

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****The DHS Intelligence Enterprise- Past, Present, and Future***

June 1, 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 DHS Intelligence Enterprise- Past, Present, and Future”:

“I am pleased to see everyone sitting together with Undersecretary Wagner to talk about information sharing across the Department. Last month, America rediscovered the importance of our intelligence community, as a decade of behind-the-scenes work culminated in the death of the world’s most wanted terrorist.

The success of the Bin Laden mission was made possible by reliable and actionable intelligence that was shared within federal agencies and across the government.

As the Chief Intelligence Officer, Undersecretary Wagner, is charged with crafting a strategic approach to support and leverage the unique intelligence capabilities of DHS. Everyday, DHS components such as TSA, ICE, and the Coast Guard, as well as the general public, come across valuable pieces of intelligence that alone may mean little, but pieced together with other information, could solve the next terrorist plot.

It is the Chief Intelligence Officer’s responsibility to ensure there is a platform to “connect the dots” across the Department and deliver that intelligence to stakeholders.

As past hearings in this Subcommittee have highlighted, however, DHS has struggled to develop an integrated Homeland Security Intelligence Enterprise.

The last Strategic Plan for the DHS Intelligence Enterprise was completed in 2008 and must be updated to reflect this Administration’s priorities, as well as emerging technologies. I still believe that DHS needs a better assessment of its intelligence capabilities and to look for ways to improve intelligence integration and analysis across the whole Department. This includes a proper standard of training in civil rights and civil liberties for all homeland security partners.

In addition, given the billion dollar cut to DHS’s budget being considered by this Congress, an emphasis must also be placed on de-confliction and finding efficiencies. The millions of dollars in cuts to grants will also hurt the ability of state and locals to connect with DHS and respond to actionable intelligence.

While much of this burden falls on you Madam Undersecretary, your colleagues at the table must also proactively step up to the challenge as well. As the Ranking Member mentioned, we will need all of your analytic capabilities to seamlessly work as one, while the “treasure trove” of data obtained at the Bin Laden compound is reviewed.

State and local partners have appreciated DHS’s timely dissemination of information on the various plots and are looking to all of you for more information.

This Committee is interested in making sure that the DHS Intelligence Enterprise has the resources and strategies in place to continue this valuable work. We want to work as your partner -- knowing that the better everyone does their job, the safer our communities will be.”

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