

## **Opening Statement of Chairman McKeon for NORTHCOM-SOUTHCAM Posture hearing**

March 20, 2013

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Good morning. The committee meets today to receive testimony on the posture of both our Northern Command and Southern Command. I am pleased to welcome General Charles Jacoby, commander of U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command and General John Kelly, commander of U.S. Southern Command. Gentlemen, thank you for your long and distinguished service to our nation and thank you for joining us today.

Even as we proceed in this difficult budget environment and the news commands our attention to Africa and the Middle East, we must be diligent in keeping our hemisphere safe. Therefore, I was pleased by the Administration's announcement last Friday affirming the program of the previous Administration to deploy 44 ground-based interceptors at two sites in California and Alaska. On the other hand, cancelling the fourth phase of the EPAA sends a terrible signal to America's allies. I would have hoped after the 2009 fiasco, we would stop waking up our Eastern European allies to tell them, at the last minute, that we're changing our missile defense plans on them. Gen. Jacoby, I look forward to learning more about how we're filling the gaps in our homeland missile defense.

I also look forward to hearing your assessment of the progress being made by the new President of Mexico on drug-related violence and what NORTHCOM is doing to support Mexico and build their capacity and capabilities. This is a threat daily and directly impacting the U.S. homeland, and we need to treat it as a national security imperative.

General Kelly, in my mind, the illicit trafficking threat is the greatest challenge we face in your geographic area of responsibility. While we continue to see success in Colombia --destabilization and violence in Central America is rampant. Tackling these issues requires close collaboration and coordination with NORTHCOM, as well as interagency partners. Unfortunately, the Navy will eliminate its ship presence in the Caribbean in April due to sequestration. This guarantees an increased flow of drugs and illicit networking across our borders. To that end, please elaborate on the

other consequences of sequestration on both of your commands. Gentlemen, thank you again for appearing before us today.