



# COMMITTEE *ON* HOMELAND SECURITY

*Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)**

### ***Worldwide Threats to the Homeland***

**November 15, 2023**

Good morning and welcome to our witnesses, Secretary Mayorkas, Director Wray, and Director Abizaid. With one notable exception during the prior administration, you and your predecessors have regularly come before this Committee to discuss security threats facing the homeland and how your Department and agencies are keeping our country safe. Thank you for being here today and for your service. And please convey our thanks to the dedicated public servants who work for you, and for all of us, every day.

This worldwide threats hearing takes place with a war going on in the Middle East, persistent threats from foreign terrorist organizations and domestic violent extremists, and surging antisemitism and Islamophobia. We are seeing more sophisticated cyber attacks, unprecedented global migration, and have a Presidential election less than a year away. The list of issues critical to the homeland goes on.

My Democratic colleagues and I plan to ask you about these issues, and we stand ready and willing, as always, to work with you to address these challenges on behalf of the American people. Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues have a different agenda today, and we need to be clear about what their agenda really means from the outset of the hearing.

Republicans are directing politically motivated attacks at these administration witnesses, and they are doing so to distract from Republicans' own failures at governing, their infighting, and their support for a Republican Presidential candidate who is, himself, a threat to democracy.

That's what some people in Washington do rather than taking responsibility for their own failures – and to be sure, Republicans have failed at running the House of Representatives. They ousted their own Speaker, paralyzing the House and bringing the legislative process to a standstill for weeks as they fought amongst themselves.

They can't manage to pass bills to fund the government. Instead, they have abruptly pulled spending bills from the House floor and have gone from near-shutdown to near-shutdown, despite the harm it causes to our government, our economy, and our security.

They appear on TV to rant about border security, and they issue bogus, so-called "reports" replete with false statements and racist rhetoric about the border. Others complain about bookstores refusing to sell their propaganda. But when it comes to actually paying for border security personnel and resources or passing legitimate border security legislation, they're AWOL.

They talk tough about strengthening our cyber defenses but then vote to slash funding for the agency charged with that important mission.

They revere their Presidential candidate, who admires dictators and despots, calling them “capable”, “competent”, and “smart.” Who recently referred to his political opponents as “vermin” and threatened to use the Justice Department against them. Who talks about erecting quote “detention camps” unquote on U.S. soil.

Republicans don’t want to own up to, or deal with, any of that. So, rather than getting their own House in order, they direct baseless attacks at the administration, and Secretary Mayorkas in particular. We know their extreme MAGA members are desperate to impeach someone, anyone at all. They are on a crusade to impeach the Secretary although there’s *zero* justification for it. Unlike the Trump Administration, the Biden Administration has followed the law on border security and immigration. Claiming asylum at the border is lawful. If my Republican colleagues don’t like the law, well, they’re in the majority — try to change it.

The prior administration also refused to provide information sought by Congress in more than 100 congressional inquiries, but this administration has been and continues to be responsive to Congress.

It is my understanding today’s hearing is Secretary Mayorkas’ 27th time testifying before Congress since being confirmed as Secretary. Under his leadership, DHS has responded to more than 1,400 congressional letters and produced more than 11,000 pages of documents to this Committee alone. Secretary Mayorkas is carrying out his responsibilities as Secretary of Homeland Security, but Republicans don’t like this administration’s policies.

Cabinet Secretaries shouldn’t be impeached over policy differences. That’s not what the Constitution says. That’s not what the Founders intended. They certainly shouldn’t be impeached to distract from Republican failures or to appease the extreme MAGA element that has overtaken their party. Rather than this impeachment distraction, we should be focused on how Congress and the Administration can work together to secure the homeland. That’s what this Committee has done since its inception. That’s what we were sent here to do, and that’s what the American people expect of us.

It’s a shame my Republican colleagues are working their own agenda instead because this Committee, this Congress, and our homeland security suffer for it.

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