

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****The Threat to the U.S. Homeland Emanating from Pakistan***

May 3, 2011 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee hearing entitled “The Threat to the U.S. Homeland Emanating from Pakistan”:

“This weekend, nearly ten years after the 9/11 attacks, the United States finally killed Osama Bin Laden, the architect of the attacks and the leader of Al Qaeda. This is an extremely strategic and symbolic victory for the United States. It could not have been done without the brave men and women of the military and intelligence organizations who were on the front lines of this fight.

I would also like to commend President Obama and his Administration for making an extremely difficult but decisive decision, in order to bring some sense of justice to the families of all those who lost loved ones on September 11th.

But it is important to remember that our job is not complete and the mission to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda and its affiliates continues. This is a tremendously important time to assess the impact this victory may have on the global terrorism movement that Bin Laden led.

It may also be an ideal time to reassess our posture in Pakistan and our counterterrorism cooperation with its government. Because Al Qaeda and its allies are not going to lay down their arms because their leader was killed.

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas are still a source of extremism, where Al Qaeda, the Pakistani Taliban, and others, often work together to plot attacks against the United States. This attack may make many of these terrorists in the FATA and those operating throughout Pakistan more resolute, not less.

Simply put, we cannot be successful in our efforts to completely defeat Al Qaeda and its affiliates, without continuing to focus on the extremist safe havens in Pakistan. This will require reevaluating our counterterrorism cooperation with the government of Pakistan and emphasizing a comprehensive strategy that encompasses better governance and long-term development.

Our gains in Pakistan must be durable and sustainable and aimed at preventing the reemergence of Al Qaeda. Thus, any aid that we do provide must be spent more wisely to ensure our assistance is truly creating a real impact on the ground.

In recent weeks our relationship with Pakistan has been more strained than ever, and it remains to be seen how this latest event will impact counterterrorism cooperation. Our national security, though, requires that we address the “trust deficit” we face with Pakistan head-on.

Because to fully capitalize on this historic accomplishment, we must demonstrate that we are committed to ensuring Bin Laden’s ideology of hate does not continue to spread.”

# # #

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

