

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Protecting the Homeland Against Mumbai-Style Attacks and the Threat from Lashkar-e-Taiba***

June 12, 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 “Protecting the Homeland Against Mumbai-Style Attacks and the Threat from Lashkar-e-Taiba”:

“For more than 60 hours in November 2008, the world watched as Mumbai – India’s entertainment and financial capital – was terrorized by attacks on hotels, hospitals, the main railway station, and other public places. By the time the siege was over, 10 terrorists had killed more than 160 people using automatic weapons and explosives.

This attack was planned and executed by Lashkar-e-Tayybia, a Pakistani terrorist organization. The style of attack, the weapons and technology used, and the diversity of the targets raised new questions for how we should approach counterterrorism and security measures here at home— at all levels of government and in the private sector.

It has become clear that the type of attack carried out in Mumbai – a “Fedayeen”-style attack, where small groups engage in combat operations, as distinguished from suicide bombings – poses a challenge to our soft targets and our law enforcement community.

As such, it is critical that we study this style of attack, evaluate how well DHS engages private sector partners in efforts to secure against such attacks, and review how the private sector acts on shared information.

By examining DHS’ outreach to the private sector during and in the aftermath of these attacks, we can determine whether it provided stakeholders, such as hotels, with actionable information about the threat situation, the groups involved, and mitigation measures to be implemented. It is also critical that we examine whether the state and local jurisdictions are adequately prepared to respond to a Fedayeen-style attack.

Support from the Homeland Security Grant Program has been critical to the development core capabilities necessary to help State and local governments and first responders prepare for and respond to terrorist attacks and natural disasters. In recent months, communities across America have seen investments in these important grant programs pay off. From Hurricane Sandy to the response following the Boston Marathon Bombings, investments in planning and exercises, interoperable emergency communications capabilities, medical surge capacity, and other capabilities saved lives and mitigated the damage those disasters inflicted.

Unfortunately, the funding for the Homeland Security Grant Program has been reduced significantly under Republican leadership of the House. Without this important Federal support, State and local governments, which are already struggling to stretch their budgets, may not be able to maintain the capabilities, training, planning, and expertise developed over the past decade.

Finally, we must consider the cost of terrorism. In response to the events of September 11th, Congress enacted the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002. That measure increased 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. That act is set to sunset in 2014. I have introduced a bill that would extend these provisions, but would add some needed improvements. I urge my colleagues on this Committee to co-sponsor this bill.

The 2008 Mumbai attack showed the vulnerability and the economic devastation a Fedayeen-style attack could have on businesses. We must recognize that small businesses and others that suffer an economic loss due to a terrorist act should not have to shoulder that burden alone and should not have to rely on the kindness of charity.”

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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>