

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria***

May 22, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat to the Homeland from al Qaeda Operations in Iran and Syria”:

“Today’s hearing is an assessment on the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in the Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both Iran and Syria have tense relationships with the United States. The US does not consider these countries as allies, is a welcome criterion for Al Qaeda to operate and thrive in these two regions.

We know that radicalization by the Al Qaeda extremist ideology and communication with Al Qaeda is widespread and accessible. Vulnerable areas such as Syria, which is crippling under a civil war, could potentially be a safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives to radicalize and train militants.

The Republic of Iran has been home to top Al Qaeda operatives for over a decade. In the past, the government closely monitored their dealings within the state. However, recent actions by the Iranian government illustrate that their interactions with Al Qaeda may have become lax. However, it is my hope as we evaluate the threat from Al Qaeda operatives in these countries, we give a fair, thorough, and critical assessment. This evaluation should not only include testimony from today’s hearing, but also information that we receive from the State Department and the Intelligence Community.

On April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two individuals for plotting a terrorist attack on a passenger rail train that travels from Toronto, through the Northern Border at Niagara Falls to New York City. According to authorities, the alleged perpetrators received assistance from Al Qaeda operatives in Iran. As of today, the authorities do not see this foiled plot as a link to a plot directed by the Iranian government. The Iranian government also denies any involvement in this plot. Even though there is not evidence that shows that there is a link to the Iranian government and these perpetrators, Iran, as a state sponsor of terrorism, and its relationship with Al Qaeda should be evaluated. This thwarted plot also gives rise to other issues that should be given another thorough evaluation.

First, the threat to mass transit is not novel. According to the National Counter-Terrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System, from January 2004 to July 2008, 530 terrorist attacks were waged worldwide against mass transit and passenger rail targets, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and over 9,000 injuries. In the United States, a plot to attack the New York City subway system was thwarted in September 2009. The convicted conspirators stated they were directed by Al Qaeda. 34 million rail and transit passenger trips are taken within the United States each weekday. However, the Transportation Security Administration’s budget for surface transportation security remains less than 2% of TSA’s budget.

Another issue that should be evaluated is the Northern Border. To date, the Over the last decade, the Department of Homeland Security, with support from Congress, has made unprecedented investments in border security. During my time on this Committee, I have

consistently advocated for a comprehensive strategy to help guide how border security funding is utilized.

Last week, the Committee passed H.R. 1417, which requires the DHS to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for achieving operational control of our borders. The bill sets a goal for the Secretary to certify to Congress that operational control of the border has been achieved in high traffic areas, which includes Northern Border areas such as Niagara Falls, within two years.

Another evaluation to consider is the cost of terrorism. Had this plot been successful, it could have affected some of the busiest border crossings in the nation. The border crossings in along the northern border between New York and Canada are linked to over 200 billion dollars in annual U.S. sales, income, and federal taxes. We know that one of the goals of Al Qaeda is to cause economic disruption.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 did not just result in the deaths of 2,250 people, it also resulted in nearly \$80 billion in economic damage with about \$32.5 billion covered by nearly 150 domestic and international insurers and reinsurers. In the wake of the attacks, commercial insurance insurers began excluding terrorism coverage from policies provided to businesses across the country.

In response, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to increase the availability of terrorism risk insurance to at-risk American businesses by guaranteeing that the government would share some of the losses with private insurers should a terrorist attack occur. Initially authorized for three years, the program was refined and extended in 2005 and 2007. It is scheduled to sunset in 2014.

I have introduced the "Fostering Resilience to Terrorism Act of 2013," which extends the TRIA program 10 years, creating much-needed stability and predictability for the business community. Finally, another evaluation should be of community engagement and involvement. Canadian authorities gave credit to the Canadian Muslim community for recognizing and identifying the behavior of the alleged perpetrators and reporting this information to the authorities.

Last Congress, this Committee held a series of hearings that stroked a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. Those hearings also served as propaganda for fear and distrust of the Muslim community. In the wake of the Boston Marathon Bombings, attempts were made to revive this climate of fear and distrust. Some said that we must surveil the Muslim Community.

Luckily, this Committee served as a platform to counter the arguments that were perpetuated last Congress. The Boston Police Chief testified that there is no need to live in a surveillance state and a former FBI Special Agent in charge testified that community involvement is what is necessary to recognize the signs of radicalization and prevent attacks. These are just a few things that we can evaluate in this hearing and beyond. I look forward to today's testimony."

# # #

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>