and we continue to struggle in our efforts to adapt to a post-9/11 world in which Americans are constantly mindful of the threat of future terrorist attacks.

Less visible, less dramatic, and less shocking to the national conscience, but equally profound, however, is the toll inflicted everyday upon American cities and towns by the consumption of harmful illegal drugs and by the collateral social and economic consequences of the drug trade.

As Chairman Souder has stated, illegal drug consumption claims 20,000 thousand American lives each year. Thousands more Americans go to jail or prison for drug-related crimes or become a victim of drug-related violence or property crime. An estimated \$150 billion in economic productivity is lost annually due to drugs. And yet these statistics do not begin to capture the concentrated, cumulative impact on the quality of life, and the quality of life prospects, for Americans trapped in neighborhoods crippled by addiction, poverty, and the range of related social ills.

Our response to 9/11 was to take the fight to the terrorists militarily and to take steps to insulate our people and infrastructure from threats to our national security at home. The latter involved creating a new cabinet-level department out of existing agencies with wide-ranging functions. Three key border agencies whose functions and assets were transferred to the Department of Homeland Security had long supplied the majority of our front-line soldiers in the war on drugs. This was only natural given that drugs and various means of inflicting terror enter by the same means – across our borders and through ports of entry around the country.

At the same time, the 9/11 attacks gave rise to a heightened recognition of the extent to which drug proceeds are the lifeblood of criminal and terrorist organizations that threaten U.S. security. This recognition is reflected in the Homeland Security Department's mission statement, codified in the authorizing statute, which directs the Secretary to explore links between terrorists and drug trafficking organizations and otherwise pursue drug interdiction.

The drugs and terror nexus is a compelling reason to address the drug threat, but, as I've noted, drugs represent a substantial and constant threat to the nation's security on their own. Chairman Souder and I have shared the view that we must be wary of allowing the threat of singular catastrophic events to detract from efforts to stop the daily onslaught of illegal drugs that gradually and quietly turns lives to waste and communities into war zones.

That is why I was happy to join Chairman Souder in sponsoring a provision in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 that created within the Department of Homeland Security the position of Counternarcotics Officer, or "CNO." It was our purpose in proposing the CNO provision to create a high-level position within DHS that would maintain a high profile and priority for counternarcotics missions and ensure that DHS drug interdiction, investigation, and enforcement efforts would be coordinated with each other and with those of other federal agencies so as to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the combined effort.

Two years later, the Homeland Security Department is up and running. Today provides a valuable opportunity to evaluate how the Department's drug mission is being coordinated. The Subcommittees have questions related to the effectiveness of the Counternarcotics Officer position and whether it ought to be augmented to achieve the effect we intended, whether DHS assets that contribute to interdiction missions are allocated optimally within the department, and whether the emphasis on preventing catastrophic acts of terrorism is preventing DHS from obtaining intelligence that could make drug interdiction efforts more effective.

Commissioner Bonner, Assistant Secretary Garcia, Admiral Collins, and Mr. Mackin are well-positioned to provide an informed perspective on these particular issues and, more generally, on what more can and should be done to ensure that the war on drugs and the war on terror both can be fought with maximum vigor, efficiency, and effectiveness.

I look forward to their testimony and I thank you, Chairman Souder and Chairman Camp, for holding this important hearing.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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