

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****America is Under Cyber Attack: Why Urgent Action is Needed***

April 24, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Oversight, Investigations, and Management subcommittee hearing entitled “America is Under Cyber Attack: Why Urgent Action is Needed”:

“The threat to our Nation’s cyber systems and networks is real and present. Billions of Americans use the Internet every day to communicate, pay bills, obtain information, and perform job-related functions.

Moreover, the Federal government relies on the Internet and a network of federal systems to support infrastructure, maintain defense systems, protect power plants and water supplies, perform administrative functions of Federal agencies, and a host of other activities.

It is therefore imperative that we take seriously the United States’ role in securing cyberspace from unwanted intrusions and dangerous attacks. A large portion of that responsibility lies with the U.S. Congress. It is our role to ensure that necessary legislation is passed that provides America with the protection it needs.

Per the title of today’s hearing: urgent action is needed and I agree. However, I have consistently noted that what is needed, is legislation that will accomplish three things:

- Address the growing cyber threat to critical infrastructure networks;
- Promote and enhance information-sharing between and among the private sector and the Federal government, while protecting the privacy and civil liberties of Americans using the Internet; and
- Solidify and enhance the Department of Homeland Security’s role as the Federal government’s lead for Federal network security and private sector cyber support.

Unfortunately, none of the bills being voted on by the House this week accomplished these goals. As a result, at the end of “Cybersecurity Week” America will remain without a comprehensive national strategy that vests cybersecurity efforts in one domestic agency and protects the privacy rights of American citizens.

While the initial measure introduced by Rep. Lungren, the Chairman of this Committee’s Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies, was not perfect, it took a number of steps in the right direction and would have measurably strengthened our Nation’s cybersecurity posture.

Yet, the key initiatives that I believe were necessary were removed at the last minute and despite these changes, the Republican leadership has elected to not bring that measure to the House floor. So while I look forward to today’s testimony and thank the witnesses for their participation, I am disheartened by the missed opportunity to produce the urgent action that is indeed needed. “

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