

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Balancing Maritime Security and Trade Facilitation:  
Protecting our Ports, Increasing Commerce and Securing  
the Supply Chain – Part I***

February 7, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Border and Maritime Security subcommittee hearing entitled “Balancing Maritime Security and Trade Facilitation: Protecting our Ports, Increasing Commerce and Securing the Supply Chain – Part I”

“Today’s hearing comes at a critical juncture in the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) efforts to secure maritime cargo entering our Nation’s ports.

Later this year, July 12, 2012, marks the deadline for achieving 100 percent scanning of maritime cargo before it arrives in the U.S., pursuant to the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-53).

In other words, the law requires all U.S.-bound cargo be scanned either through non-intrusive scanning machines or receive a physical examination.

Today, it is widely acknowledged that DHS will not meet this deadline. I am a pragmatic person. I was a proponent of the 100 percent scanning mandate, but understood that fulfilling the requirement would be no easy task.

However, those of us who supported the provision hoped to spur significant advances in cargo security by this point even if the initial 2012 deadline was not met. Instead, in the nearly five years since the law was enacted DHS has failed to make an honest effort to implement the mandate.

We have heard a litany of reasons that 100 percent scanning cannot or should not be done. In testimony before this Committee, Secretary Napolitano expressed opposition to the mandate, indicating that the 100% requirement “is not achievable” by 2012 and instead advocating for a risk-based approach to maritime cargo security.

Of course, the surest way to fail is not to try at all. Equally troubling is the fact that in recent years some of DHS’s existing cargo security programs have become stagnant or have been scaled back. For example, the Container Security Initiative (CSI) is operational in the same 58 ports that were active before enactment of the 9/11 Act.

Over the past five years, CSI has not been expanded, despite the fact that at least 700 ports ship goods to the U.S. and the number of overseas personnel deployed to the 58 ports has plummeted.

Specifically, in 2009, there were 167 CSI officers at overseas ports – today there are only 79. Similarly, while just a few years ago the Secure Freight Initiative (SFI) included six ports, today the program has been reduced to a single, low-volume port.

Last month, the Administration released the long-awaited National Strategy for Global Supply Chain Security.

At less than six pages in length, it is hard to see how this document could offer a comprehensive blueprint

for enhancing the security of the supply chain, especially given the enormity of the task and the number of stakeholders involved.

Nevertheless, I expect to hear testimony today from DHS witnesses about how successful the Department has been at creating programs to ensure that shippers can be trusted, manifests are analyzed, and ports are protected.

Those programs play an important role in maritime security. However, they do not take the place of having an active partnership where CBP personnel work with their foreign counterparts in overseas ports to examine high-risk cargo containers before they arrive at U.S. ports.

After all, what good is identifying a high-risk container if it doesn't get examined until it has arrived at the Ports of New York or Houston or New Orleans or Los Angeles, or any other the hundreds of other ports across America? By then, it very well may be too late.

I hope to hear from our witnesses today not only about their successes, but also about what remains to be done to secure maritime cargo, and how we can get there. Meaningful homeland security will only be achieved when we know who and what is coming into this country, not only by air and land, but also by sea.”

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