

*After urging President Obama to deploy National Guard, Mitchell welcomes plan to add 1,500 Guard personnel*

SCOTTSDALE - U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell called President Obama's plan to assign 1,500 National Guard troops to the Southwestern border a good step but said more resources are needed to fight the growing threat posed by Mexican drug cartels.

"Bringing more National Guard troops to the border is a good step since Mexican drug cartels have turned the Phoenix metropolitan area into the nation's kidnapping capitol," Mitchell said. "In the past we've seen the presence of National Guard have a positive impact along the border. However, more resources are needed to fight the real danger posed by these cartels."

President Obama has announced plans to assign 1,500 National Guard troops to the Southwestern border. The move may more than double the force's presence at the along Arizona's border. Currently, 150 members of the National Guard are in Arizona to combat drug smuggling. [Source: [Arizona Republic](#), July 1, 2009]

Increased crime from Mexican drug cartels has had a major impact Arizona. In 2008, Phoenix had more kidnappings than any other city. Last week, the Arizona Department of Public Safety announced the arrest of two suspected human smugglers who were holding a man from Florida and demanding about \$2,200 for his release or he would be beaten or killed. [Source: [Arizona Department of Public Safety](#), June 23, 2009]

In March, Mitchell wrote President Obama to encourage him to deploy National Guard troops to the region, citing the effectiveness of Operation Jump Start which ended last year. According to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the Yuma sector experienced a 68 percent decrease in apprehensions between October 1, 2006 and July 31, 2007, compared with the previous year. Border-wide, the National Guard helped seize more than 1,080 vehicles used to transport drugs and/or illegal immigrants; more than 300,600 pounds of marijuana; and 5,060 pounds of cocaine.

Last month, the House adopted two amendments co-authored by Rep. Mitchell relating to border security and immigration enforcement. The first, an amendment to the FY2010 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill, blocked a proposed \$100 million cut to the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which reimburses state and local law

enforcement agencies for the cost of arresting and jailing criminal illegal immigrants. The second, an amendment to the FY2010 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, provides an additional \$4.9 million to help U.S. Customs and Border Protection implement the new Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, which as of June 1, 2009 requires the use of passports or other approved travel documentation to enter the United States by land and sea.

*Below are links to the letter Mitchell sent to President Obama and the Administration's response sent from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano:*

[Letter to President Obama Regarding National Guard in Border Region](#)

[Response Sent from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano](#)