



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

***Threats to the American Homeland after Killing Bin Laden:
An Assessment***

May 25, 2011 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee hearing entitled “Threats to the American Homeland after Killing Bin Laden: An Assessment”:

“Before we consider the risk of terrorist attack following the death of Bin Laden, I want to publicly add my voice to the many who have commended the President, the national security team and our uniformed forces for successfully completing a mission that began ten years ago.

The success of this mission was made possible by this administration’s efforts, reliable intelligence and the surgical use of force.

For many, the killing of Bin Laden has always been the ultimate goal of the war on terror.

As the mastermind of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, he became the central focus of our policies.

Bin Laden became the personification of terrorism for us.

We went to war in Afghanistan to eliminate Bin Laden’s training camps and base of operations.

We went to war in Iraq because we were told that Saddam Hussein had some connection with Bin Laden.

In the last ten years, many of our policies at home and abroad have been based on forecasts and predictions about Bin Laden.

For many, the elimination of Bin Laden will require a dramatic shift in thinking about and analyzing the terrorist threat.

In the last 10 years, we have seen the migration and mutation of the terrorist network and the terrorist threat.

The terrorist network has moved beyond familiar borders and operatives have become decentralized.

At the time of his death, Bin Laden remained a dangerous charismatic figure, but his control was not absolute and his authority was not singular.

We cannot ignore the new challenge presented by his death.

In every group, the death of a leader causes disarray and confusion among the followers. These periods of transition can last for weeks or years.

When we consider the safety of our country, the question that matters most is--- what will we do while the terrorist are in the throes of transition?

For fiscal year 2012, the answer is not encouraging.

The DHS appropriations bill, recently approved by the Republican-controlled Appropriations Committee, cuts the Department's budget by more than \$1 billion.

Since Bin Laden's death, we have learned that Al Qaeda was targeting our cities and critical infrastructure.

We also know that AQAP is actively targeting our aviation sector.

Last week, the Pakistani Taliban, an al-Qaida-allied group struck an American armored vehicle transporting American government personnel. They claimed the attack was in retaliation for Bin Laden's death.

At a time when our adversaries are seeking opportunities to attack us, cuts to homeland security funding put us in harm's way.

Bin Laden's death does not end the threat to this nation.

In many ways, the picture has become more complex. Our focus must remain steady. And our funding must match our focus."

#

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>